

Ent Center
for the
Arts



phase
shift

(wattling), 2023

Martha Russo

ENT CENTER FOR THE ARTS



phase shift (wattling), by Martha Russo, is made from wattles which are normally used to control sediment and erosion at construction sites, newly landscaped areas, or flood mitigation. Wattles are made by stuffing tubes of plastic netting or biodegradable cloth with hay or shredded aspen trees.

Following the 2013 flood in Boulder County, Russo was inspired by the “intriguing mass” of wattles she observed piled alongside the road and firmly staked into the ground during the reconstruction of Jamestown Canyon, northwest of Boulder. The concept behind this new installation is “to free” the wattles from their normally earthbound fate and give them a whimsical lightness and movement.

The title references the scientific process of phase change, which is a conversion of matter from one state to another: i.e. solids to liquids, liquids to gas. Here, the aspen trees began as solid objects which were shredded, adding air. The shredded matter further changed phase during installation, floating in the air with unexpected freedom.

The artwork is dedicated to the artist Roberta Faulhaber, the epitome of an untethered mind, spirit, and heart.





Acknowledgements

Making the wattles come alive was years in the planning and a four-week installation process that demanded stamina, artistic agility, and trust at every stage.

First, I want to express my deepest gratitude to curators Dr. Joy Armstrong and Daisy McGowan for the invitation to exhibit the wattles and to the Boyatt and Gerhart Families whose generous donations made it possible. To the director of the Ent Center for the Arts at UCCS, David Seigel, for his unwavering enthusiasm at having the wattles inhabit the glorious architecture of the building. I am infinitely grateful to Lynné Bowman Cravens, GOCA interim director, and Abigail Kopetzky, gallery manager, who put together a magnificent installation team of UCCS staff, students, and friends:

Olivia Azadmanesh	Sherry Anderson
Margaret Bailey	Corinne Butler
Grayson Cravens	Jeffrey Bennett
Hossein Forouzandeh	William Bennett
Katharina Hill	Jordan Kopp
Avery Jam	Kiri Mc Nerney
Daniella Mata	Rannon Skye
Noel Powell	Jamel Taylor

The artwork was physically made possible by longtime sponsors Dwayne Deck and Dennis Maddox of Den-Col Metal and new support from Corey Stafford and Daylnn Walker of Aspen Wood Products and Bowman Construction Supply. A special thanks goes to Oliva Bode and Evan Blackstock of the University of Colorado Boulder Art and History Department for their

expertise in fabricating the hundreds of metal supports. And a shout out to Patrick Marold for letting me use his big studio to test the wattles.

And lastly, grazie mille to some gracious art angels: Elizabeth Faulhaber and Rebecca DiDomenico for always being at the ready with their aesthetic eyes, hands, and minds; to my tireless and insightful husband Joe Ryan, daughter Odelia, and son Henry for always saying "YES" whenever I need a hand and being so supportive in every way over the years; and to Pamela Beverly- Quigley for designing this beautiful brochure.

The Galleries of Contemporary Art (GOCA) is an academic, non-profit gallery on the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) campus. The galleries serve the faculty and students as well as the larger community in Colorado Springs. GOCA's outdoor sculpture program, Art WithOut Limits (AWOL), features temporary projects outside the confines of the gallery walls, bringing art to the community, as an extension of the GOCA indoor gallery spaces. Artists engage with students and community members, giving a platform to international, national, and regional artists alike.



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