

THE
NEST
PROJECT

DEBBIE BAXTER



PRESS KIT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
About the Artist/Author	4
About The NEST Project	5
NEST: before the story	6
Recent Press	7
Past Events	10
Contact	11



INTRODUCTION

This project is my response as an artist and mother to the ever-growing pain, injustice, devastation, and wounding of our culture. It is an expression of returning to home, safety, and to our innocence. It also gives people a transformative experience by allowing them to strip it all down, hop into The NEST, and be witnessed and photographed.

The inspiration for building a nest came to me as a way to bring form and symbolism to my own personal journey. It was a personal quest for unconditional love and holding of my pain and wounds. It was built as a representation of HOME.

The NEST Project stems from the notion that as a human race and American culture we are suffering from extreme amounts of pain, violence, hatred, trauma, devastation, and wounding. This project is an opportunity for healing through expression and a chance to strip it all down, be vulnerable and return to home, safety, and protection of innocence.

The mission with this project is to get as many people in The NEST as a way to show that when we strip it all down...we are all the same, we all have wounding, and have all come the same place no matter where we were born, the color of our skin, who we choose to love, and who we pray to.





ABOUT THE ARTIST/AUTHOR

Debbie Baxter (she/her) is an artist, Fine Art Photographer and creator of The NEST Project. As a photographer she has spent her career capturing the essence of the human experience in all of its varied forms.

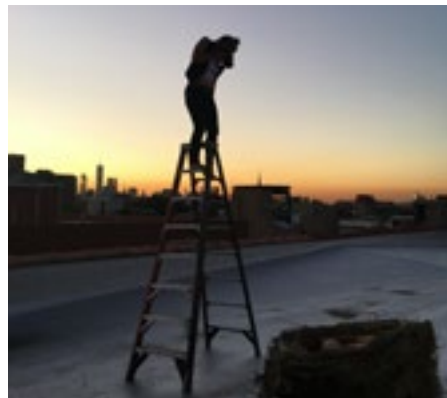
Her work focuses on the joy, triumph, pain and sadness of real people from all walks of life in their most vulnerable state. Through the use of her lens Debbie channels her own understanding of trauma to create ethereal yet beautiful and delicate photos that strip their subjects bare and allow them to reconnect to an innocence long since lost.

Debbie graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business and then received an Associate's Degree in Photography. She began her career by starting her own business as a portrait photographer and darkroom teacher for kids. During this time she also led numerous workshops and classes for adults with the theme of healing through the creative process.

Since starting The NEST Project in 2016, Debbie has traveled to multiple cities throughout the United States offering her nest experiences in galleries and at festivals and events. She has been covered by several media outlets having appeared on page two of *The New York Post* and has been written up in other publications such as [Brooklyn Daily](#), [Vice.com](#) and [The Long Island Herald](#). The photographer has also appeared on news stations in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Portland. To date, about 400 people have gotten into The NEST. She has also led thousands of others through talks and workshops.

Debbie has spent the last four years traveling the United States and worldwide building human-sized nests. Each time she invites people in to shed their emotional weight and become their truest selves to create transformational nest portraits.

Currently Debbie is in the final stages of putting together a book that chronicles her journey and the journeys of many others. It is a culmination of four years of holding space with strangers and helping them to face their trauma and be witnessed in humanity's purest form. *NEST: before the story* is a photography book and journal of human experiences investigating the darkness and light of our society without judgment or admonition, it is a collection of real people as they truly are.



ABOUT THE NEST PROJECT

The NEST Project began as an inspiration in the artist's backyard June 2016 as a way for her to make sense of and express her own personal childhood experiences. After gathering sticks and building the very first nest with her son, the artist removed her clothes and entered. Finding the experience transformation, the artist began a journey to help others face their own personal stories. To date over 400 people have gotten into The NEST and had their own experiences of healing, acceptance and growth.

It is an interactive healing modality that invites people to strip down to their truest selves and get into human sized nests to be photographed at their most vulnerable and powerful. Following in the footsteps of the birds, the womblike nests are built by the artist out of natural found materials. Each nest is built with the intention of providing a safe space for the participants to return to a state of innocence and peace as a way to transform their trauma and find acceptance.

The artist acts as a guide and witness for each journey, holding a safe space to allow people to tell their story free of judgment and expectation. The NEST experience allows each participant a chance to revisit themselves in their most natural human state and reconnect with a way of being that is often forgotten as we grow and age and as the complications of adulthood and society change us along the way.

Each participant is invited to shed not only their clothes but their emotional burdens through deep self-reflection and honesty. With her lens the artist captures the complex nature of the human experience while simultaneously exposing them to their truest selves.





THE
NEST
PROJECT

NEST: before the story

NEST: before the story is a fine art photography book that guides the reader through a healing experience with the use of powerful images and moving stories told by participants in their own words. The book is the culmination of four years of holding healing spaces through the use of human sized nests as a vehicle to transport subjects to a purer form of self.

The book seeks to give readers an insight into the powerful nature of healing, self-reflection and acceptance that can occur when one is given a safe space to be free. The images and the stories that accompany them are of real people exploring their pain, loss, love, hopes and dreams.

The book follows Debbie through her process of dealing with her own trauma through building human-sized nests as a way to express vulnerability, innocence, home, and a safe container to heal and grow. It shares with the reader the naked truth of over 400 people that felt called to strip down, curl up, and be photographed in a giant hand-made nest. It's powerful, it's raw, it's provocative, it's political, and it's real.

Readers of this book will be reminded of what it means to be a human, go through the pain of this world, and find the courage to bare it all, be held, let it go, and discover the true nature of who they are and who all are before the story.





THE
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PROJECT

RECENT PRESS

"Women's March – Washington DC & Nest Project"

heatherbleadsell.com | January 2017

"Oregon Artist Creates 'Human Nest' for People to Heal from Trauma"

NBC29.com | November 16, 2017

"An Artist Asked People to Get Naked in a Nest to Face Their Demons"

Vice.com | June 4, 2017

"Portland artist builds huge nest to honor victims, help people cope with MAX stabbing"

KATU2 | June 2, 2017

"You Can Now Fulfill Your Dream of Being Photographed Naked inside a Giant Bird's Nest"

The Cut | May 1, 2017

"Naked As Jaybird: Artist Finds Nudie Nesters in a Snap"

New York Post | April 30, 2017

"Why are people posing nude in this giant bird nest?"

New York Post | April 29, 2017

"Naked in a nest: Liberating art project bears it all in Brooklyn"

Pix11.com | April 27, 2017

"Naked nesting: Strip bare and crawl into a mound of twigs — for art!"

Brooklyn Daily | April 20, 2017

"Crawl Into a Human-Sized Nest"

bedfordandbowery.com | July 22, 2019

"Back to the nest — Artist pays a visit to Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary"

The Long Island Herald | September 6, 2019

NAKED AS JAYBIRD



Artist finds nudie nesters in a snap

By MELKORKA LICEA

This artist wants you to come out of your shell — and your clothes.

Debbie Baxter, 44, is snapping photos of men and women willing to strip down and curl up inside a human-size bird's nest in Brooklyn.

Anyone who treks out to the Wyckoff-Bond Community Garden in Boerum Hill can give it a crack.

The pictures are part of the Portland, Ore., photographer's Nest Project, which she hatched after hand-shaping a roost out of twigs, moss and dirt in her back yard.

"It was a way of putting myself back in the womb and in this space of unconditional love and holding," she said, explaining that it helped her address her relationship with her mother, who suffers from mental illness.

Baxter has since taken the project public, building a dozen nests and photographing close to 300 people.

She has set up her nests at the Burning Man festival and the Women's March in DC.

The nests let people embrace Mother Nature.

"When you take it all away, we're all the same," Baxter chuckled. "People can really shed their fears and worries."

And her subjects often bare



EXPOSURE: Debbie Baxter (above) trains her lens (top left) on volunteer Carrie Asby in a Brooklyn garden, where the fotog has invited the public to pose nude in her giant nest. The resulting pic is at top right.

"For some people it's just a fun thing to try out, but for others it's about sharing their story," she said.

Carrie Asby, 46, of Queens, was excited to go au naturel.

"It was much more peaceful than I thought," Asby said.

"Once I got in, I felt protected and just wanted to take a nap."

Baxter's shoots will run through Sunday.



(718) 260-2500

Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

April 21-27, 2017

Naked nesting



The naked truth: Debbie Baxter's "The Nest" project invites people to strip and embrace issues such as personal traumas and experience a sort-of rebirth in this exhibit in Boerum Hill from April 21 to 28.

Strip bare and crawl into a mound of twigs — for art!

By Caroline Spiveak
Brooklyn Paper

The artist wanted to help you come out of your shell — and your clothes.

Stark asked Brooklynites to crawl up in a man-of-war's nest in Boerum Hill as a whirl of sorts for participants to grapple with heavy experiences. The project, "The Nest," running at Wyckoff Blvd Community Garden from April 22 to 28, is a way for locals to strip away the modern world and get to touch with their work in a rustic, peaceful, said the artist behind the experience.

"The nakedness really is about going to the most vulnerable place," said photographer Debbie Baxter, who plans on documenting participants' experiences. "It's about stripping down and letting yourself be vulner-

able, and letting yourself be held."

The project began last summer and has toured across the country, making its way through a handful of states such as Oregon, Nevada, and Virginia. In each location, Baxter takes a few hours to weave enormous nests out of twigs, vines, or whatever else is on hand, and then photographs nude models in a raw moment.

"I feel like I'm capturing humanity. The fragility of humanity," said Baxter.

The experience of the models can be enlightening and transformative, she said.

"It can't be an interesting experience, but some are holding something. People hold their sexual awakes, they're body confidence, or maybe they're claiming their safety. It can be a symbol for different things they're going through."

The journey began when Baxter experi-

mented in the backyard after Oregon home and went her first nest out of sticks as a way of revisiting the "womb of mother nature," she said.

"It was a way of allowing myself to be nurtured and healed," she said. "That my friends started getting in the nest and it kept growing."

Now more than 200 stark naked people have climbed into nests like hers across the country, each coming away with a different experience based on who and where they are. The nest is an important reminder of how, despite our differences, we're all human, said Baxter.

"I lost the idea of when we strip everything away we're all come from the same space," she said. "And in Brooklyn there are million dollar Brownstones next to projects. So it's a chance to strip

all that down."

In a contained enclosure, participants shoo and simply fall into the nest in a relaxed, comfortable position. And as they recline, Baxter scales a ladder and snaps photos of their curled up outlines.

It will be a liberating experience for those who are normally camera shy — especially in the buff.

"I feel it's very freeing," said Baxter. "Plus, there's never going to be another chance to get naked and lay into a bird's nest. Embrace it."

Wyckoff Blvd Community Garden [795 Wyckoff St. at Bond Street, debbiebaxter.com. (503) 309-3171] Baxter will construct the nest on April 22 starting at noon. Book a time to climb in from noon to 6 pm on April 27, 28, and 30 at the website. Drop by for a walk in on April 29, noon-4 pm.

BOOKS Novel news

These book worms are serious. A science-fiction and fantasy "Readers of the Lost Ark" led to the Way Station bar in the last month can't say for the club. possible server. Back to back, a book a month.

"It helps bringing together those who have something in common." Strickland, who lives in Crown Heights, from the beginning, the ground, everyone who joins in the outside world, but at the Dr. Who and Marvel movies. And while the stereotypical for engaging in passionate, rocky arguments ever come whether the Hulk could beat the other's note, he said, the Road are intellectually engaged as Strickland.

"People have their own kind of the day we very much one's different points of view kind of the post?"

The group gives members a monthly topic such as actual vs. contemporary world-to and detailed guided questions by Strickland — keep it interesting too far afield.

Each month the group does a theme, and members suggest. An anonymous online vote does the month's selection. The difference the discussion from getting.

"In March we did a graphic design because all of a sudden talking the visual aspect into emotion," said Strickland. "In April Fox's, we selected out! [A Visit From the Goon Squad]

In the two years the club attracted about 30 members, most of about 15 regulars in Strickland, who created the wing-like-midnight events, he said, could not be more so.

"Last year we had a mix including all the film, we've had read," she said. "It's not memories."

The next meeting of the club will discuss "A Visit From the Way Station" (303) Prospect and St Mark's, (347) 627-4945. Starts April 29 at 8 pm.

MORE BOOKS Reading

Community Reads
"Names" by Don DeLillo
If "Moby Dick" was a cultural breakthrough, "The Names" is a literary one. Surprisingly in "The Names," the novel follows James Axton, a risk analyst for a company covering catastrophic insurance for companies abroad, possibly affiliated with the CIA. Axton becomes obsessed by a series of killings in the region, purportedly staged by a well-developed to the world's most powerful nations. Don DeLillo uses this language worthy to heart, and each of his next in control and sound, they're — Hal Havisaka, Core South Ave., between C Field Place in Park Slope; communitybookstore.net

Word's pick: "The Len Pike" by Carys Day
In the title story of this vibrant collection of short stories, the main character is a young man who is trying to find his way in a world that is constantly changing.





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PAST EVENTS

THE WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON, DC
Washington, DC | January 19 – 23, 2017

SANCTUARY CLUB
Portland, OR | July 6, 2017

KICK STARTER CAMPAIGN LAUNCH
Worldwide | November 2017

CATHARSIS ON THE MALL
Washington, DC | November 7 – 12, 2017

A HEALING VIGIL: THE NATIONAL MALL
Charlottesville, VA | November 14 – 15, 2017

RED CURTAIN FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
Seattle, WA | January 27 – 28, 2018

STUDIO NORTHWEST
Portland, OR | March 24, 2018

ACE HOTEL
New York | July 26, 2019

PICKATHON INDEPENDENT MUSIC FESTIVAL
Portland, OR | July 30 – August 2, 2019

JUPITER HOTEL GALLERY
Portland, OR | October – December 2019





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CONTACT

Want to get involved? Want to bring The NEST to your event? Get in touch!

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