

## **Sound artist seeking materials artist for collaboration(s) Jan 21, 2022, 5 pages**

I'm a Toronto-based sound artist and am developing a new series of outdoor, small site-specific works. I'm seeking a collaborating materials artist who identifies as Indigenous, and who would be interested in expressing their perspectives and relationship to the land through creating small objects (with or without language) that integrate into each site (details below). The series will address the biology of forests, earth's biodiversity and human culture, with Indigenous perspectives integral to the work.

Concept: Each work will be situated at a log (or a tree with deadwood) where small groups of visitors will be invited to investigate and contemplate all life interactions surrounding the log, and also to listen to the interior of the log. Participants will include a field biologist and, where possible, a local Traditional Knowledge Keeper, who will offer their perspectives on and knowledge about the habitat surrounding the site and Indigenous cultural connections. A short description is below, with some reference photos attached.

Together (where possible), we would be selecting a log or a series of logs in a park or other predetermined area. I will drill one or two small tunnels into each log which will fit a removable vibrational sensor that acts as a microphone. The sensor is embedded into a small piece of wood dowel with audio cable that connects to a hand-held amplifier and headphones that I provide. It transmits vibrations within the dead-wood made by ants, termites, beetles, native bees and other small animals. The tunnels, once drilled, will be plugged with a small dowel piece or similar when not in use so as to keep insects from inhabiting them. The hand-held amplifier and "microphone" will be kept (and owned) by parks staff, the venue or similar (visitors may use their own headphones/earbuds).

The collaborating materials artist integrates into each site small-scale objects/mixed media works that can be created or installed on-site or created ahead of time and installed by myself or the venue if needed. Any form of visual/media expression that integrates with the site and/or the electronics for listening that will be brought to and from the site will be elemental to the overall work. Durable works that can withstand being gently touched by visually-impaired visitors are encouraged. Below are some suggestions to consider which are points of intersection with the audio:

- small-scale objects/visual works that integrate with the plugs left in the tunnels and remain there when nobody is listening to the log; this is all-season, and could use biodegradable and/or non biodegradable materials
- integrating the headphones, the hand-held amplifier &/or microphone's audio cable within a mixed media work (beadwork, for example)
- integrating / creating a carrying vessel that contains the hand-held amplifier, microphone and headphones

If beadwork is of interest, I have colour-coded gene barcode snippets of various native bees that create nests within vacated beetle bores in logs (see attached; I can explain further about those separately).

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I have no funding at this conceptual stage, but I consider it necessary to pay all artists. I have two interested venues so far: an artist residency this July at Quetico Provincial Park (Treaty #3 Territory, Ontario) through their programming, and ecologist, educator and land worker Junaid Shahzad Khan (Treaty 20 Territory, Ontario) for his own ongoing work with various organizations and groups, including Pollinator Partnership Canada. I hope this series of works will eventually happen far and wide! My contact information and reference links below.

The following is a preliminary description and title (to be improved):

***Log Life***

***Listening to the forest community through trees***

What do we hear when we listen to a log? *Log Life* is time spent with dead and dying wood in the forest: listening to the life within, observing the visible web of life on and around, and learning about the life beneath the forest floor. *Log Life* is a reflection on Earth's biodiversity, the forest community, what the forest teaches us, and our relationships to the land.

Summer 2022: Quetico park interpretive staff and biologists, together with Traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers (when possible) host log-listening sessions and interpretation of deadwood ecology and the forest community through specific trees (living and dead) chosen by the artists in a collaborative process. Locating listening sites, we'll encounter art that speaks to Indigenous perspectives on forest communities and the artists' relationship to the land. Using a vibrational sensor with the dead-wood as a listening conduit, we'll learn about beetles, ants, native bees & wasps, mice, mosses, fungi, flowers, birds, and more. Headphones provided or bring your own.

“A tree does not die all at once.” – Tree: A Life Story by David Suzuki and Wayne Grady

Contact & reference sites:

Sarah Peebles, Toronto (Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.)

E: [sarahpeebles@gmail.com](mailto:sarahpeebles@gmail.com) W: sarahpeebles.net W: resonatingbodies.wordpress.com

Video: [Native Bee Nest Sites by Sarah Peebles](#) (6 min)

**Images next pages**

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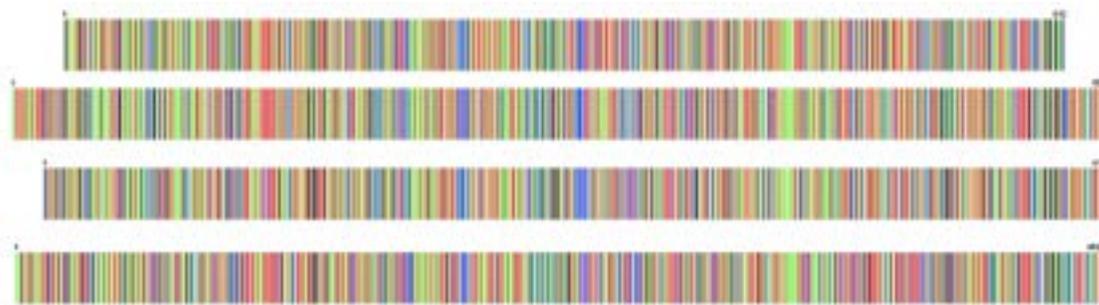
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Canada has more than 850 species of native bees, and many of these nest in old beetle bores in

wood and other cavities. Each species has a unique DNA signature. A DNA barcode is a short sequence of mitochondrial DNA that can be used to identify species. The four letter code of the genetic language can be translated into colour for easy visual inspection. A colour DNA barcode then becomes 650

vertical stripes made out of four different colours. DNA barcodes have been used to identify species of almost all groups of animals, seaweeds and fungi. It works because the level of difference between different species is much larger than the amount of variation within species. These barcodes are also used to distinguish species' evolutionary relatedness to one another (more on this subject [HERE](#)).

Diverse traits of native bees, such physical differences, nest creation strategies, plant & flower preferences, and life-cycle timing, reflect their biodiversity though not necessarily how closely related one bee may be to another. For example, the barcode snippets stacked below show 3 bee species in the same genus (Megachile, “large jaw”, a/k/a leafcutter bees), which are more closely related to one another than they would be to the Osmia shown in the bottom barcode (a different genus).



Megachile inermis  
M. relativa  
M. pugnata  
Osmia lignaria



Bees use various materials to create nests: at left, the large Pugnacious leafcutter (*M. pugnata* in barcode above) masticates her leaves while the leafcutter in the tunnel to her right cerated and stitched leaves together; some leafcutters use resin and no leaves. Meanwhile, the bee to her left (from the genus *Heriades*) used resin.

See video examples at [Odes to Solitary Bees](#)

Thanks to Laurence Packer for the explanations and DNA colour barcodes (provided by Barcode of Life Data Systems, Guelph).