OLLAS PODS

Ollas Pods proposes a circular relationship among earth, sky, humans, and non-humans designed to walk in tandem with the journey of Modern Elder Academy's curriculum. The trilogy of interventions provide soulful contemplation in conjunction with both wild and equine inhabitants of the site. The project is built with soil materials that come from the site to carve spaces for humans who are going through the life changing curriculum of the Modern Elder Academy. To MEET one another in a larger setting, to BOND with one or two other participants, and then to REFLECT in a solitary manner on the journey of the week. The trilogy of experiences lie along a loop walk from the central point between the two MEA campuses, along the road tangent to the saddle for which Saddle Back Ranch is named, and up into the highest prospect view of the entire campus, providing a contemplative experience of the landscape. MEET, BOND, and REFLECT meet the sky in a roof plane to collect solar power and water. The project redistributes these sky resources to the ground for the plants, the animals, and the humans, providing a drinker at each site, sized to different animals' needs, a seepage from each drinker provides water for native pollinator forbs and grasses, and a filter at each site allows humans to fill water bottles. The project seeks to provide MEET, BOND, and REFLECT experiences among human attendees of Modern Elder Academy, the non-human sentient beings, and the elemental forces of the New Mexico landscape.
MEET

Largest of the three interventions, MEET offers the opportunity for MEA attendees to come together in the first weeks of the residency period. A large drinker and stage-like roof provides ample water collection and solar power to have LED lights in the evening, phone and device chargers, as well as water bottle spigot and space for conversation. The equine life of the MEA site is invited to join in and a solar powered Reconyx camera records wildlife coming to the drinker at night. The space centers on a 6’ diameter horse trough, a centered 20’ diameter fabric formed poured earth (FFPE) dark red wall with fabric formed concrete posts and bond beam. Posts are connected by rebar to in ground foundations, from which excavation the earth material for the infill FFPE wall panels will be formed. The bond beam is connected by rebar to the posts and to flange steel roof attachments. The steel roof attachments will have bolt assembly attachments to 2” x 6” x ⅛” wall steel rafters, which will be rotated down to serve as scaffolding for the FFPE bag system and rotated up and bolted in place to form rafters for a 430 square foot roof. The solar powered panel will be installed on the roof. Before cutting, 300 gallons of water will be stored in the thirty 9.5” x 1’-0” x 6’-0” = 10 gal tanks suspended among the roof rafters and connected to the bond beams for suction. Tanks will be operational before the beginning of the residency period and will be managed by the residency participants.

The whole system will have a first flush valve and a particulate matter filter built in to extend the life of the pump and allow the UV filter to have fully transparent water to sterilize. The ground plane will be mulched with locally chipped cholla materials and seeded with grasses and perennials where indicated on plan for about 12 sq. ft. of area with added water due to runoff from horse trough. Mulch will define walking spaces. Planting will attract pollinators, birds, and mammals.

**Plant List**
- Helianthus maximiliani (maximilian sunflower)
- Ratibida columnifera (mexican hat)
- Symphyotrichum oblongifolium (aromatic aster)
- Potable water spigot with UV filter
- Underground pipe for water distribution
- Terracotta tile "slice" for soil water retention
- Native grasses and perennial plantings
- Wooden bench, typical
- Stainless steel rainwater harvesting tank, typical
- Fabric formed concrete post, typical
- Chipped cholla mulch area
- Terracotta tile frame
- Metal roof line above
Mid range in size of the three interventions, BOND sits at the apex of the saddle view, after a mile and a half walk from the campuses of MEA. This space is envisioned as a space to arrive with the person or people who have inspired your imagination, with whom you want to talk at length about the new visions you have for your life through the MEA process. The space centers on a bench with a view, held by separate golden FFPE walls and backed by a 10' x 30'' x 6'' deep terracotta drinker, viewed from a wooden bench, roofed by 200 square foot 1/8'' thick sheet metal plate roof with steel tubing purlins and rafters. Between rafters fifteen 10 gallon custom rectangular stainless steel water tanks will collect rainwater from the butterfly roof in an integrated system to distribute water to bat and human drinker. Tanks will be operated to flow based on a flow switch in the drinkers and in the single tank which will hold UV purified water. The system will have a first flush valve and a particulate matter filter built in to extend the life of the pump and allow the UV filter to have fully transparent water to sterilize. The ground plane will be mulched with locally sourced materials and seeded with grasses and perennials to improve plantings’ drought resistance. Olla pod plants attract pollinators, birds, and mammals. A solar powered Reconyx camera records wildlife coming to the drinker during the day and at night.
REFLECT offers a space for an individual BHA participant to look back on the entire valley, buildings, and mountains in the distance. The project imagines this as the last journey a participant takes, to think about the path they have followed from arrival, to bonding with other participants, to seeing their own future in view. It will be an emotional and immersive experience. REFLECT is designed to allow a single ray of light to come through and warm the viewer's back. The 10 gallon roof tank is sized for water collection, and is made from 1/8" steel, having a 47" diameter. It is positioned to catch rainwater from the butterfly roof in an integrated system to distribute water to wildlife and human drinker. REFLECT requires storage of 10 gallons of water and thus will have one 9.5" x 1'-0" x 6'-0" stainless steel tank suspended among the roof rafters and connected to the bond beams for support. The ground plane will be mulched with locally chipped materials and seeded with grasses and perennials where indicated on plan for about 1 sq. ft. of area with added water due to terracotta bird bowl infiltration. Run off from south roof flange will water roughly another 10 square feet. Mulch will define walking and planting spaces and come from site materials chipped. Mulches will be inoculated with microbes and mycorrhizae to improve plantings' drought resistance. Planting will attract pollinators, birds, and mammals. A solar powered Reconyx camera records wildlife coming to the drinker during the day and at night.