

The World of We

Power of Art Creates Belonging in Sanctuaries Working for Transformative Change for All Life

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Abstract:

The World of We would be land/water-based public art installations inspired by the powerful aesthetics of Olmec culture that are WORKING sanctuaries. Each sanctuary would feature a series of monumental, neckless heads honoring the disenfranchised, missing, endangered, underdogs, and overlooked lives that need to belong. Neckless imagery symbolizes interrupted lineage, broken migration, severed ecological memory, forced silence, our history. They would be built using site-specific materials with heads placed across the landscape as haunting witnesses to and providing respite from crises, standing guard so that harm does not enter. Belonging doesn't come from fitting in; *The World of We* isn't exclusion — it's the power from all coming together.

Proposal:

The World of We are working sanctuaries—not just protected spaces for life; spaces that are alive. Where we see Mother Nature as sacred:

- Rivers become sentinels of continuity;
- Buffalo, bears, antelope become guardians of memory;
- Forests become elders, not resources.

The World of We sanctuaries are the opposite of emptiness; they are listening, not as passive witnesses. They are:

- Watchers who remember when humans forget;
- Holders of balance and opportunity;
- Spiritual intermediaries between human urgency and planetary patience.

Olmec Influence: The Olmec heads evoke an ancestral presence, symbolizing wisdom, memory, and the spiritual cost of erasure.

Hollowed Spaces: Each sculpture includes carved cavities and hollows to serve as habitats for bees, birds, fish, fungi, small mammals, native plants, wild flowers, and any life, transforming each head into a living monument. By adding water features, forests, savannas, deserts, hills, the true power of *The World of We* will be released.

Interspecies Integration across Ecosystems: Native plants are seeded on and around the sculptures, with wildflowers growing from cracks and crevices as symbols of regeneration.

Purpose & Messaging

- Raise awareness about the disproportionate Othering occurring; the rapid disappearance of biodiversity and destruction of ecosystems.
- Highlight the interconnectedness of cultural and ecological extinction.
- Inspire conversations around decolonization, ecological healing, and the reclamation of voice and land.
- Engage communities in discussions of belonging, resilience, memory, and shared responsibility.

Community & Impact

Collaborative Process: Partner with Indigenous, migrant, elder, young, disabled artists, environmental scientists, community leaders, the disenfranchised, the scared, the sick, the animals, the plants, the ecosystems to build **The World of We** together.

Story Archives: QR codes or AR access points at each site can share stories of specific women, animals, plants, fungi, and tribes, fostering educational and emotional connection.

Legacy: Over time, as the heads return to the earth, they leave behind a more hospitable landscape—a poetic metaphor for healing and renewal.

Call to Action

The World of We challenges all to reflect on what is lost when we ignore violence—against people, all life, and the planet—and calls for transformative care, policy change, and land stewardship. We ask: What must we remember, and what must we do, to shape a future that listens, protects, and grows? For example:

- Missing Indigenous Women → poverty after genocide creates vulnerability;
- Buffalo → slaughter tied to Indigenous genocide;
- Salmon → dammed rivers and broken treaties;
- Whales → industrial extraction, sonar, shipping lanes;
- Bees → chemical agriculture and monoculture collapse.

But these would be working sanctuaries:

Bee Sentinels: pollinate

Salmon Sentinels: oxygenate water

Whale Sentinels: seed plankton blooms

Buffalo Sentinels: restore grasslands

Indigenous women: provide safe space, we were here, we still belong, and we are watching.

This would be a vision on how the power of art could be used to foster inner growth, deepen self-awareness, and cultivate a connection with something greater than oneself as we build **The World of We**.



































