



THE BLUE TREES | FACTS + FAQs

What is this project?

The Blue Trees, presented by Breckenridge Creative Arts, is a socially-driven art action. Created and conceived by Australian artist Konstantin Dimopoulos, the project will temporarily and dramatically transform trees in downtown Breckenridge near the Riverwalk Center and Blue River Plaza during the Breckenridge International Festival of Arts (BIFA) starting August 14, 2015.

Using water-based, environmentally safe pigment, Dimopoulos and a team of community volunteers will color the trees a striking ultramarine blue, inspiring awareness and discussion about global deforestation. An ephemeral work, the trees gradually revert back to their natural state over four weeks. *The Blue Trees* is ultimately a world-wide effort. This installation extends and reinterprets the original project launched in 2011 at the Vancouver Biennale.

Who is Konstantin Dimopoulos?

Konstantin Dimopoulos was born in Egypt and currently resides in Melbourne, Australia. He graduated from university in New Zealand with a degree in sociology and psychology, and later studied art in London. Dimopoulos describes himself as a humanist, using his art practice - from studio works to site-specific installations - to address social and environmental issues.

More information on the artist and project: <http://www.kondimopoulos.com/blue-trees/>

Why Blue Trees?

Every year the planet loses some 32 million acres of old growth forests, trees which by transforming carbon dioxide into oxygen, literally help sustain life. Deforestation contributes to climate change. Trees breathe for the planet and without them, appropriate conditions for human, animal and plant life may not be sustained.

"Through my work I am striving to address global issues and provide a visual platform to effect change. So many universal concerns seem larger than an individual's power of influence and I want to evoke in people the idea that we can all contribute to change in a positive way." -Konstantin Dimopoulos, artist

Color is a powerful stimulant, a means of altering perception and defining space and time. Blue is a color that is not naturally identified with trees and suggests that something unusual, something out of the ordinary is happening. In nature, color is used both as a means of protection and as a mechanism to attract. The Blue Trees is an attempt to elicit a similar response from viewers and inspire conversation and action around deforestation issues.

Is the color safe for the trees?

The ultramarine blue color is biologically and environmentally safe. It is a water-based colorant, *not* paint, and as such, has a different composition. The product was specifically developed for this project and has been utilized in multiple installations without causing damage to the trees or their surrounding environment.

How long will the color last?

The longevity of the color will depend on the weather. The more rainfall we get, the shorter the lifecycle of the colorant. Trees in Vancouver, BC remained blue for 6 to 9 months. Given the traditional high concentration of rain in Breckenridge during late summer, it is expected that our colorant will last up to four (4) weeks and into mid-September.

How does this project benefit the public?

Over the course of five days (starting on 8/12 and finishing on 8/16), Dimopoulos will engage volunteers to help transform nine groups of trees that are predominantly Aspen and Cottonwood from the Riverwalk Center parking lot, across the Blue River to the Blue River Plaza.

The Blue Trees seeks to raise awareness and encourage discussion about the benefits of trees and forests for people and the planet. Forests provide many ecological, social and economic benefits, including retaining and filtering storm water, replenishing groundwater for streams and lakes, providing fish and wildlife habitat, sequestering carbon and releasing oxygen that we breathe and beautification of our communities and local landscape. Every year, we lose an estimated 32 million acres of forests – an area nearly the size of England.

How can I get involved?

Volunteers interested in participating in the installation in Breckenridge should contact Lauren Dittle, by email at lauren@breckcreate.org or by phone at 970 453 3364.

How was this project funded?

This project is funded through the Breckenridge Creative Arts budget that is generously supported by the Town of Breckenridge. Breckenridge Creative Arts was developed by the Town to manage the Town's cultural assets and to promote Breckenridge as a creative destination.

Other local programs

The Town of Breckenridge is vested in offering a comprehensive Forest Health Program to address the impacts of the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation and to ensure the viability and future of the forest. The Town has developed various ordinances and treatment plans which can be found on the Town's website at www.townofbreckenridge.com.

The Town of Breckenridge also developed the Breckenridge Open Space program to preserve lands that define and enhance the unique mountain character of the Town of Breckenridge, with the goal of maintaining our community's quality of life for present and future generations. Through property acquisition and management, the program protects public open space lands that contain trails, sensitive natural resources, historical sites, view corridors or other open space and community conservation values. Since the creation of the Open Space Program 4,425 acres of land have been acquired and protected as public open space. Over 47 miles of trails have been built and maintained to provide public recreational access. Preserving and providing access to backcountry trails from most neighborhoods in Town has been a priority of the program.

What can I do to combat deforestation?

- Plant a tree. Volunteer on this project or on others in your community!
- Go paperless.
- Recycle and buy recycled products.
- Look for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification on your wood and wood products.
- Eat vegetarian meals more often. (Forests are destroyed in other parts of the world to provide land to graze livestock).
- Educate yourself and others:

<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestationoverview/>
http://www.rainforestconcern.org/education_resources/what_can_we_do_to_stop_deforestation/
<http://www.childrenoftheearth.org/deforestation-information-for-kids.html>

More Information on Breckenridge Creative Arts at: breckcreate.org

More information on the Breckenridge International Festival of Arts (BIFA) at: breckcreate.org/BIFA