

THE BLUE TREES FAQS

What is this project?

The Blue Trees, produced by 4Culture, the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the City of Seattle's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, and Seattle Parks and Recreation, is a socially-driven art action. Created and conceived by Australian artist Konstantin Dimopoulos, the project will temporarily and dramatically transform trees in Seattle's Westlake Park and along the Burke-Gillman Trail in Kenmore beginning April 2. 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.

The Blue Trees is ultimately a world-wide effort. This installation extends and reinterprets the original project launched in April 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.

<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

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.

How does this project benefit the public?

Over the course of eight days, Dimopoulos will engage volunteers to help transform 16 existing Honey Locust trees at Westlake Park in downtown Seattle and 40 newly planted Jacquemontii Birch trees along the Burke-Gilman Trail near NE Bothell Way and 80th Ave NE in Kenmore.

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.

After the colorant has faded, trees planted along the Burke-Gilman Trail will remain as a safety feature, separating the trail from an adjacent roadway, and as new landscape amenity that repairs and beautifies an area currently infested with invasive weeds, offering the public a more pleasant and enjoyable experience. In a symbolic way, the project serves to remind us how we have an impact on our surroundings and how we can all effect positive change.

King County Parks' offers over 175 miles of trails, many are used daily by commuters, and they are a wonderful amenity in our region. *The Blue Trees* project aligns with King County Parks' mission of enhancing trails and other sustainable transportation options that reduce carbon emissions.

Seattle Parks and Recreation works to protect and promote preservation and development of urban forests and park land. Through the Green Seattle Partnership (<http://greenseattle.org/>), thousands of community volunteers actively work with the support of businesses and nonprofits to restore and maintain Seattle's forested parklands. In 2008, the Partnership reached its goal of restoring 100 acres of urban forest and planting 6,500 seedlings in Seattle's parks and is working hard to restore 2,500 forested acres of parkland by the year 2020.

How can I get involved?

Volunteers interested in participating in the installation along the Burke-Gilman Trail should contact Laurie Clinton, Volunteer Program Coordinator by email at Laurie.Clinton@kingcounty.gov or by telephone at (206) 296-4452. Volunteers interested in participating at Westlake Park can contact Adele Dimopoulos by email at info@kondimopoulos.com or by telephone at (206) 890-4315.

How was this project funded?

Burke-Gilman Trail Project:

This project is funded through King County's 1% for Art program which is managed by 4Culture, with additional support from the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and a generous private donation.

Westlake Park Project:

This project is partially funded through Seattle Parks and Recreation's ARTSparks program, with support from the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs. This program is part of the Center City Parks Initiative, to promote a healthy and vibrant urban community and bring positive, welcoming activities into our downtown parks.

Sponsorship for both installations comes from Courtyard Marriott Hotel and Curator PR.

What can I do to combat deforestation?

1. Plant a tree. Volunteer on this project or on others in your community!
2. Go paperless.
3. Recycle and buy recycled products.
4. Look for [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) certification on your wood and wood products.
5. Eat vegetarian meals more often. (Forests are destroyed in other parts of the world to provide land to graze livestock).
6. Educate yourself and others:
<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/urgentissues/climatechange/howwework/reducing-emissions-from-deforestation.xml>
<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation-overview/>
http://www.rainforestconcern.org/education_resources/what_can_we_do_to_stop_deforestation/
<http://www.childrenoftheearth.org/deforestation-information-for-kids.html>

Additional Questions?

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