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How Lovely Are Thy Branches Exhibit To Open At Olbrich Park

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Olbrich Park Holiday Tree Labyrinth to Open at the E...



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 WORT 89.9FM Madison · Olbrich Park Holiday Tree Labyrinth to Open at the End of January

It's about that time of year when people start taking down their holiday decorations and putting their trees on the curb. This year, however, Madison residents can recycle their holiday trees in a more unique way.

Lillian Sizemore, the Madison-based artist behind the project, is asking for local tree donations in order to build an 89-foot wide tree labyrinth.

Titled "How Lovely Are Thy Branches", this public art installment will stand in Olbrich Park throughout the month of February. Families will be able to come and walk through short walls that will consist of hundreds of holiday tree branches.

Before the January 30th grand opening, Sizemore needs around 250 trees to complete the project.

Residents can drive their holiday trees to Olbrich Park within park hours and hand it off to a team of volunteers who will then trim and cut the branches. The trees need to have no ornaments or decorations on them for donation. Sizemore says they have already reached over 100 total since donations began last week.

She says the idea of a community-led effort was one of her main inspirations behind the project.

"It's been so wonderful, all different kinds of people have been bringing their trees. I think this project is a really great way during these COVID times, and also for winter when everyone wants to be inside, it's a nice way to get outside. All the trees are from all different community members, and we're weaving them all together and the walk itself sort of weaves the community together."

Tree donations will end on January 29, and the labyrinth will open the following day.



“How Lovely Are Thy Branches” is the result of a year-long effort by Sizemore and other local benefactors.

Sizemore received a Blink grant through the Madison Arts Commission last winter, which is used to sponsor local artists for temporary public projects. She also received aid from the Madison Community Foundation.

Since then, she has been in contact with several community members to plan and prepare for this large-scale project. Local tree farms have even lent support by offering their leftover holiday trees for donation.

Along with this, the City of Madison Streets Division has offered to help dismantle and collect the project at the end of February. Similar to other holiday trees, the “How Lovely” trees will be loaded into trucks and ground into mulch for local farmers and gardeners to buy and use.

Sizemore says this gives some excitement to the post-holiday winter months.

“My conception of the work was not only to bring community together but also to look at how the supporting our Wisconsin tree farmers and all the industry and the agriculture around how we work with trees and you know it’s kind of sad when you see a tree on the side of the road and you’re sort of like ‘the holiday is over’, and this is a way to intercept that and create something really positive.”

Sizemore had environmental consult while she was planning the project.

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Stevens supports what the artwork stands for.

"I think her whole concept of giving them yet another purpose is something that really struck me right from the get-go. We all want to reuse and repurpose things, and Christmas trees we don't think of that."

Outside of the labyrinth, the Streets Division is continuing to collect curbside trees throughout the city. The second round of tree collection will begin January 18th, right after Martin Luther King day.

Bryan Johnson is Public Information Officer and Recycling Coordinator for the Streets Division. He wants to remind everyone to use these resources to have their trees collected and recycled.

"If you want to partake in that, donate to them. The trees we collect, they get crunched in the back of a truck and then they get run through a woodchipper. They're not really the branches she's looking to saw off and help create the labyrinth that she's looking for".

Find more information about "How Lovely Are Thy Branches" [here](https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/how-lovely-are-thy-branches-by-lillian-sizemore) (https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/how-lovely-are-thy-branches-by-lillian-sizemore).

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