

For immediate release

Issued 23 July 2020



Helping bees thrive on the South Circular

A new garden display at the Horniman Museum and Gardens features a sculpture that clears air pollution, alongside bee hotels and specially-selected plants – all aiming to help bees thrive by the side of one of London’s busiest roads, the South Circular.

The Bee Garden is designed around a central group of six hexagonal raised beds planted with species that attract and provide food for bees – including annuals such as Sunflowers *Helianthus annuus*, perennials including Vipers Bugloss *Echium vulgare* and shrubs like *Mahonia × media* ‘Winter Sun’. To either side is an area of wildflower turf for maximum plant diversity, with a bee hotel in each – made from reclaimed pallets – to provide shelter and nesting sites for solitary bees.

And seeming to rise out of the foliage is ‘Flower Girl’, a new sculpture by Jasmine Pradissitto, which is made from a material that absorbs NO₂ or nitrogen dioxide pollution from the air. NO₂ has been found to mask the smell of flowers and prevent bees from finding food.

The new work – with the full title ‘Flower Girl - For it was only upon the gentle buzzing of bees that she could awaken’ – takes the form of a sleeping female face, surrounded by giant swirling leaves as she waits to be woken by returning bees. The sculpture is formed from NoxTek™, a geopolymer which, over time, can absorb up to 15% of its own weight in nitrogen dioxide molecules. Rain falling onto the sculpture will wash away the absorbed gas as a harmless liquid, allowing more pollution to be absorbed from the surrounding air.

The hope is that ‘Flower Girl’ will clear a ‘scent path’ for bees living in the bee hotels and in the surrounding area, making it easier for them to find the food sources provided in the Bee Garden.

Wes Shaw, Head of Horticulture at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, says: ‘This area has been given over to wildflowers in recent years but we’ve decided to step it up and create a garden dedicated to supporting bees. They’re our most important pollinators, vital to gardeners and to the environment as whole, so it makes sense to design with them in mind. And we’re thrilled to have Jasmine’s sculpture adding both beauty and environmental benefit to the Bee Garden.’

More

Work to create the Bee Garden and install 'Flower Girl' has been carried out during lockdown. Although the Museum has been closed to the public, the Gardens have remained open with social distancing measures in place to allow local people to visit.

The Bee Garden is in full bloom this month, ready to welcome visitors back to the Museum when it reopens to the public on Thursday 30 July. And you can catch up with how the Bee Garden has grown over the past few months by watching the Horniman's [time-lapse film](#).

Ends

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Pictured: Bee Garden with Flower Girl (c) Jasmine Pradissitto, image credit: Horniman Museum and Gardens

Notes to Editors:

- **Coronavirus closure and impact** - Following advice from Public Health England regarding the coronavirus, the **Museum closed** to the public on Wednesday 18 March and will **reopen on Thursday 30 July**. The Horniman's **Gardens remain open** (from 7.15am (Monday to Saturday) or 8am (Sunday and Bank Holidays) until dusk. The **Café Kiosks** are now open for snacks and drinks. The Horniman is asking the public to adhere to [social distancing guidance](#) in the Gardens.
- **Every month the Horniman is closed costs around £150,000 in lost income** from ticket sales, memberships, the shop and café. In recent years the Horniman has increasingly relied on this vital income to help care for the Gardens, fish and animals, to run events and to look after the collections. The support of the public, and their generous donations, are more needed than ever.
- **Dr Jasmine Pradissitto** is an artist, physicist, and speaker who sculpts and creates pieces using new and old processes to create pioneering that addresses an increasingly polluted, Anthropocene world. Based in South London, Pradissitto has a PhD from UCL in physics and has studied fine art at Goldsmiths College and London Metropolitan University. She exhibits internationally, has had solo shows in London and Venice, been shortlisted for various art prizes such as the Celeste and Threadneedle and has pieces in collections worldwide such as Tokyo Museum, The Corinthia Hotel and Lewisham Hospital. She is supported by London South Bank University, Public Art UK, Solar Polar, Alsitek, Eltham Bees, and her son Ciaran Burns in creating her work. As well as an artist, she also speaks extensively on the power of creativity and connective thinking to engender the change which will create a more sustainable future. pradissitto.com Instagram [@jasmine_pradissitto](#)
- **NoxTek™** is a zero-carbon mineral polymer developed and patented by Alsitek Limited, a company established in 2008 to research and develop novel and sustainable products. NoxTek™ is sustainably sourced as a natural by-product of quarrying, and its nitrogen-dioxide-absorbing properties have been confirmed by researchers at University College London, University of Cambridge and the University of Leicester's Department for Atmospheric Science.
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- In July 2019 the Horniman Museum and Gardens **declared a climate and ecological emergency** and in January 2020 published its **Climate and Ecology Manifesto**. The manifesto outlines the Horniman's platform for action and the steps it will take to mitigate against the climate and ecological emergency, and to help shape a positive future for generations to come. Find out more at horniman.ac.uk.