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WALK INTO WILDFIRE

Immersive Multimedia Exhibit Kicks Off High Fire Season

Free Family Friendly Art Installation to Debut at Buellton Recreation Center April 24 – May 1

With an official start date of May 1st, high fire season will soon be upon us. Just in time to bring fire awareness to the forefront of our attention, artist Ethan Turpin and the Burn Cycle Project (BurnCycleProject.com) present **Walk Into Wildfire**, a free, family friendly art installation set to premier at the Buellton Recreation Center, 301 2nd Street, Buellton, California from **April 24 through May 1, open daily 2 - 6 pm** with a special **opening reception on Saturday, April 24 from 1 - 4 pm** featuring fire awareness resources and presentations, fun activities, and live music from Sean and Jaime Montgomery.



This immersive multimedia exhibit is designed to give participants an experiential, proxy view inside a wildland

fire, and brings people together to encourage conversations about fire. Audiences of all ages can both hear and see how fire moves through landscapes from a rarely seen perspective making wildfire education both interesting and personal. This new installation includes recent footage of Central Coast wildfires and wondrous time-lapse footage of green, post-fire growth. By having the experience of “being there,” viewers have a unique point of view that captures the attention and induces important discussions about

fire’s place in nature, fire preparedness, defensible space, prescribed burning, and resilience. As audiences approach the three-sided installation featuring 8 x 15-foot video screens, they will experience the sound and texture of walking on a forest floor, including the illusion of glowing embers. The panoramic audio and video are collected from fireproof camera boxes by artist Ethan Turpin and members of the US Forest Service. Recent changes in video technology allow artists offer immersive multimedia experiences outside of major museums, allowing the art to come to people in their own communities.

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Opening Reception

Saturday, April 24, 1 - 4 pm

- Fire Awareness Resources and Presentations
- Fun Crafts and Activities
- Live Music from **Sean & Jaime Montgomery**
- Exhibit Ribbon Cutting
- “Defensible Space” Video Debut
- Artist Walkthrough and Q&A

“The concept of this exhibit is to allow people to safely experience what happens in a landscape as fire changes it. This is something both awe inspiring and dangerous, which fire personnel witness, but most of us cannot. A simulated wildfire helps us to understand what they face on our behalf,” said Ethan Turpin, Founder/Director of the Burn Cycle Project and lead artist for ***Walk Into Wildfire***.

“By making this installation free and accessible to everyone, we hope to build awareness of wildfire’s risks and natural cycles to increase the community’s preparedness for it. The experience encourages broader conversations about how to live and thrive

in a fire-prone region. We built this exhibit with the idea that it can travel anywhere, and we work hard to capture mesmerizing footage for it with fireproof cameras in a variety of regions.”



In 2020 Californians experienced wildfires burning 4.2 million acres, breaking records by double – an alarming trend which sees wildfires increasing in both size and severity. Even communities who have so far avoided major incidents need to learn to live with fire. Our evolving relationship to fire is heavily influenced by the latest big wildfire, but when the next rainy season arrives and a new layer of green growth emerges, memories fade as the risk grows back. “Now – while everything is green – is the time for community members throughout Santa Barbara County to prepare for the upcoming fire season,” said Rob Hazard, Fire Marshal with Santa Barbara County Fire Department. “By creating defensible space around our home we can actually separate it from the risk of wildfire and dramatically increase its chances of surviving.”

Walk Into Wildfire offers a unique opportunity for the communities in and around Santa Barbara County to experience what a wildfire looks and sounds like close-up before our next fire season begins - which is the best time to have conversations about our fire prone landscapes, ignition prevention, and defensible space and to deepen our understanding of wildfire events in our region.

Walk Into Wildfire is presented by the City of Buellton Arts and Culture Committee with support and collaboration from the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council, The Environment Makers, and UCSB Bren School - SERI Fire, Sean and Jaime Montgomery, US Forest Service Fire Behavior Assessment Team, and National Science Foundation.

For more information about the Burn Cycle Project please visit BurnCycleProject.com. To request broadcast-quality B-roll and high-res images, or to arrange interviews with artist and founder of the Burn Cycle Project, Ethan Turpin and/or members of the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council, please contact Joni Kelly, Communications Specialist at 805-886-1869 or jonikellycomm@gmail.com.

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About the Burn Cycle Project:

The Burn Cycle Project (BCP) started as a design and production services company in 2013. BCP's mission is to help grow the understanding of wildfire's risks, roles, and behaviors. BCP offers immersive and interactive media experiences for both professionals and residents living near fire-lands. Content is generated through collaborations with fire services, scientists, artists, journalists, and educators, for exhibition in public spaces. Whether from the fireline or a data-stream, our communication holds attention and provides a deeper understanding of wildfires.



About Ethan Turpin:

Founder/Director Ethan Turpin was born in Solvang and now lives in Santa Barbara, one of the most flammable, fire-adapted places on Earth. His artwork crosses disciplines and technologies with a focus on how we are involved with and perceive natural systems. He became interested in complex systems as a sculptor at the Kansas City Art Institute, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1997. Working as an independent video producer and media artist since 1999, his documentaries and immersive exhibits have been shown in film festivals and museums internationally, spanning topics such as water quality and wildlife. Ethan had a growing interest in working with fire as a major topic in his work and was invited to run public outreach projects for a research team called SERI Fire at the UCSB Bren School for Environmental Science and Management in 2013. He formed the Burn Cycle Project for their first exhibit at the UCSB Library. In 2015 the team was awarded a 4-year grant from the National Science Foundation, sponsoring a series of visualization and exhibit collaborations. Ethan is a fireline-trained and press-credentialed photographer and videographer specializing in incidents for various media affiliates. His current installation **Walk Into Wildfire** was created as a travelling exhibit with video footage tailored to any fire prone community where the exhibit is featured. Ethan may often be found in the hills checking out his favorite native plants before, during, and after fire.