

**The University Art Museum at California State University Long Beach presents  
Jessica Rath: A Better Nectar, as it celebrates the opening of its new space.**

Long Beach, CA – The University Art Museum and CSULB community celebrate the grand opening of a new plaza entrance and permanent collection gallery with three exhibitions, featuring *Jessica Rath: A Better Nectar*, an expansive multisensory installation based on the tender co-evolutionary communication between flowering plants and their pollinators. The exhibition opens to the public on January 27 and is on view until April 12, 2015. The free public opening reception is Saturday, January 31, from 5-8 pm, with a press preview on January 29.

**In *A Better Nectar*, Jessica Rath creates an immersive rhythmic experience, using sculpture, light, and sound to consider how bumblebees learn and remember multisensory floral signals to find better nectar.** Visitors are provided with a human-scaled experience of a bee's intimate sensorial journey from its underground nest to an audibly and visually pulsating world, based on the Rath's research and discussions with the scientists at Leonard Bee Lab at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The exhibition's highlight, "Resonant Nest," is a responsive acoustic sculpture taking the form of a human-scaled bumblebee nest. Human voice interpretations of bee communication emanate from the sculpture, designed in collaboration with Ian Schneller of Specimen Products, Chicago. The score, created by Los Angeles-based composer Robert Hoehn and performed by the nationally renowned CSULB Bob Cole Conservatory of Music Chamber Choir, directed by Dr. Jonathan Talberg, shifts with live changes in weather, season, and time, as well as to the viewer's presence in the gallery.



*Ian Schneller of Specimen Products and Jessica Rath with the plug mold for "Resonant Nest," an acoustic sculpture designed to resonate human voice interpretations of bee communications, based on the form of bee nests.*

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Photo credit: Marc PoKempner*

"Bee Purple" is an immersive light work based on bee vision, created in collaboration with Aeolab multimedia designer Elise Co. Bee perception of color is shifted to the ultraviolet spectrum and omits red completely. This installation follows the bee's visual passage from nest to flower, with intermittent flashes of rhythmic floral patterns in purples, yellows, and aqua-greens that signal nectar.



*Research bee (Bombus impatiens, or common eastern bumblebee) at the Leonard Bee Lab, University of Nevada, Reno. Leonard Bee Lab's research into the complex signals between bees and plants became the focus of the exhibition.*

*© Jessica Rath, Courtesy of the artist  
Photo credit: Jessica Rath*

In “Staminal Evolution,” the odd and visually intriguing forms of both cultivated tomato and native Manzanita flower stamens have been enlarged to human scale. These sonic sculptures emit the frequencies of “buzz pollination,” a phenomenon created through coadaptation between certain flowers and their pollinators. As bee expert Dr. Anne Leonard describes, “During buzz pollination (also known as sonication), bees rapidly contract their indirect flight muscles, producing strong vibrations that forcibly expel pollen out from inside the flower’s anthers.” In essence, the bees “turn themselves into living tuning forks,” according to entomologist Dr. Stephen Buchmann. Leading up to the January exhibition, Rath’s progress can be followed on her “Bee Blog” at [jessicarath.com](http://jessicarath.com).

*A Better Nectar* also includes a “Research Station,” featuring Rath’s photo essay of the Leonard Bee Lab; the acoustically designed 200-pound plug mold used to produce “Resonant Nest”; and live feeds of native flower specimens, using microscopes provided by the CSULB Department of Biological Sciences. On-site plantings for the “Research Station” and related LBUSD elementary school outreach are developed by the UAM in partnership with the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants, which is dedicated to the promotion, preservation and restoration of California landscapes and habitats.



*Silverleaf nightshade before pollen collection at the Leonard Bee Lab, University of Nevada, Reno.*

*© Jessica Rath, Courtesy of the artist  
Photo credit: Jessica Rath*

*Jessica Rath: A Better Nectar* is organized Kristina Newhouse, UAM Curator of Exhibitions and generously supported by Metabolic Studio, The Peter S. Reed Foundation, The Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, and a California Community Foundation Mid-Career Fellowship for Visual Artists. A full color catalogue will be available for pre-order at the opening reception.

### **Event Details:**

Opening Reception – Free and open to the public  
Saturday, January 31, 2015, 5-8pm

Press Preview  
Thursday, January 29, 2015

University Art Museum, CSULB  
1250 Bellflower Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90840

A series of related educational programming will accompany the exhibition. For more information on events, or for directions or parking information, visit [www.csulb.edu/uam](http://www.csulb.edu/uam)

## **About the University Art Museum**

The University Art Museum at California State University Long Beach is a unique cultural institution that champions new and often challenging ideas through wide-ranging exhibitions and provocative programs. Begun as a significant campus gallery in 1973 and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 1984, the UAM remains an important resource in the field of visual arts for the largest comprehensive university system in the nation. Ranking among the top ten percent of the nation's 16,000 museums, and praised as one of the top museums in the state by the California Arts Council, the UAM maintains a permanent collection of site-specific outdoor sculpture, works of art on paper, and the Gordon F. Hampton Collection of American painting and prints, that has brought recognition to the university and the city of Long Beach.

The UAM curatorial vision focuses on tension and interplay at the nexus of contemporary art and society. Through dedication to scholarly and artistic excellence, the UAM has earned a reputation for its high-quality exhibitions and award-winning publications. The museum also plays a vital role in training future museum professionals, art educators, arts administrators, and artists.

[www.csulb.edu/uam](http://www.csulb.edu/uam)

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