

MARIA MEDINA-SCHECHTER - BIO ARTIST

PROJECT TITLE: GATEKEEPERS  
A SIX FOOT ARCHWAY GROWN FROM MYCELIUM  
A YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT  
USING HEALTHIER MATERIALS FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD

ADDRESSING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS THROUGH ART  
THIS PROJECT IS 100% SUSTAINABLE

**PRESS RELEASE**  
BY MARIA MEDINA-SCHECHTER

2 YEARS  
2,400 GROW HOURS  
200LBS OF MYCELIUM  
2,000 SEASHELLS



*T6DH*

where art and science  
collaborate

The Gatekeepers project  
is sponsored by

PHOTOGRAPHY  
BY LENDSEY GENTRY

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*Spring 2023!*

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The Gatekeepers, a climate solution, youth empowerment project.

A Gatekeeper is a guardian of the earth.

A Gatekeeper makes an effort to make a difference.

A Gatekeeper is a climate activist.

A Gatekeeper co-creates solutions towards our climate crises.

Press Release

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# Gatekeepers

Using healthier materials for a healthier world, a youth empowerment project meant to inspire hope and seed solutions towards our climate crises.

Indianapolis, IN - January 29, 2023 - *The Gatekeepers* is a climate solution, youth empowerment project. For the past two years artist Maria Medina-Schechter has spent over 2,000 hours to grow 3.5 feet of the left and right sides of the columns of the gate. She has 2.5 feet to go before initiating the final phase of growth. The third phase of the project is growing the arch from a variety of substrates of mycelium. Some parts of the archway will flower mushrooms, other parts may not. However, the project is made entirely from the filamentous structure of a fungus, a network of mycelium, the same substrate that fruits mushrooms. The mycelium the artist uses is a substrate made from agriculture waste. The material is made by Ecovative Technology and purchased in the form of a substrate from grow.bio. The completion and final phase of the project is currently in production and this effort is sponsored by NorthSpore. In 2020 Maria was a recipient of the Fantastic Fungi Global Summit Scholarship. The material informed the artist works from growing structures from mycelium to growing paintings through the use of mycelium. Mrs. Schechter went on to attend the Biophilium: Science School for Artist a residency located in Canada. Maria's paintings are grown with mycelium. She refers to them as dimensional structures on paper. Along with foraging her own materials, Maria creates botanical painting palettes utilizing methods and materials from the Middle Ages, using only organic, foraged, and living materials in her works. The importance of the Gatekeepers project is to highlight how nature reminds us of impermanence, a concept addressed in a variety of religions and philosophies. Maria has been a dharma practitioner for 29 years. It is through her practice that she learned about ikebana, the classical art of Japanese flower arranging. The meaning of the term is to encompass all the various styles of Japanese floral art. Ikebana was introduced in 6th Century Japan by Chinese Buddhist missionaries who had formalized the ritual of offering flowers to the Buddha. The first school of flower arranging in Japan, Ikenobō, was founded by Ono no Imoko in the early 7th century. The art form has many positions and principles. However, the principles found in Mrs. Schechter's artwork are what is called the 3 pointed nature: Heaven, Humanity and Earth. Each style showcases the personality of the artist and elements of color, form, balance, and texture, all of which can be found in the artist's dimensional paintings.

The Gatekeepers project came as a result of living through the California wildfires and Maria's lifelong experience with them. In particular, it was losing artwork in the Caldor fire of 2021 that caused her to leave her beloved home state of California. As a former Cal Fire employee, as the marketing director for the Fire Safe Council of Saratoga, California, Maria Medina-Schechter is aware of the reality of our climate crises and has the science and experience to back it up. This experience with Cal Fire, along with materials accumulated from the 2021 Fantastic Fungi Global Summit Scholarship, has informed Maria's work as an artist and helped to shape curriculum to share in environmental work shops which she is currently hosting around the country. When we share information we empower others with hope and ignite the illuminated power of the imagination. Sparking excitement around one's own ability to learn the material and begin innovating their own solutions is planting a seed of change. Inspiring people to become Gatekeepers is sharing that there is a solution to eco-grief, a term coined by Jane Goodall in her book *Hope*. Educating people about their options and alternatives to our choices is empowering and healing. When we make choices to change our lives so that our personal decisions are not felt by the earth but instead heal the earth with our intentions. Maria is looking to inspire others to make choices that encourage continued conservation of the natural world.

Hope begins by planting seeds of possibility and sharing our own stories of triumph. Working towards carbon neutral means providing solutions towards our climate crisis and visually articulating compelling and engaging content that inspires youth as the next generation of gatekeepers. We are standing at the tipping point of our evolution. The natural world has provided for us and held our entire planet together by way of the super highway mycelium. As guardians of our planet, being human means we are nature, too, and we must protect our future and our children's future. Engaging in critical dialogue that illuminates options and choices, helps to inform others of what could change with your help.

For more information, images, interviews contact:

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# MATERIALS

MYCELIUM  
GOLDLEAF  
SEASHELLS  
FUNGI

## GROWN TO THE SIDES OF THE MYCELIUM TOWERS

BEES                      HONEYCOMBS  
CHESSNUT              LEAF    OYSTER MUSHROOMS  
HONEYCOMB HIVE      MOTHS    RABBIT



## 6 SPECIES

BLACK CROW  
FOX  
FROG  
MOUSE  
OWL  
SQUIRREL

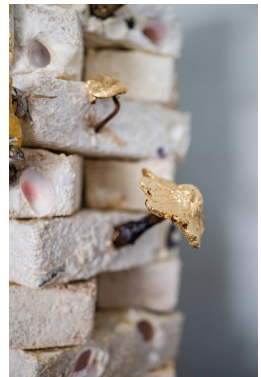


## ECOSYSTEMS

Why is a healthy ecosystem important?  
Biodiversity and our personal health go hand in hand.  
But, why & How?

Over 90% of our food comes from terrestrial ecosystems.

If the soil holds toxins, then the food that is grown there will make us sick. Chemical and waste contamination in any body of water will ultimately get into our drinking water. In 2021, an article in *Scientific America* found a handful of states have set about trying to address these contaminants, which are scientifically known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs). If we have bad water, then it can lead to a variety of illnesses including cancer. On March 31st, 2021, an article published by the Guardian stated 49 American states have drinking water known to be contaminated with PFASs...



Images may be downloaded at [www.T6DH.com/Gatekeepers](http://www.T6DH.com/Gatekeepers)

IMAGES

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