

FOR
LIFE

THE FOREST



THE FOREST was a project by Christy McCaffrey and Sara Newey installed at Machine Project from Friday 3/27/09 till Friday 4/24/09.

The following woodland-themed lectures, readings and performances took place in Machine Project throughout the month, staged inside the forest:

3/27	Opening reception
4/4	Field recording workshop
4/5	Field recording workshop Double-feature vampire movies
4/10	Dead author readings Midnight ghost stories
4/11	Moonlit poetry reading with Anthony McCann
4/12	Bigfoot lecture
4/17	Reading by Christine Wertheim and performance by Acoustic Force 300
4/18	Music to nap by with tehn Jason Brown's lecture about elves, and a midnight music show with Jackson Fledermaus
4/19	Pancake breakfast Bird song identification tour Reading by Amar Ravva and musical performance by Heather Lockie, Shawn Lockie, and Laura Steenberge
4/23	Joshua Beckman readings

AFTER
POETRY:
JOSHUA
BECKMAN
&
THE END
OF NATURE

Colin Dickey
May 5, 2009

It seems incontrovertible that our contemporary landscape has become “post-natural”. The New Museum’s recent exhibit, “After Nature,” which takes its title from W. G. Sebald’s posthumous poetry collection and uses Werner Herzog’s “Lessons from Darkness” as its starting point, is a perfect case in point—the teleological conception of nature as a tool for man’s advancement has given way under the failures and catastrophes of the twentieth century, and what remains in its place is incomprehensible wreckage. Wreckage without use value and which cannot be inscribed under a rubric of “progress,” it leers at us as sullen hieroglyph.

In such a worldview, can our approach to nature be anything other than mere nostalgia? The possibility of communing with nature as it actually appears seems to be lost to us; it reflects only on our incapacity to understand it. Parable-like, nature exists not to be known, but to show us that we do not know it, can never know it. Any love of nature now is merely the longing for a lost time when we could authentically commune with it, a desire for a prelapsarian time.

Such was Machine Project’s recent forest experiment, one in which nature appears not as a real object to be touched, but a recreation à la a Hollywood sound stage, where 50’s films about bears are projected on foldout screens, complete with the clattering of an elementary school projector. But to read Machine’s project as merely nostalgic would be to miss the point—evidence: Joshua Beckman’s poetry, which closed the month-long series and was captured on video for a subsequent Youtube event. Beckman’s poetry takes the post-natural as its starting point, one in which both human invention and the natural world have become equally bereft of meaning:

But it was in this exact landscape that the mossy box
of bullets sat

A magnifying glass leaned up against it, thinking wrong,
wrong, wrong

No one ever knows what to wish for.

Recalling Man Ray’s photo of a locomotive, abandoned and overgrown in the forest, beloved by André Breton and used as the focal point for the latter’s “Mad Love,” Beckman’s failure to find anything

of value in the moss-grown artifact shows humanity at the apex of his own failure, so that all that can be uttered is the mantra, “wrong, wrong, wrong,” as if in complete denial of a sudden epiphany. Beckman’s work turns the faux-forest into an allegory of nature, one in which what we see is only our inability to see; in such a state, speechlessness becomes the only answer:

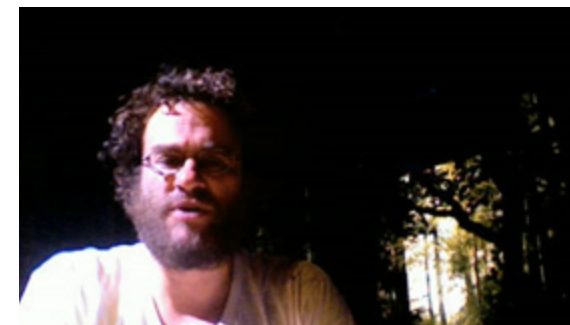
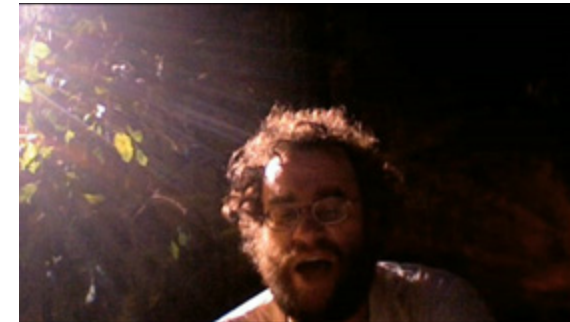
One silver night the breeze puffed up our tent
So that returning to it,
We were stilled and frightened

What else but to be “stilled and frightened” when confronted with not only the illegibility of nature, but its utter indifference to us as anything but meat for the grist?

The panning of the camera through this wilderness shows a forest that could almost be real, if not for the ultra-blue of the backlit sky, peaking through the gaps of the trees, reminding us of the falsity of our realities and making that pain of longing that much more acute. Meanwhile, Beckman continues on:

Sweet and fragrant cold that descends the named mountain
To sleep here among the people and never go away
You have done all this and now
The frozen hair atop my head
Your mocking cosmic light through cloud
And no bird all day

Unmoored, we descend through Beckman’s cadences, wishing for that which we can never have, realizing the hubris of the very wish itself, realizing we must let go but utterly unable to let go. As with that magnifying glass, leaned against the overgrown box of bullets, we no longer even know what to wish for.



INSTALLATION/ RECLAMATION





Dear Friends,

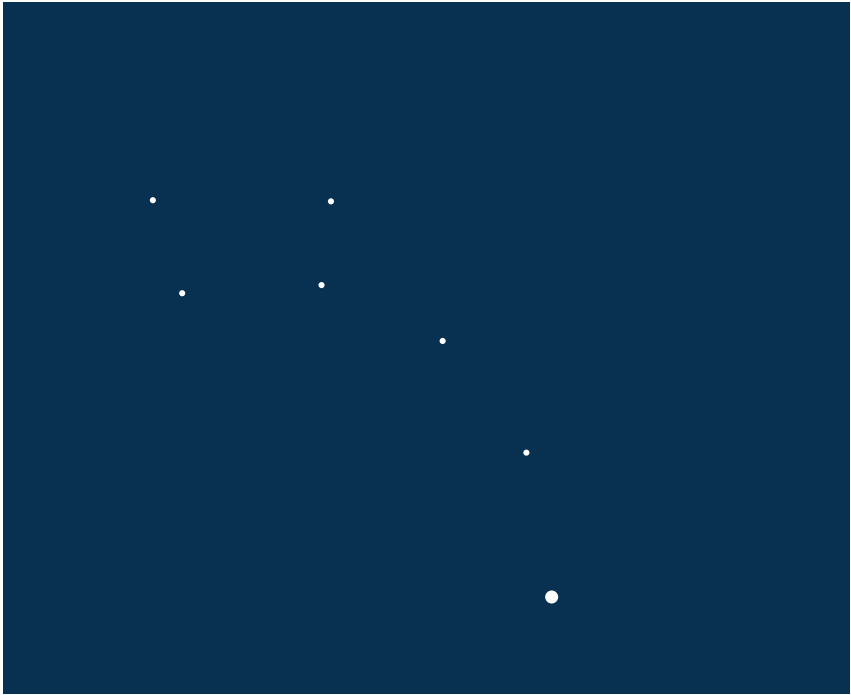
Short Version: Sara and Christy are turning Machine into a complete forest set, and we are having a volunteer meeting for those who want to participate this Thursday March 12th at 8:30pm.

Long Version: When we last saw Christy McCaffrey and Sara Newey they were making the Heavy Metal Gothic Arch at the LACMA show. They are returning to Machine this month to turn the entire gallery into a forest for a month, during which time we will be hosting all kinds of forest-related activities.

This is a fairly epic project, even for us, and so we're putting the call out to see if anyone would like to be part of making this happen. This is a great volunteer opportunity if you are interested in building very real looking fake forests, learning about how set design and set dressing works, and being part of an epic Machine Project project. The meeting to hear more about volunteering is this Thursday night at 8:30pm, right here at Machine Project. Beer likely.

love,
Machine

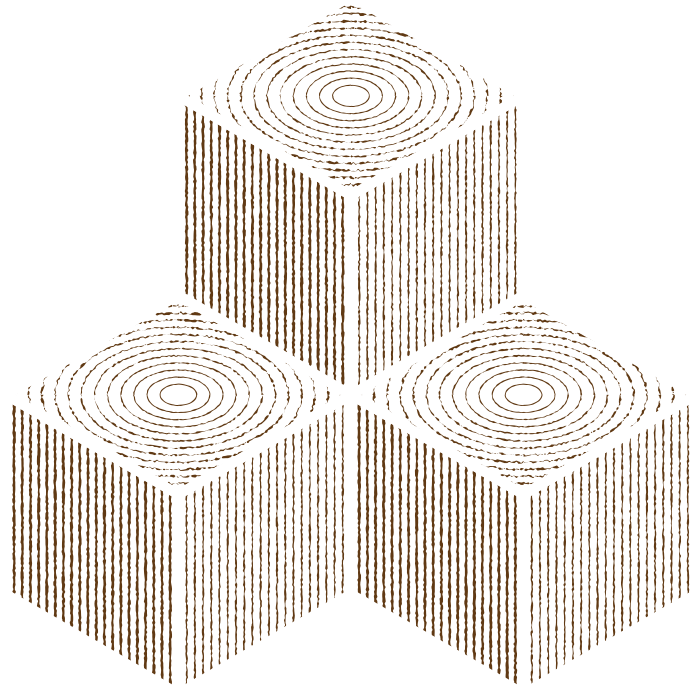














Dear Friends,

Our transformation into a woodland glen is complete. Please join us for the opening of The Forest by Christy McCaffrey and Sara Newey this Friday, March 27th, from 8-10pm. The evening will be complemented by an occasional bear performance in the general vicinity of 1200 North Alvarado by Louisa Van Leer, as well as a screening of 16mm films of bear cubs next door at the beloved Echo Park Film Center.

Machine, Christy and Sara would like to thank all the volunteer forest builders. Thank you volunteers! This project was funded in part by an ARC grant from the Durfee Foundation. Thank you Durfee Foundation!

love,
Machine







FOREST DWELLERS



Saturday, April 18th, 2009
8pm

JASON BROWN LECTURE ABOUT ELVES

A Jason Brown lecture, about elves, in the Forest.

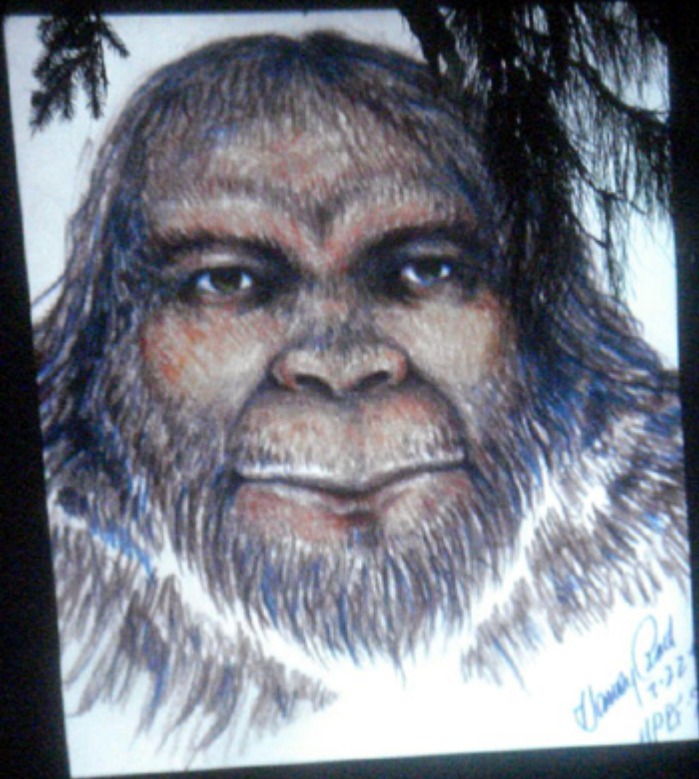
Sunday, April 19th, 2009
8pm

BIGFOOT LECTURE

Easter Sunday join us for a history of bigfoot sightings, activity, etc. in the area, and a practicum on field techniques led by local bigfoot experts Josh Grolemond and Scott Minton.

Additionally entails the following:

1. Casts of bigfoot feet, bigfoot-tracking tools, etc.
2. A discussion of what kinds of forests are suited to Bigfoot because of his relationship with other flora and fauna.
3. A rare sighting of Karen Lofgren's unicorn.
4. Unsanctioned Sasquatch vs. the Easter Bunny debates (we hope).



911 PHONE CALL:
THE BIGFOOT
RECORDINGS, VOL.2

OPERATOR 9-1-1, what are you reporting?

UNIDENTIFIED CALLER Uh, we've got someone or something... crawlin' around out here.

OP Did you see what it was? Was it a person or an animal? Or...

UC I can't tell. Alls I know is that my censor light came on and I just happened to glance and see this thing runnin' across the yard. Uh, a good-sized man, or something—looks like a man. I don't know what it was. It ran across the yard...

OP Okay. You've had problems in the neighborhood before?

UC Yeah, my dog was killed here just recently. I don't know what it was, whatever it is that's runnin'—I couldn't catch it if I was gonna chase it. Whatever it was it was standin' up. I'm out here lookin' through the window now and I don't see anything, and I don't want to go outside...
JESUS CHRIST, YOU'D BETTER-GOD DAMN!

OP Hello?!

UC **GET SOMEBODY OUT HERE!**

OP What's going on now, sir?

UC That son-of-a-bitch is about six-foot nine—I don't know.

OP Do you see him now, sir?

UC Yes, I'm looking right at him!

OP Oh, oh! 'K, hang on. Is he in your yard, sir?

UC Yeah! God, **HE'S BIG!**

OP Okay, what's he doing in your yard?

UC **HE'S LOOKIN' AT ME!**

OP Oh. And the guy is on foot?

UC I don't know what—it, it's a big, real-big person. That's all I can say.

OP Okay, but it is, uh, it is, uh—person?

UC I, uh... yeah, I'd say it was a person, or somebody really big! But he's all in black! He's...

OP Is he a black male or a white male? Did you actually see what, or was he just wearing black?

UC He's all black and he's **BIG!**
HE'S BIG!



BIRD SONG IDENTIFICATION TOUR



THE TOUR

Sunday, April 19th, 2009
5pm and 6pm

Ann Hadlock and Jordan Biren will be leading small groups in a bird song identification tour of the Forest.

"Select Birds from Timothe's Guide" by Jordan Biren can be downloaded before you come, here:

www.machineproject.com/files/pdf/birdguide.pdf









VAMPIRE MOVIES

Sunday, April 5th, 2009
8pm

Double Feature:
THE LOST BOYS &
TWILIGHT

We're watching *The Lost Boys* and *Twilight* in Christy & Sara's Forest!

Due to trees, space is limited. Please RSVP to reserve a space.





READINGS BY NIGHT



MIDNIGHT READINGS



Friday, April 10th, 2009

DEAD AUTHOR READINGS WITH 826LA

This Friday night, please join us for a Dead Author Reading. This is our first coproduction with 826LA.

Friday, April 10th, 2009

11:59pm

GHOST STORIES

Join us for ghost stories at midnight, as told by Anthony McCann, Jason Brown, and Elna Baker.

Saturday, April 11th, 2009

ANTHONY McCANN MOONLIT POETRY READING

A reading of poetry by Anthony McCann in the Forest, via moonlight.

Friday, April 17th, 2009

8pm

A READING BY CHRISTINE WERTHEIM

Please join us for a reading by the Institute for Figuring's Christine Wertheim.

Sunday, April 19th, 2009

8pm

A READING BY AMARNATH RAVVA

Amar Ravva will read us some of his short stories to do with little people, bears, and forest rangers.



Anthony McCann

The clouds drifted over a late human lunch
From miles away the tiny clouds came
Soft moss underfoot, far off rage of the dogs
Protect me, my love, from these horrible words

When the rains began I was waiting for you
The sky opened up and delivered this sound
It makes my lips linger here near the plates
Each thing we perform is rehearsing for death

This miracle gland gives my body no rest
To be emptied again by the meaningless roar
Let's go die, and then die, and then die and then die
Roll on, little toes, to the top of the earth!

I address this next line to the mind of the trees
The trees are green hair, all wild and ripped
Then the world slumps and is soft as clay heads
I lie at your feet and imagine my eyes

The hedge behind me is filled with small eyes
Each animal seems like a personal trait
All of these signs--but only one word!
Demented! Demented! I run through the woods

sp 1

sp 2

whataaaaa about

Meeeeeeeeee ?

yes YOU

no Meeee.....

But you are YOU

no Meeee

Meeee Meeee Meeee!

Meeee Meeee Meeee!

Meeeeeeeeee!

But you ARE me

eh?

you R me

me is U?

yes. me is U

(light on sp 2 fades)

mmmmmm

me

U is me

| is me

| am ME!

(bright spot on sp 1)



SOUNDS OF THE FOREST

FIELD RECORDING WORKSHOP

Sunday, April 5th 2–5pm
Session 1 - Instruction

Saturday, April 11th
4–6pm
Session 2 - Sound
performance by students

Given the increase of field recordings as compositional material, this two-part workshop will discuss the aesthetics of field recording and compare the results of practical work (in the field, of course).

The first session will cover the various possibilities and something of a history of the genre through listening examples and discussion. We'll also cover the technical means for making field recordings including information on microphones, field recorders, and techniques for improving your sound. You'll then have access to a field recorder which you can use to create a recording of your own.

Session two will be a listening and discussion party where everyone presents their field recording.

Led by Clay Chaplin

MUSIC OF THE FOREST

Friday, April 17th, 2009
8pm

Please join us for a Forest-specific performance by Acoustic Force 300 (also known as Ambient Force 3000 in other environments).

Then Friday night at midnight features the indefatigable Jackson Fledermaus. Free, RSVP required.

Saturday, April 18th, 2009
3pm

A performance by Brian Crabtree (tehn) of music to nap by.

It's recommended you bring a blanket to nap on!

Sunday, April 19th, 2009
8pm

Musical fairies/furies Heather Lockie, Shawn Lockie and Laura Steenberge will perform among the trees.





THE FINAL DAYS

Sunday, April 19th, 2009
11am-2pm

Join us for \$3 short stacks of pancakes from the Kwong Dynasty Pancake Cart, maple syrup, and nature films about bears. Due to the demand for this, we gave up on RSVP and extended the time to 2pm.







April 21st, 2009

Dear Friends,

Our whirlwind series of forest activities draws to a close this week. We will be open from 11am until 6pm Wednesday and Thursday in case you haven't yet visited. Our last Forest event is this Thursday evening April 23rd featuring our beloved poet friend and woodlands enthusiast Joshua Beckman. In the past Joshua has read while trapped in our basement, walked door-to-door delivering poems in Echo Park, and recited poetry from dusk until dawn aboard a small sail boat. This will be his first time reading in a forest inside of an art gallery. Free. The 8pm show is sold out, so we have added two more shows at 10pm and 11pm.

love,
Machine

DEAR ANGRY MOB

Joshua Beckman

Dear Angry Mob,

Oak Wood Trail is closed to you. We feel it unnecessary to defend our position, for we have always thought of ourselves (and rightly, I venture) as a haven for those seeking a quiet and solitary contemplation. We are truly sorry for the inconvenience.

Signed,

Ranger Lil

PS Ofttimes as the day ends
 on a wet bed of yellow leaves
 or the sky densens gray and dark
I am brought to imagine
 the growing disquiet
 in the hearts of my countrymen.

POST FOREST



MACHINE PROJECT DEFORESTATION SQUAD

The Machine Project Deforestation Squad (Liz Glynn and Nate Page) is recycling the Forest.

Remember when we turned Machine Project into a forest? That was awesome. Well, it turns out a lot of our fake forest was made with fake stuff, which would make us sad to throw away. So the Deforestation Squad is now going to recycle that stuff by turning it into whatever you want. Cactus planters? Yes. Camouflage speaker boxes, grass skirts, foam beach shoes? Yes. Office furniture? Sure.

We will make anything you want, to spec, to the best of our ability. We will make a sincere effort to make something functional, if that's one of the specifications. In return you must agree to provide a home for, and have space to accommodate, said object.

Please be patient, as we are working with foam, mulch, and a storage unit full of pokey branches. Turnaround time is about two weeks. All objects are free, provided that you are willing to pick them up. Donations to Machine Project are welcome, but not necessary. Our goal is to recycle all the leftovers into your house/car/yard.

List of Materials:

- A variety of large and small Styrofoam pieces 48 x 48 x 12". These can be cut to scale
- Approximately twenty tufts of dead grass
- Mulch, enough to cover a small front yard
- Enough sand (in bags) to fill up the back of Michele's Scion
- A handful of fake silk leaves
- Real rocks, of varying size. not boulders. just rocks.
- Houseplants and ferns at varying degrees of deadness
- Tree branches
- Two juniper-ish trees, probably dead
- Several swaths of astroturf
- A few miscellaneous pieces of plywood

We want to use *ALL* of the leftover materials.

Space is limited—we are only making 25 things. Whatever it is will be accompanied by some kind of official paperwork confirming its green forest origins.

We would like to gather photos of the objects in their final homes for the show at the Bolsky Gallery. If you are willing, we might ask to display your thing in the Bolsky Gallery at Otis for a week in June.

Free. What else do you want?



Nate Page's studio during the deforestation construction process with Toxo the cat.



UNTITLED: VARIATIONS IN
DESIGN PRACTICE

Installation view of the exhibition
Bolksy Gallery @ Otis College of Art and Design
Saturday, June 27
6 - 8pm



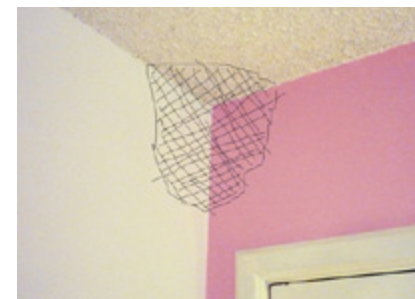
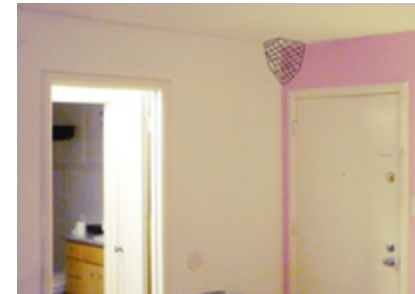


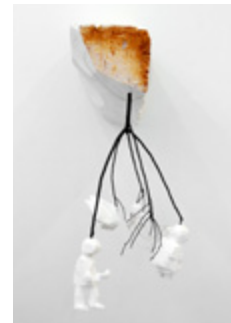
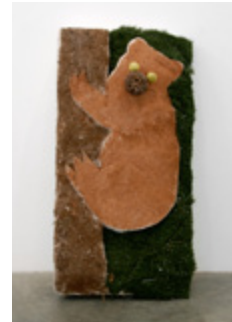
I do voice-over from home. I'm finding it increasingly difficult to drown out the sound of my loud neighborhood - historic filipinotown (Hi_Fi)/rampart division - in my tiny closet. Until I can afford to buy a home and install a proper sound studio (2010?), I need something to stick my mic in to. Something like this <http://harlenhogan.com/portaboothArticle.shtml> but I don't expect it to be portable/collapsible. I would love to take possession before I leave town for the summer, on June 5.



Oh, hi, I hear you want to make a realistic foam beehive for the corner above the front door of my apartment.
Great! It should be about 10 or 11 inches tall and, you know, proportionally wide and deep. And it should look like a beehive. And fit in a corner.

Thanks!





A small purse made out of your extra Astroturf. About 7"x 5" would be a great size. The strap can be made out of Astroturf or any material you feel would be appropriate.

A sign that reads "Dead Letter Bureau".

A nice boulder out of Styrofoam and made to look like stone.

Shooting gallery target.

Tree-branch chandelier.

A miniature forest composed of recycled forest materials

Planters: what ever you want to make for us.

An outdoor couch for my porch, ~20" deep x ~5' wide. Looking for something a little comfy or that I can put some cushions on.

A trophy large enough to cool champagne in.

4 ft tall foam sheep (hogget).

Something that rhymes with "alligator" and can sit on a mantel. (can be dense)

A mobile, such as one for a baby's crib, featuring the Gipsy Kings. It's for a new father, and is a reference to <http://girl-sarepretty.com/happycrueltyday/>.

Take a tree trunk and turn it into a floor lamp.

I'm fantasizing about foam clogs. Maybe even a bit oversized and with a spout for syrup (like the forest). So that when you are shipwrecked on an island eating delicious Dutch pancakes in your clogs, you will have your friend in syrup.

Small tables.

Some sort of small side table to go beside my sofa. Something to put a book or drinks on. I have two cats, so ideally the table would be something that could also serve as a cat cave. Maybe with little legs so a cat could fit underneath it?

Two bookends for my baby Iris' bookshelf.

A wall hanging of sorts.

CREDITS

A production of Machine Project, a non-profit performance and installation space investigating art, technology, natural history, science, music, literature, food, and whatever else humans like to do.

For more information please visit machineproject.com

The Machine Project Deforestation Squad was a joint effort of Liz Glynn and Nate Page.

The Machine Project Deforestation Squad would like to thank all those who requested objects. Special thanks to Joanne Gonzalez and Kim Ye, who assisted the final days of production and transport.

THANK YOU:

This project was funded in part by an ARC grant from the Durfee Foundation. Thank you Durfee Foundation!

Lighting design by Bill Ballou
Sound Design by Emily Cummins

Design by Xavier "Alex" Cerrilla
whoismisterx.info

Volunteers, Skillset :

Adrienne Adar, Painting / Building
Sunil Rampersad, Graphic Designer
Erik Van Uden, Painting / Building
Erin Horahan, Painting / Building
Laura Flannigan, Building Scenery
Miles Martinez, Painting / Foam Sculpting
MoTwine, Shoveling Dirt
Nicole Belle
Carolyn Cross
Ray Lind
Tina Kapousis
Aimee Lind

Alana Vilaul, Building Scenery
Allison Miller
Bill Sebring
Dawn Kasper
David James, 1/2 Bed Pick-Up
Jason Torchinsky, Building / Tools
Kris Canning, Pregnant
Cindy Chao, Possible Newborn Baby?
Olivia + David Mole, Gecko
Baby people
Pig lady
Bear lady