

the Natural Builders

Interactive Bamboo Sculpture



Created as a public installation for the Living Word festival in Oakland, California. The installation starts with bamboo splits, a box of gloves and some hand tools. It is only after the arrival of groups of participants that the form takes shape. In the interactive process explained below, participants are led through design and construction in a matter of minutes. We use projects like this to help people consider the built environment, asking them to reflect on how people move around and through spaces. During the build phase participants are exposed to construction methods and engineering concepts as the structure is formed and strengthened on the fly.



STEP:1

Participants are asked to stand in a circle, at first holding hands gently, inviting a group consciousness and to allow space for the next steps.

STEP:2

With eyes closed participants are asked three separate times to take a step either forward towards the center, or out away from the center. Encouraged to follow their own desire with each movement.

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STEP:3

Project facilitators bring small bamboo stakes and a mallet to mark the final positions of each participant. This becomes the outline or footprint of the installation.

STEP:4

A few bamboo splits are tied together following the path of the bamboo stakes, this represents our foundation.



STEP:5

Participants stand inside the foundation in whatever space they feel called to. They are asked to put their hands at the height they imagine the ceiling.

STEP:6

Facilitators take a few digital pictures, these become the plans from which the rest of the structure will grow.



STEP:7

The group works together beginning to take on roles, some people gathering splits, others verifying the shape by looking at the photographs from the last step. Anyone can place a split where they think it is appropriate, lively discussions arise as the structure gains stability.



STEP:8

Projects are completed, each installation taking on an evolution of its own. Some become so dense that they can be climbed on while others remain flexible frames.

See our feature in the East Bay Express for more on this project:

www.thenaturalbuilders.com/press.html

