



The exhibition *a better nectar* is the fascinating result of scientific research as interpreted through art. The installation is divided between the Hand Art Center (HAC) and the Gillespie Museum. At both locations, visitors are provided a human-scaled experience of a bee's intimate sensorial journey from its underground nest to an audibly and visually pulsating world. Artists Jessica Rath and Robert Hoehn have created an immersive experience using human-size sculptural forms, light, and sound to explore how bumblebees learn and remember multisensory floral symbols to find a better nectar. The installation is based on the artists' extensive research into the communication between flowering plants and their pollinators, so *a better nectar* reveals to guests a sense of what life would be like as a bee.

On display in the Gillespie is "Staminal Evolution," a sculpture based on flowers that require "buzz pollination," a coadaptation between certain angiosperms (flowering plants) and their pollinators, in which bees vibrate a particular frequency to open the flower and thus release its pollen. The seven-foot tall structure represents one of five stamens in the tiny Manzanita flower (*Arctostaphylos densiflora*). Buzz-pollinated flowers have anthers shaped like closed vessels, with small pores or slits that must be coaxed open by a pollinator's distinctive touch. Staminal Evolution includes a sound composition to suggest the breath of a flower as it releases pollen from pores in the tips of its anthers, which sit on a white-sheathed filament. Together, the anther and filament form the stamen, the male structure of the Manzanita flower.



The artists Jessica Rath and Robert Hoehn researched bee foraging patterns and bee-to-flower communication at the Leonard Bee Lab (University of Nevada, Reno) as background for the creation of this exhibit. Visual artist Jessica Rath teaches at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA



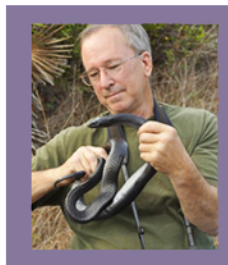
and received her B.A. from the University of Missouri and her M.F.A. from California Institute of the Arts. Composer and sound designer Robert Hoehn received his BFA in Electro-Acoustic Composition from California Institute of the Arts in 1994, with additional studies at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University and the Hartt School of Music at University of Hartford. Trained as a musician, composer and keyboardist, Hoehn creates music and sound for pictures and builds interactive electronic sound systems for galleries, and experimental mechanical acoustical sound sculptures, most often exhibited in art and music festivals.



Photo by Peter May

A research station at the Gillespie features research from the Pollinator Project, including a gallery of digital images of Florida native pollinators, taken by Peter May (Professor of Biology, Stetson); displays of native pollinating insects, assembled by Cynthia Bennington (Professor of Biology, Stetson); and a seed library, from which visitors may “borrow” the seeds of native plants to sow at home. At the adjacent Rinker Environmental Learning Center, visitors may tour the Volusia Sandhill Ecosystem, an urban reforestation project, to view and monitor native pollinators in the landscape.

The Pollinator Project centers around the ongoing work of Stetson biology professors Cindy Bennington and Peter May. As part of a larger comparative study, they are measuring pollinator visitation rate and species composition in the Volusia Sandhill Ecosystem, acquiring baseline data to be built upon as the site matures. In addition to providing baseline data through this survey, the Pollinator Project seeks to enlist volunteers in collaborative field work and to educate about the importance of ecosystem restoration to native pollinators, enhancing the use of the Gillespie Museum as an outdoor classroom.



Peter May and Cindy Bennington,
Professors of Biology, Stetson University

Pollination Guild. Creating a sense of community by looking to bees for inspiration, this project relied on the time and talents of numerous participants including students, staff, faculty and community members. Brown Visiting Teacher Scholar Madison Creech facilitated two workshops that led to the development of *Pollination Guild*, installed in the foyer of Sage Science Center. Seven textile artists worked together to design and screen print the fabric installation. Each motif is an abstracted and enlarged buzz pollination grain. A continuation of this fabric is on view at the Hand Art Center and Gillespie Museum. The oversized partridge pea flowers are assembled from recycled cloth, wire, paraffin wax and bees wax foraged from Stetson’s beehive.



Pollination Guild, photo by Jenna Palmisano

Textile collaborators: Bobbi Baugh, Madison Creech, Amy Dove, Regina Dunn, Pamela Kettner, Nancy Gear, and Mary McBride.

Flower sculpture collaborators: Cindy Bennington, Sarah Coffey, Karen Cole, Madison Creech, Tonya Curran, Ashley Edwards, Mari Hanley, Yoko Lujan, Kayla Macphree, Samantha Mcpherson, Annette Morton, and Jenna Noel Palmisano. **Sound design:** Robert Hoehn.

If you want to learn more about pollinators and how to encourage their habitats, check out these Stetson University projects and organizations:

Stetson Seed Library



Stetson Beekeeping



Hatter Harvest



www.facebook.com/hatterharvest

Stetson Environmental Club

