



A new sculpture by Boston artist Erin Genia entitled *Tuhmagatipi*, has been installed on the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway's Wildflower Meadow, near the parking garage by Faneuil Hall.

The work, which is named after the Dakota word for beehive, was designed with the intention to acknowledge and aid the meadow's natural pollinators, such as bees, butterflies, beetles, etc.

The decision to display Genia's work on the Greenway came from a collaboration between the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Conservancy and the Boston Green Ribbon Commission, a city group which collaborates with various organizations across Boston to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change.



[The Boston Green Ribbon Commission] is "always doing large- scale collaborations and really opening up communication between organizations, so that we're not all operating in silos around these things," said Audrey Lopez, Director and Curator of Public Art for the Greenway Conservancy. "There is that communication and conversation and dialogue and sharing of resources and ideas, to really make sure that we are addressing these issues as they come up."

The sculpture is shaped for the Dakota morning star, and is glazed in the violet color spectrum, which pollinators are most drawn to.

In addition to its curated visuals, the piece also has a functional aspect to it as it was sculpted to hold water for pollinators, a need which would aid Greenway's effort to build a pollinator habitat in the area where the sculpture resides.

"I really started to learn about the impacts of climate change on different native plants and different pollinators and through conversations with their horticultural team," Genia said. "We began to identify ways in which my artwork could actually just kind of give back to that ecosystem there, which I thought was really would be really an interesting and kind of meaningful approach for me because the work would go beyond what I have done before."

Genia's chosen materials, consisting of clay and driftwood, were selected due to their natural state and connection to the land.

I wanted to make sure to use materials that would be completely nontoxic that the bees, butterflies, and moths would be able to use without any kind of chemicals or anything like that. I wanted to honor that original character of the land," Genia said.

"As a devoted person myself in our culture, animals and plants are seen as equal to humans. And that's something that is not really present in this kind of dominant society."

Lopez noted the importance of bringing art and artists that address the issue of climate change to the public space.

"We are thinking about climate change really carefully within our organization, as we're in a place that will be affected by it and by having projects like this and artists like Erin working in the public realm is so important because it helps bring those questions and those perspectives into the public where people can access it in a very tactile way," said Lopez.

Genia's work and the Greenway both present a contrasting habitat to the surrounding city of Boston.

"We're still so dependent on nature for our survival. It may be hard to see that in a city because we're so surrounded by buildings or the built environment, but we still need it," Genia said. "We still rely on it, and we can still do things in our own backyard. You know, even little things like setting up pollinator water can actually have a big impact."

From: <https://read.thebostonguardian.com/the-boston-guardian;see-2022/08/26;c-4012833>