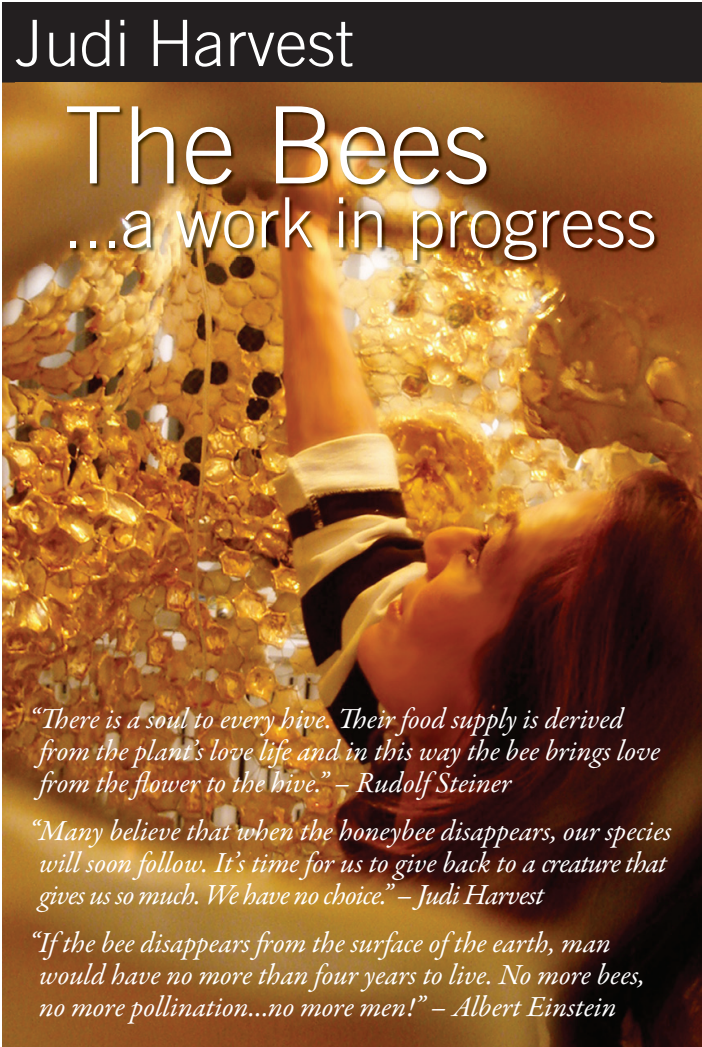


Judi Harvest

The Bees

...a work in progress



"There is a soul to every hive. Their food supply is derived from the plant's love life and in this way the bee brings love from the flower to the hive." – Rudolf Steiner

"Many believe that when the honeybee disappears, our species will soon follow. It's time for us to give back to a creature that gives us so much. We have no choice." – Judi Harvest

"If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live. No more bees, no more pollination...no more men!" – Albert Einstein

The Inspiration: It is my desire that each person who encounters this work will become more aware of the plight of the bees and will do something to help. Art heals. It is our responsibility, as artists, to raise awareness—and from awareness, positive action.

My current body of work, including extensive research of bees and their hives began several years ago when I came across various articles describing what is known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a phenomenon in which large numbers of worker bees abruptly disappear from beehives or honeybee colonies. The term CCD was first applied in order to describe the drastic rise in the number of disappearances of Western honeybee colonies in North America in late 2006, but it is not specific to the region. CCD currently affects more than 25 countries worldwide.

This current body of work has evolved from my previous series, Martian Gardens, which was first inspired by the discovery of ice on Mars. If there was water, there were gardens. If there were gardens, there were bees. It's my belief that we wouldn't be sending rovers to look for signs of life if we weren't concerned about our own planet's expiration date. Einstein postulated that man would have no more than four years to live if bees disappeared from the surface of the earth: "No more bees, no more pollination...no more men."

The Work: I built beehives in my studio, one cell at a time, as honeybees do. I created these sculptures with a hexagonal mesh similar to a honeycomb, and with porcelain, beeswax, gold leaf and resin. Individually these are fragile materials, but combined they create a very strong, solid structure. Just like a beehive.

The central piece is a suspended human-scale beehive. One person at a time is allowed to enter the hive. The visitor witnesses the sound of buzzing bees combined with music and other natural elements inspired by bees. This work provokes all senses; from the smell of beeswax to the sound of swarming bees to the glow of honey. The tight interior space, made up of thousands of hexagonal cells, is meant to give a feeling of the intensity and community of an actual beehive. The solo experience of the visitor reinforces the notion that if the bees disappear, so do we. "The Waggle Dance" is a large-scale painting, one of several created for this series, which depicts a bee phenomenon discovered by Nobel Prize winner Karl von Frisch. The honeybees communicate the whereabouts of pollen and nectar to the colony by dancing. The dance is always directed toward the sun and involves specific sounds, all of which are used in the audio component of the hive sculpture.

The Philosophy: A great wisdom lives in the beehive. It is not simply an assembly line of bees; the beehive has a very specific soul.

The wax represents warmth; gold signifies the precious metal of the sun with its alchemical properties; porcelain embodies the nature of fragility; and resin, a dangerous medium if not used wisely, represents finality. The Bee Series is concerned with the vitality of life and its fragile state.

As I continue my work on the hive sculptures, they evolve from chaos to order, undetermined to determined, cold to warm, expansion to contraction, fragile to strong, inanimate to alive, artificial to organic, quiet to noisy and unsettling to comforting—all the while, maintaining a balance and ultimately, an inner beauty and soul. The hive sculptures in this exhibit bring people together, inspiring thought and conversation. They become a kind of "social sculpture," as Joseph Beuys suggested when he bridged the gap between art and contemporary life. And as Rudolf Steiner, the famous Austrian philosopher and artist said, "Genuine art is an affair of the people, essentially social in character. We must learn to bring art into our thinking. All real philosophers have been artists in the realm of concepts."

If the current decline of hives continues, honeybees will be extinct by the year 2035. A world without color, fruit or flowers, in less than 27 years seems unfathomable. But it is not. The honeybee is a highly evolved, super-organized social creature that is absolutely fundamental to our survival.

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<http://judiharvest.com/bees>

Colony Collapse Disorder

The sudden and mysterious worldwide disappearance of bees poses very serious problems. As an artist, passionate gardener, and lover of fruit and flowers, I am shocked by the severity of this devastating situation.

HOW SERIOUS IS IT? Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) currently affects more than 25 countries worldwide. In 2005, for the first time in 85 years, the United States was forced to import honeybees in order to meet its pollination demands. Over the past twenty years, the honeybee population experienced a dramatic 40 percent decline from nearly 6 million to less than 2.5 million. By early 2008, one in three hives in the United States was left lifeless. In France, the death rate is 60%, while in Britain it's been estimated that honeybees could be extinct within ten years. In Sichuan, China, where widespread use of pesticides has led to honeybee extinction, the pollination must be done by hand. First the pollinating tool is created by finding baby chicken feathers and attaching them to a bamboo stick with string. Then the feathers are dipped into ground pollen, which is then tapped onto trees in the spring. It's a ritual that's been practiced by the people of Sichuan for more than 20 years and, without it, trees in the region cannot produce fruit.

Three quarters of the world's 250,000 flowering plants, including fruits and vegetables, require pollination in order to reproduce. More than one-third of the entire food industry requires pollination by bees, including the crops used to feed livestock. The 35% of U.S. crops pollinated by honeybees includes almonds, peaches, soybeans, apples, pears, cherries, raspberries, cucumbers, blackberries, watermelons, cantaloupes, avocados, asparagus, broccoli, celery, squash, pumpkins, oranges, grapefruit, kiwi, cranberries and strawberries, and are indirectly responsible for the production of such things as cheese, milk, ice cream, meat, cotton and coffee. The bee is a highly developed and socially sophisticated creature, and fundamental to



our existence on this planet. The connection between bees and the world's ecosystem is undeniable. If a cure for infected honeybees is not found, by the year 2035 there will be no more honeybees, and three quarters of the world's flowering plants, including fruits and vegetables, will have completely died out.

WHAT CAUSES IT? In addition to malnutrition, environmental change-related stress, tainted pollen from genetically modified crops, mites, bacteria, insect diseases and viruses (autoimmune and others), the culprits are:

Dangerous pesticides. According to a 2003 French government report, Bayer's seed treatment GAUCHO pesticide was noted as a key factor in the mass poisoning of hundreds of thousands of honeybee colonies.

Migratory beekeeping. Honeybees are homebodies. The colony is a close-knit group that loves the comfort of its warm, super-organized home to return to at the end of the day. Transporting or moving colonies to meet pollination demands across the country and the world is traumatic.

Cell phone radiation and electromagnetic waves in the environment. There is a theory that the radiation given off by mobile phones and other high-tech gadgets is a possible answer to the mysterious disappearance of the honeybees. Radiation from mobile phones interferes with bees' navigation systems, preventing the home-loving species from relocating the hive. The vanished bees are never found, and are thought to die singly far from home. At present there are over 2.5 billion cell phone users in the world. Satellite radio

and constant electromagnetic background noise disrupt intercellular communication within individual bees. Dr. Carlo of Landau University claims that within 72 hours entire bee colonies can disappear as a result of the proliferation of electromagnetic waves.

Parasites and other bees that might normally raid the honey and pollen left behind when a colony dies, refuse to go near the abandoned hive.

BEES AND HUMANS For thousands of years, humans have been fascinated with honeybees and craved the products that bees provide for human nutrition. Paleolithic art featuring bees in Altamira, Spain suggests that early humans gathered honey 11,000 years ago. The developing trend towards sedentary life eventually changed the relationship between humans and bees from hunting to keeping. In the Fertile Crescent, sedentary agricultural practices began about 7,000 years ago with the domestication of wild animals, plants and the honeybee. In the Nile Delta, Egyptians created artwork portraying the practice of apiculture or beekeeping 4,400 years ago. Today, honeybees are being trained by the U.S. Army to detect landmines. The goal is for bees to recognize the smell of TNT and associate it with food.

We must stop treating bees like machines. Even machines break down. Severely weakened, honeybees have been pushed to the point of collapse.

This summer I planted my terrace in NYC with foliage that bees love; lavender, purple flowers, and sunflowers. It wasn't long before they came in droves. I purchased and raised ladybugs – an alternative to bug spray – to take care of the aphids. In restoration ecology these actions are known as the field of dreams hypothesis: If you build it they will come. We have a moral obligation to protect the bees so they can regain their life forces and heal the wounds we have inflicted through greed, ignorance and shortsightedness. By planting flowers, reducing electromagnetic waves, not using pesticides and creating awareness through art, we can protect this irreplaceable species.