



***Swoop* by Agnes Niewiadomski and Michelle Purchase**

Using basket weaving techniques, we (Agnes and Michelle) will conduct a series of community-based workshops to craft a flight of hand-woven willow swallows. The swallows, which will hang from the ceiling and/or be affixed to an indoor wall, will be locally sourced from wild and farmed willow. Likewise, dyes, made from local walnut (brown) and acorn (black) pigments, will be handmade, along with a set of woven baskets resembling swallow mud nests, placed in the upper room corners.



sample woven willow swallows - aprox. 30cm x 45cm

Swallows, small migratory songbirds found worldwide, carry myriad cultural symbols. They are known for their homing instincts, denoting stability and home in many cultures. Indigenous North American beliefs associate swallows with protection and good fortune. As such the presence of swallows is seen as a sign that the community is being watched over and safeguarded from harm. In Europe and China, swallows are seen as a blessing that wards off harm, and for sailors, they are harbingers that signify safe shores ahead.

Swallows also allude to love and loyalty, as male and female pairs look alike and often mate for life. This association with love, freedom, and hope connects to the 2SLGBTQI+ community and Pride celebrations. And their return each spring after long migrations ties swallows to renewal, new beginnings, and the end of difficult times—all markers of resilience and transformation.

There are more than a dozen willow species native to Canada, and their presence provides vital habitats, prevents erosion, and aids in ecosystem restoration. They also bloom early in spring, offering some of the first food for pollinators. Known for their flexibility, the willow is adaptable and strong with the ability to bounce back following adversity. In folklore, willows represent renewal, and the bark has a compound used in modern pain relievers like aspirin.



Existing double height public lounge - 6.5m x 4.2m x 7.2m height

Our flight will feature a gradation of natural colors in reference to movement, transition, and change—a nod to personal growth, the forging of new friendships, and the acceptance of physical and emotional change .

As symbols, the swallow and willow align with the values of the MCCC, which serves a diverse community, often helping families who have come from afar to find safety and support. MCCC connects people to resources in support of building healthy, vibrant neighborhoods. The swallows and willow remind us of the resilience of nature and

how we can thrive even under challenging conditions. This makes them fitting emblems of hope, new beginnings, and adaptability.

We are passionate about our shared love for nature and creativity, especially through hands-on art-based activities. By building deep connections to nature, a sense of responsibility for the environment with strong bonds to our surroundings is nurtured. Engaging hands-on crafting, alongside friends (old and new), enhances mental health and well-being, which in turn contributes to a sense of belonging—to each other, to the community, and to the plants and animals that inhabit our natural environment.



Above is the mood board from the artists to help convey textures & other details of their concept.

MCCC public art competition: stage two PRELIMINARY BUDGET ESTIMATE		
Title SWOOP		
Artists: Agnes Niewiadomski & Michelle Purchase		
	Budget	Budget Notes Briefly explain your calculations
daily rate per artist charged at \$500 (8 hour day) or \$50 per hour		
Professional Fees: Artistic (these estimates all include HST)		
Willow harvesting from local sites, soaking and mellowing	\$735.00	
Nest weaving - 15 nests (\$150 per nest)	\$2,250.00	
Willow weaving community workshops	\$11,000.00	216 birds - (1:15 student to teacher ratio - approx. 2-3 hours to make a bird) If 10 students per workshop need about 22 half day workshops \$250 to each instructor per workshop
Installation - two people for two weeks (140 hours @50 per hour)	\$7,000.00	
Project Management / Administration - planning, liase with city staff, organizing, promotion, calculations and measurements, sourcing materials, etc. (9% of total - approx 54 hours @ \$50 per hour)	\$2,700.00	
Subtotal Professional Fees: Artistic	\$23,685.00	
Professional Fees: Technical Support		
develop prototype for custom willow weaving tools along with blacksmith		Sandra says \$500 to develop the prototype
Custom Tool manufacturing workshops at Two Smiths blacksmith studio with artist Sandra Dunn		Sandra – It's a minimum charge of \$1500.00 for a group session. One day classes are \$375.00 per person.
Engineer consult and specification/drawing approval	\$300.00	have used Micheal Zwart at Tacoma Engineering before, Michelle performed a consult then she drafted the specifications and construction details for the approval
Engineer site inspection during / after installation?		
Subtotal Professional Fees: Technical	\$300.00	
Travel Costs		
Personnel travel		included in other costs
Freight, shipping or additional baggage		included in other costs
Packing and Crating		included in other costs
Per Diem and Accommodation (maximum \$150/person/day)		non anticipated
Other Travel Costs		
Subtotal Travel Costs	\$0.00	
Project Costs		
Production Space & Equipment		
Storage space rental (\$100 per month - 8 months?)	\$800.00	
Community space rental for workshops	\$0.00	in-kind from City
Equipment rental - Scissor Lift - two weeks	\$1,783.40	Cooper Rentals - 19ft lift 793.50 (per week, 26ft is \$891.70 per week - includes insurance, envionmental fee, taxes, delivery (\$125 each way) - daily rental approx \$170 per day

Sculpture Tools and Materials		
Materials: dry willow (to ensure variety of colour and quality we will collect some willow and purchase some willow)	\$1,000.00	priced by the pound \$18 per pound before tax - approximately 200 birds (60 grams per bird - 7.5 birds per pound of willow) - need about 29 pounds for birds and about 1 pound per nest
willow soaking tank	\$0.00	Agnes has a tank
freezer (for storing soaked willow)	\$0.00	Agnes has a freezer
Fabrication Hardware: secateurs, awls, etc.	\$350.00	branch ranch sells awls for \$48, replacement blades or sharpening for secateurs that Agnes already has
Installation Materials		
Installation Hardware: brackets, wires/aircraft cable (1/16"), sleeves/fasteners, crimping tool etc.	\$300.00	
hanging hardware: wires and eye loops fastened to walls/beams, drill/tool rental	\$300.00	
Subtotal Project Costs	\$4,533.40	
Other Costs (Provide details in budget notes)		
working at heights training (2 people) - 6.5 hour course	\$508.50	Acute Services (\$254.25 each) https://acuteservices.com/working-at-heights-training-kitchener/
harness - class A harness features one D-ring on the back	\$165.55	\$71.98 each plus tax
Studio & personal liability insurance for shows and workshops	\$800.00	Agnes is \$1240 per year. Ayr Farmers Mutual is \$71.10 per month (over 8 months = \$568.80)
Subtotal Other Costs	\$1,474.05	
Total Project Costs	\$29,992.45	