

VISITING ARTIST: MICHAEL BASHAW

With its immediate, sensory demands, art has the potential to engage audiences with issues in deeply resonating ways. Rather than teach or preach, art can connect audiences emotionally and experientially with an idea or theme.

Embedded into Bashaw's art and process are many of the principles key to advancing a sustainable treatment of the environment, including recycling and salvaging of materials, using strategies that "leave no trace," focusing on group-based experiential projects, including and empowering all individuals to make a difference, and being sensitive to place—its aesthetics, history and resources.

Bashaw shared his perspective with student River Stewards during their orientation trip down the Great Miami River, contributing to their introduction to all aspects of Dayton and the river. Paddling along with students, he challenged them to focus on experiencing both the history and natural beauty of the space.

He also navigated the construction of a large-scale, temporary installation during Sustainability Week, aimed at calling attention to the overuse of disposable water bottles. Bashaw invited classes and passers-by to build a bamboo framework to hang 120 salvaged plastic panels—each

signifying one percent of the bottles that might be consumed each day on campus.

At an all-day retreat focused on Laudato Si' and held at the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC), Bashaw enhanced the experience by leading participants in an improvisational musical meditation.

Re-uniting with the River Stewards, Bashaw again used art to further the message of sustainability, working with students to record an evocative soundtrack destined for the Rivers Institute's RiverMobile, which travels the region to introduce area students to basic ecological lessons about the river and watershed.

Bashaw also constructed and played kinetic sound sculptures for an experimental theatre presentation, *Sustenance*. Bashaw's interactive musical sets/instruments were crafted

What's most important to me is to find ways to address issues of the environment from a local point of view. I think that's how change happens.

- Michael Bashaw

entirely of salvaged materials, setting the tone for the theatrical experience.

Capping a year's focus on "daily climate," Bashaw guided 70 students in the creation of the final ArtStreet installation, which was called—and called for—CHANGE. Over the course of several weeks, these students designed a moving installation and performance that addressed environmental and social challenges encountered in their world.

