

Berkeleyans make environmental art with Zach Pine



Zach Pine works with children on a natural sculpture installation in Berkeley. Photos: Angela Epifano

By **Izzy ben Izzy**

A patch of dirt on the unremarkable corner of Shattuck Avenue and Lincoln Street was brought to life last Friday after an outbreak of public-made environmental art, led by [environmental artist Zach Pine](#).

A “welcome sign” of three sticks in a pyramid shape with an array of flowers and rocks, on a coconut shell foundation, steered passerbys to several buckets of shells, sticks, flowers and leaves. The empty space across the sidewalk was the canvas, and soon several people were building towers, mandalas, and more.

“Everyone is creative, everyone is an artist,” said Pine, as he watched over the spontaneous artists. Pine hosts group nature sculpture events like this regularly. In fact, he was hosting the same thing later that day — and [his website includes future dates](#) over the summer in Berkeley and beyond. The gatherings last about an hour, and the attendance varies, he said; and there might be as many as ten people working at a time. They are open to the public, and when the hour and a half is over, the sculptures are taken down and the materials moved onto the next location.

This particular day was a little different. In a fun coincidence, it happened that [Berkeley Community Media](#) was having a “movie jam” for which different groups of people were creating five-minute movies in no more than 48 hours, all of which had to include three very random things: giving a hug, the concept of free speech, and a TV set.



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The [resulting film](#) showed on Saturday night at BCM’s studio in downtown Berkeley. Pine decided to contribute a short movie of his own of Friday’s events for the screening. It showed the different environmental art that the Berkeley participants had made.

It was a challenge to fit the three essential elements into the shorts, but the participants managed. People hugged each other, and then hugged trees. They spoke about how making environmental art helped them to feel the freedom of speech and expression in Berkeley. And an image of a TV set was made out of wood chips and flowers.

When asked what he gains from these events, Pine said: “It’s not what I get, it’s what I give.” He explained that, for him, the objective was “for people to come together with a common purpose, and to creatively and collaboratively connect with nature.”

“Our society is losing touch with nature,” he said. “Ultimately, the goal is to help people to value the earth and take care of it.”