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Page last updated at 15:44 GMT, Thursday, 26 November 2009

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Wanted: A million CDs for a CD Sea

By Sarah Jones
BBC Wiltshire



It's going to take a million CDs and 200 volunteers to create the CD Sea.

A 10 acre field, lying in the shadow of one of Wiltshire's ancient hills, is fast becoming one of the county's leading contemporary art spaces.

In 2005, much to the surprise of local hikers, it was planted out with over 15,000 fibre optic light stems to create the now iconic 'Field of Light'.

Five years on and Wiltshire based light artist, Bruce Munro, is again returning to the field to create a glimmering inland sea of shimmering CDs.

And he needs your help.

Field of Light

For a year, in 2005, Bruce Munro's waving crop of light-changing fibre optic 'desert flowers' filled a 10 acre field on the outskirts of Kilmington.

For a year, as dusk fell, walkers and visitors alike through the tiny village were treated to the experience of the extraordinary and almost 'alien installation':

"I wanted to create a field of light stems," says Bruce, "that, like the dormant seed in a dry desert, would quietly wait until darkness fell and then under a blazing blanket of southern stars would bloom with gentle rhythms of light."

And he did.

It was on the back of a commercial installation at Harvey Nichols, and a smaller one at the V&A, that Bruce was able to try out his idea.

And, as the projects came to an end, he not only found himself with a barn full of lights but the owner of a field in the depths of Wiltshire:

"It was very labour intensive," says Bruce, "and cost a large



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amount of money to install - actually it was a frightening amount.



In 2005, 15,000 fibre optic light stems, were planted to create a Field of Light

"My wife was really cross about this and kept asking me why I was messing around in a field setting up lights when I had a family and four kids. But the lights were sitting in storage and it was my dream."

And for unsuspecting hikers, walking through the field as the fibre optic stems began to glow, it was a dream that had them gasping, crying and for one man bursting into impromptu song.

"For about a year I felt like a lighthouse keeper," says Bruce, "switching lights on and off. Finally we left a note saying please turn lights on and off again when you're done."

"But people's strong reactions to it made it really worthwhile."

CD Sea

Since then Bruce's iconic 'Field of Light', fresh from a stint at the Eden Project, is all set to head stateside whilst Bruce himself has turned his sights to his latest self-funded eco project, a CD Sea.

"It's going to be something like an inland sea in Wiltshire," says Bruce. "It stems back from when I was living in Australia in my 20s. I remember, one time, I was sitting on the rocks looking out over the water near Sydney Harbour Bridge and watching it shimmer in the light."

"It was one of those moments in my life when I had a huge change of mood and I wanted to understand if it was true that the landscape could be instrumental in changing your mood from down in the dumps to going away feeling recharged."

Equipped with one million discarded CDs, and a team of over 200 volunteers, Bruce is hoping to find out next spring when his 10 acre field becomes the gallery setting again this time for a carpet of shimmering CDs:



"It's going to be 120 metres square," says Bruce, "and the public footpath is going to be made into a feature meandering, serpent-like, though the field like a river in reverse."

Bruce has received just over 100,000 CDs, so far, from as far afield as the US and Australia.

"With the hill, and a fragmented sky, reflecting in the CDs it's going to look a lot fuller than the visualisation, which is very crude, because you can't draw detail in CG."

All he needs now is one million CDs.

With over 100,000 already donated, from as far afield as the US and Australia, Bruce still has over 900,000 CDs to collect and just four short months to do it in:

"I've no idea if it will work out," says Bruce, "it could be disastrous but I'm hoping it will create something like the feeling I had over 10 years ago."

And if you have any unwanted CD-s gathering dust on your shelves then send them loose (minus their cases and covers) to: Bruce Munro Ltd Long Knoll Barns, Cokers Lane, Kilmington, BA12 7HU. He needs all the CDs you can spare.

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