

**Burning Man Project: 2005**  
**Psyche Art Grant**

**“Synapses”**

**A community building experience**

**[Greek *sunapsis*, *point of contact*,  
from *sunaptein*, *to join together*  
: *sun-*, *syn-* + *haptein*, *to fasten*.]**

**syn·apse** (snps, s-nps).

*n* The junction across which a nerve impulse passes from an axon terminal to a neuron, muscle cell, or gland cell.

*intr.v.* **syn·apsed**, **syn·aps·ing**, **syn·aps·es**

- 1.To form a synapse.
- 2.To undergo synapsis.

**Proposed by:**  
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This proposal is based on funding from  
The Burning Man Project  
The Regional Workshop Participants  
And lil ol us

The only way this project can become reality is if all of the above collaborate fully in the descriptions and scenarios found in this proposal.

Thank You  
For taking the time to review this proposal.

## **Table of Contents**

- 1.-Cover Page
- 2.-Table of Contents
- 3.-Artist Introduction
- 4.-Artistic Vision
- 5.-Workshop Description
- 6.-Tour Schedule
- 7.-Collaborative Budget Description
- 8.-Drawing 1-Color Rendering
- 9.-Drawing 2-Pencil Rendering
- 10.-Drawing 3-Pencil Rendering
- 11.-Drawing 4-Plan View
- 12.-Burn Scar & Fire Safety Plan

## **Artists Introduction**

Charlie Smith and Jaime Ladet have been collaborating and touring together since March of 2004. They spent the spring & summer of 2004 on the road sharing four different fire caldrons at nine different events within the Burning Man regional network. This touring and sharing of these caldrons has stimulated an inspiring commonality and friendship between the regional networks across the country.

Charlie has been involved in the Burning Man community since 1998. In 2000 Charlie collaborated with Syd Klinge on a project named Hearth . In 2001 Hearth returned to the playa along with a new wheeled fire caldron known as Infanity. In 2002 three new fire caldrons, “The Nausts”, were built to symbolize the four directions. On the night of the burn, people from four different regions pushed them around the inner circle. Since 2002, the Nausts have been showcased at different regional events across the country. Charlie has released, moved, and gifted these caldrons to the regional communities for the last four years. In 2003 the “tunnel of transformation” made its way to the playa with the help of the infinite oasis theme village. The tunnel was fully funded by Charlie and the regional community within the theme village. The Nausts reunited and were burned together in the black rock desert for Burning Man 2004. Charlie has attended decompression parties and regional burns sharing this work in the following states: New York, Colorado, California, Nevada, Washington, Arizona, Texas, Georgia, and Utah. He has received funding from BRAF and some of the regional organizations to help offset the costs of transportation and expendables allowing the fire caldrons to travel between communities.

Jaime Ladet is based out of the Seattle Washington . She has been involved with Burning Man since 2000 when she volunteered for the Café décor crew. She has continued to be part of Burning Man’s café décor crew through 2004. She has been involved in performing & fire arts since 1995 when she was kidnapped by a group of insane fire clowns in the mountains of North Carolina. She has been a member of the Burning Man fire conclave since 2002. Jaime has been performing, teaching, and collaborating with other performance and fire artists in her community, nationally, and abroad. Jaime is a documentary photographer. She traveled, supported, and documented most of the 2004 regional fire tour. During the fire tour she acted as art support for the tour helping to install, tend, organize and navigate throughout the Project. Jaime has a BA degree in theater design & production and has brought her gift of aesthetics, talent, and skills to the table in this huge collaborative project.

Jaime and Charlie have decided to collaborate on this project as they balance each other out with their different skills and personal attributes. They view this new project as a symbol of a higher level of commonality through collaboration and education in the fire arts community. They believe this is a great exercise in regional collaboration. It will build stronger relationships between the participants and the communities by working, learning, and developing new techniques in creating what is ART. This project will be documented very carefully so it may act as a model for other artists to use in developing and extending their art forms within the Regional Network.

## Vision

It's a chilly night out on the open playa. You and your friends are on an adventure cruising along towards the Man. You see a large group of people and hear the sounds of clunk, bang, crash, clunk, clunk, bang, klank; some abstract metallic drumming sound. The smell of wood fire fills your senses and takes you back to childhood memories, you smile and move on. Then, you see flames shooting out of the top of a large metal sculpture. There is one big flame, another, whoa another, wait there's five, no six big ol' flames. C'mon lets get over there! You arrive at the undulating red hot sculpture. All who are there are talking, playing, and warming themselves from the intense heat waves emitting from this creature of fire energy. A group of fire performers light up and start their dance with the element. A group of musicians are playing music. A conversation is overheard of the building of this fire caldron. How two traveling artists came up with an idea to build a sculpture in six different cities, and how they shared the art of fire caldron building. Over 60 people worked on the six pieces of sculpture placed together in front of you as a symbol of unity. It represents the nature of collaboration in the sub cultural art communities across the United States.

This will be the first interactive sculpture of its kind. A fully collaborative, group built, and cared for fire caldron. The sculpture is made up of six units built in six regions across the United States. The sculpture consists of six dynamic parts. The five somewhat similar outer sculptures will make up a pentagonal shape, the sixth is the central core. The outer sculptures will stand 12 feet tall, four feet wide, and five feet deep. The central section will be 18 feet tall and 4.5 ft wide. The five sections will have two tracks coming out from the central unit. These sculptures can be repositioned and locked down creating different compositions during the week. This will result in a spectacular ever changing art piece during Burning Man. The space needed for the sculpture is a 100 ft circle.  
(Please see drawings)

The six sculptures will be assembled during workshops held in the following regional areas: New York, Georgia, Texas, California, Washington, & Colorado. The sculptural sections will be built in six workshops by 10-15 participants from local communities. These communities will in turn be the care takers of the sculptures at Burning Man and back in their community. Each community will take shared responsibility for the operation, tending, and clean up of the sculpture during Burning Man. This will create a central space ("synapse") where all of the participants from around the country will get to know each other as they tend the sculpture during the firings. After the event, each regional group will be responsible for the return of their sculpture to their region. Post Burning Man 2005 the regional group can use this icon for their gatherings. The sculpture in the community will act as an iconic symbol of our sub cultural art community. The community retains and takes ownership of the sculpture from its creation in their community and on through the life of the sculpture.

## **Workshop Description**

The ten participants of the workshop will have a hands on collaborative learning experience. They will discover aspects of the layout and construction techniques involved in building the sculptural volume from metal. They will also be learning fabrication techniques which will include welding, plasma torch cutting, grinding & sanding to create the sculptural form.

### **Day One** (Orientation) 4 hour meeting.

We will meet and get to know each other and what we are preparing to build. We will go over the basic skills of welding and fabrication. We will evaluate the plans for the sculpture and how it all fits together. We will have an orientation of the equipment and how to use it.

### **Day Two**(build day) 8-10hrs

We will split into groups and work on layout and parts preparations for the sculpture. Each person in the workshop will cut, weld, sand and grind on the sculpture. There will be no spectators in this workshop. Everyone will do what they are capable of doing.

### **Day Three** (finish day) 8-10hrs

We will work together in shifts welding, grinding and sanding on the sculptural sections. By mid-day we will be assembling the two sections. We will then draw the regional icon onto the front of the sculpture and plasma cut it into the piece. Each participant will make a cut into the sculpture creating the symbolic icon that the community has designed. We will assemble and admire the finished product of our hard work.

### **Day Four** (clean up) 4hrs

We will, as a group, clean up the space we used to build the sculpture. Then we will disassemble and pack the sculpture for shipment to Burning Man.

The criteria for the participants are based on the dedication and interest to learn, develop, and refine skills in metal fabrication and sculpture building. No experience is necessary to participate. However, possession of good motor skills is a plus. There will be no alcohol, drugs, or smoking in the workshop. It is suggested to bring a lunch and/or snack with you. There will be a one hour break in the middle of each day.

## **Proposed Tour 2005**

We will be participating in some regional activities that coincide with our workshop dates. The Sculptures may be featured and shown in some of the regional art community events and exhibitions.

### **April 8-11 NYC Workshop- NYC**

### **April 22-25 Atlanta Workshop- Atlanta GA**

April 29-May 1 Freedom Park- Atlanta GA

May 6-8 RIPE- Atlanta GA

### **May 20-23 Austin Workshop- Austin, TX**

May 26-30 FLIPSIDE- Austin, TX

June 3-6 L.A. Arts Fest-L.A., CA

### **June 9-12 L.A. Workshop- L.A., CA**

### **June 24-27 Seattle Workshop- Seattle, WA**

### **August 11-14 Boulder Workshop- Boulder, CO**

August 18-20 Fringe Fest- Boulder, CO

August 23-September 7 BURNINGMAN

## Collaborative Budget

This project depends on three different sources for financial support. Following is the description of how the grants will support this art experience.

We propose that **The Burning Man Project** provide funding for the Raw materials, expendables, shipping, and wood to burn the sculptures at Burning Man 2005.

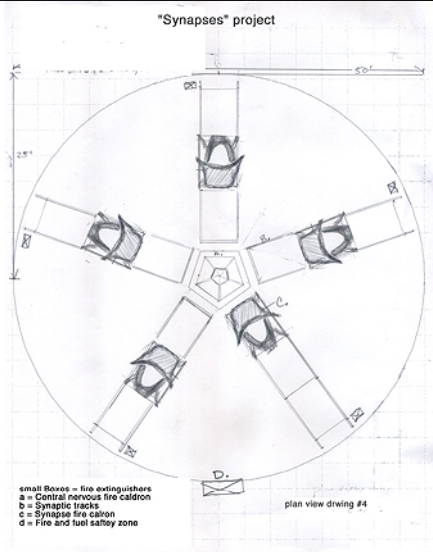
We propose that **The Participants** of the workshops pay a fee for the educational section of the workshop. This fee will be on a sliding scale \$150.00 - \$300.00 per person as per income and need. This funding by the participants in the community will aid the personal financial needs of the two persons traveling and teaching the workshops. This fee will also help to offset the investments made in the equipment purchased by the teachers.

We, **Charlie Smith and Jaime Ladet**, propose that we will deviate from our normal lives to travel and work with the communities listed in the proposal. Together we will build this interactive social study of a sculpture for the Burning Man project 2005. We are using our vehicle and some of our existing equipment for this project. We will also be purchasing additional equipment for the project. We will document with digital photography and create a web site to post images, updates, and tour schedules. The web site will be linked to the Burning Man web site to share this information. This can serve to promote the tour and the interactive nature of the project to the community. We will be investing our time to drive and share the educational experience with the communities and participants who wish to collaborate with us in this project.

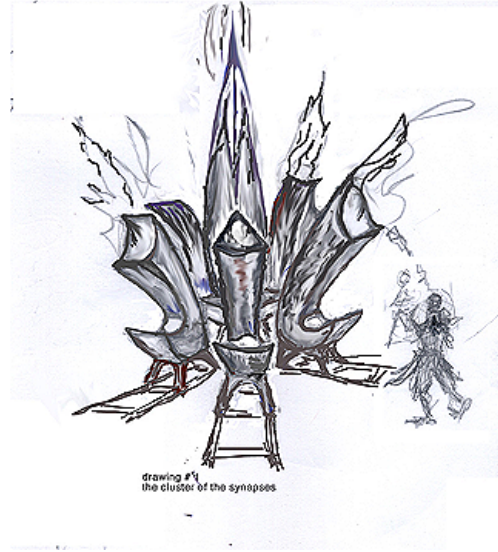
We would like to welcome the Burning Man film crew to meet and travel with us on parts of the tour to document the project. It is one of the most unique projects of its kind to date and should be recorded.



"Synapses" project



drawing #3  
"the separation of the synapse"



drawing #4  
the cluster of the synapses



## **Burn Scar Prevention** **& Fire Safety Plan**

### **Burn Scar Prevention**

“Synapses” consists of 6 large scale wood burning fire caldrons created from metal. Each fire caldron is designed to catch and contain the burning embers produced by the caldron. The bottom of the caldrons are 24“ from the ground allowing an insulating cool down space between the caldron and the earth. The burn space will be inspected and maintained on a daily basis, checking for spillage and wandering ashes. At the end of the event the sculptures will be properly cleaned and emptied of their cinder & ash. The remaining cinder and ash will be removed from the playa in steel drum containers.

### **Fire Safety Plan**

On the nights of scheduled burns there will be at least six fire tenders that all have experience with the burning process. They will all know how to use the extinguishers as well as the safe distances and spaces that need to be maintained during the firing processes. One Type ABC 25lb. Fire extinguisher will be posted at each end of the synaptic tracks = 5 extinguishers for the space. A first aid kit, two shovels, and two coolers of water will be in the fire safety area during the burning process. All of the caldrons will be dowsed with kerosene to accelerate the ignition of the caldrons. This fuel and all other accelerants for this purpose will be stored and maintained in the fire and fuel safety area noted on the plan view drawing. There will be a burn schedule posted and listed in the Who, What, Where & When. A representative from our project will be present at any required fire safety meetings held by the organization. We will notify the Black Rock Rangers and Fire Department of our burn schedule so the proper authorities are notified of the burns.

Please View Drawing #4 to see he layout of the above description.  
Thanks!