

GIMME SHELTER

Sustainably Designed Structures in an Urban Woodland

Project Purpose

Gimme Shelter will be a showcase of up to six semi-permanent, functional woodland shelters to enhance the experience of visitors to the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, a 350-acre nature preserve in the Roxborough neighborhood of Philadelphia. The project is meant to build awareness of the applied possibilities and meaning of sustainability and its impact on our lives and our connection to the natural world. This is a competition that encourages collaboration between artists, designers and architects, in order to demonstrate and promote new, unique, and inspiring approaches to sustainable design and building techniques.

Background

The mission of The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education (SCEE) is to promote, through environmental education, the preservation and improvement of our natural environment by fostering appreciation, understanding and responsible use of the ecosystem; by disseminating information on current environmental issues; by encouraging appropriate public response to environmental problems and also to maintain the facilities of SCEE and conserve its land for the purpose of environmental education. This work is accomplished through the work of four interrelated departments: Environmental Education, Wildlife Rehabilitation, Land Restoration, and Environmental Art.

Environmental Art Programming at SCEE gives artists a unique opportunity to explore working with new and non-traditional materials - challenging them to consider the context in which the work is being created both physically and conceptually. With three interrelated programs (gallery exhibitions, outdoor exhibitions, and an artist-in-residence program), Environmental Art at SCEE provides professional opportunities for emerging and underrepresented artists while presenting an alternative art venue for the community and an accessible educational platform for the general public.

The goal of SCEE's outdoor exhibitions program: Art in the Environment is to enhance awareness of and appreciation for the discipline of environmental art through the presentation and exhibition of outdoor installations that respond to the natural environment and environmental concerns.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all artists, architects, and designers interested in submitting a design. Entrants are encouraged to work in collaboration with individuals from outside their discipline. Partnering with schools, community groups, or arts organizations is also acceptable. Students in an accredited program are also eligible to apply.

Award Amounts

Each finalist will be awarded a stipend of \$5,500. Additional funds are actively being sought and may be available to cover materials costs. Applicants will be encouraged to plan within or under the stipend amount. The full amount will be available to finalists to use at their discretion towards materials, stipends for team members, and other costs.

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Site Description

Surrounded by a canopy of native trees, the Gimme Shelter site is an 85' x 40' yard plot at the convergence of three SCEE trails. The shelters will be within walking distance of a polliwog pond, a stone pavilion, the SCEE main building and other SCEE trails and features. A remnant 18th century stone retaining wall delineates one edge of the shelters' site. There is a slight grade in the topography and several clusters of trees and other vegetative growth are present. Site maps and images are online at <http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/departments/art/>.

Design Criteria - Sustainability and the Environment

Living sustainably begins with understanding sustainability. A sustainable future is dependent upon continually building awareness and knowledge about issues of sustainability into the lives of individuals and the foundations of institutions. Sharing information and engaging in open dialogue in a manner that increases collaboration between diverse parties is critical to success. Solutions should be understandable, relevant, and important at a personal level and the message and the process for change should be honest and positive. If sustainability is to be persuasive, it depends on motivating people in a positive way to replace non-sustainable practices with alternative values and patterns of behavior that are satisfying. Gimme Shelter is intended to present the visiting public with an engaging and memorable experience that builds awareness of the applied possibilities of sustainability in our lives and in our connection to the natural world. Toward that end, proposals should consider how the structure's design impacts the personal experience of individuals and the natural environment based on the following criteria:

Concept:

- **Visual and Physical Appeal:** Is the piece visually engaging? Does it communicate a formal, playful, whimsical, non-objective, or other worldly aesthetic that is in harmony with nature?
- **Inspiration and Education:** Does the design incorporate an educational experience that promotes a greater understanding of materials, construction, function and buildability as it relates to sustainability? Optional: Can the structure be replicated easily by anyone?
- **Functionality and Scale:** Does the design provide for easy use by children and families, and will it accommodate at least four children? Is the design structurally sound and safe for use by people of all ages?
- **Environmental Impact:** Does the design consider protection, restoration or preservation of habitat, native species, or natural resources? Does it consider rainwater reclamation, impact on the land, or erosion? Does the design realistically integrate or harness natural resources for the comfort and pleasure of the user?

Materials:

- **Recycled and Recyclability:** Consider using pre-consumer and post-consumer recycled materials whenever possible. Materials should be considered that are both of recycled content, and recyclable after the expected life-span of the shelter itself. Use FSC-certified wood products or from salvaged sources, or consider a rapidly-renewable product instead of wood.
- **Think Local:** Consider the environmental impact of any shipping of materials, as well as travel of participants. The entire project should be designed to create the lowest carbon-footprint possible. Plan to source all materials from within 100 miles of the project site, with a preference for materials sourced within 50 miles. Use of materials found on-site at SCEE is also encouraged, with certain restrictions.
- **Safety:** Proposals must take into consideration any toxic chemicals involved in the production or treatment of the materials, and any energy-demanding processes associated with the materials, and should use materials with low or zero VOCs. (primarily paints, coatings, sealants, and adhesives)
- **Minimize Waste:** Applicants should be prepared to take fabrication or installation construction waste to a recycling facility and document its receipt. Proposed designs should divert as much waste from landfills as possible.

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Requirements and Restrictions

- Applicants can submit up to 6 designs.
- Shelters must have a floor plan of at least 100 square. There is no restriction on height or volume
- Natural materials can be found on the grounds, but permission is required.
- No cutting of trees or branches is allowed, and pruning of bushes is by SCEE approval only.

Process of Selection

The review and selection process will be in two phases:

Phase One is the first review of entry materials by our panel of jurors. No more than 12 finalists will be selected to move on to the next round. Jurors will be asked to consider the design criteria as described above in their decisions.

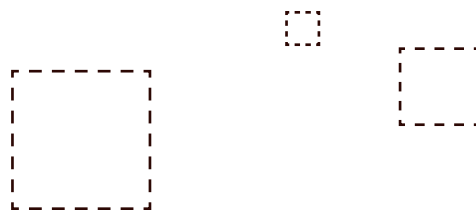
Phase Two is the second round of review. The selected 12 finalists will be asked to refine their proposals to respond to any concerns, issues or clarifications related to the design. The finalists will also be required to submit two 20 x 30 inch boards in a horizontal orientation depicting multiple views of the proposed designs.

Jurors will then select the final 6 winners from the second round submissions. SCEE will display all 24 boards in the gallery and other satellite locations during the exhibition period of the event.

The selected designers or teams will meet to discuss placement of the shelters prior to construction. All Phase One applicants are required to send at least one representative to the site walk-through on October 18th, 2008.

Important Dates and Times

Register intent to apply (optional)	October 3, 2008
Site walk through	October 18, 2008
Preliminary proposals due (postmark)	November 21, 2008
Jurist review period	November 28 – December 5, 2008
Second round teams notified	December 12th, 2008
Final proposals due	January 30, 2009
Final notification	February 12, 2009
Construction/Installation period	March – April, 2009
Install Gallery Component	April 25 – 28, 2009
Construction complete	May 4, 2009
Opening Reception	Saturday May 9, 2009, 1- 4pm



Reference Materials and Resources

Images of the site and a map are available on the website at:

<http://www.schuylkillcenter.org/departments/art/>

The following websites and organizations can provide resources and guidelines for sustainable design and building:

Delaware Valley Green Building Council
<http://www.dvgbc.org>

Healthy Building Network
<http://www.healthybuilding.net>

Pharos- Materials Selection
<http://www.pharoslens.net>

Recycling Centers
<http://www.recyclingcenters.org>

Identifying Collaborators

Entrants interested in assistance in identifying potential collaborators with other interested entrants can submit an intent to apply email. Your name and contact info will be registered and made available to other intendeds. Students interested in interning with finalists should also register. Please send your name and contact info to Zoë Cohen (see below) by October 3rd, 2008.

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Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Applicants can submit up to six designs. Please submit all materials on one CD, labeled with name.

The following to be included in one Microsoft Word Document or PDF:

- Name of applicant and title of proposal
- List of collaborators: names, credentials or title.
- A one page abstract and detailed description of proposed design. Including details on sustainable design components and the design criteria.
- Materials, including detailed descriptions of sources, manufacturing processes, recycled content or recyclability, and any other aspect of the environmental impact or sustainability of the materials
- Fabrication and installation timeline
- Materials and labor budget

The following to be saved on the CD in separate folders:

- 3 to 5 drawings, renderings, or other representations of your proposed installation. These installation representations should clearly show proposed location within the site, scale, and orientation. All images should be in jpg format, no larger than 2 MB each, file names should be Name1.jpg, or TitleofProposal1.jpg, etc.
- 2 to 3 images of previous projects from each applicant. All images should be in jpg format, no larger than 2 MB each, file names should be LastNameFirstName.jpg, etc.
- One-page Resume/CV from each applicant. Files should be titled LastNameCV

Send to:

Zoë Cohen

Art Program Manager

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

8480 Hagy's Mill Road

Philadelphia, PA 19128

Direct Inquiries to:

Zoë Cohen

zcohen@schuylkillcenter.org

215-482-7300 x 113 (in office Weds-Fri)

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Site Images



Taken from the North corner



Taken from the South corner



Taken from the East corner

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Gimme Shelter Site Plan

