

A Scream Buzzing Through Nature

By Chris Shaw



Artistic Statement

Masonry bee houses seem like a simple idea at first but are much more complicated the more you look into them. Not in terms of design and material choice or placement, but even concept. This makes them a good metaphor for systems thinking. They can be beneficial, but not all native species use them, some non-native species and non-bees do too. Most commercial houses utilize different nesting media, however, different bees have different preferences and cramming different media into one house can cause disuse and disputes. This reflects a common issue: the expectation that one solution will fix every variant or facet of a problem. They are also a “Band-Aid fix”: a solution that doesn’t address the root of the problem.

Each house, with its different nesting media, represents different possible solutions. While the openness embodies access, access itself is a paradox: just as the house is open to the bees, it is also open to parasites and predators. The arrangement and colour scheme are reminiscent of *The Scream* by Edvard Munch. Blue tones swirl together to embody an overwhelming chaotic interplay of feelings and thoughts: inundation, separation, apathy, sadness, grief, fear, anxiety and distrust. Munch stated he was inspired by a “scream passing through nature” that left him feeling uneasy and anxious. On the back of each house, there is a face evocative of the iconic one in *The Scream* that represents signs of dread that are plainly presented to us, but that we are unaware or ignorant of.

