

The Butterfly Affect: Embodying Hopeful Change

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The Butterfly Affect is a guided experience to travel through a butterfly's metamorphosis from egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, to butterfly. It is an invitation for homo sapiens to go inside and contemplate change within themselves—to emerge transformed and ready to co-create an equitable, survivable, and thrive-able world for life and the eco-systems upon which life depends. This will be a hybrid presentation in which participants can experience parts of *The Butterfly Affect*, learn about the project and its background, and explore the context of performance-based methods for hopeful climate communication and activism.

For this performance, participants proceed from the first stage inside an egg, to the second emerging as a caterpillar, the third stage hanging within a chrysalis, and final emerging as a butterfly. Immersed in a soundscape, participants are costumed for each stage and guided through a moving embodiment and thoughtful reflection of the transformation by their host plant guides. Delving into the science of a butterfly's metamorphosis and embodying each stage can allow the opportunity to focus on something within the self that is yearning to transform.

“The butterfly *effect* theory” posits that a butterfly's wing beating on one side of the world can cause a tornado on the other side of the world. Small changes can result in large and distant consequences. “*Effect*” (noun) is the change that has already happened. “*Affect*” (verb) is the action that causes change now. If climate is the aggregated effect of weather patterns over time, many of us united in action can change the climate. Contemplation of a butterfly's metamorphosis contains useful truths, codes, and inspiration for emergence that carries meaning for this moment in multi-species evolutionary history. An egg, a caterpillar, chrysalis, and a butterfly are all created of the same matter yet are capable of remarkable change from one stage to the next. This transformation suggests that change needn't be scary or include deprivation, but, rather, could leave us lighter, beautiful, and capable of new flight. Material explorations can be a way to think through the body as a process of interspecies exchange. It is an opening to the wisdom and guidance of species beyond our own. I will conclude by introducing other forms this creative material can be experienced through, the Butterfly Affect Care Deck and the Butterfly Affect Paper Doll Experience. All forms are designed to be contemplative and immersive invitations to reflect, dream, and imagine.



Figure. 1: Performance of The Butterfly Affect on Flagstaff Mountain, Boulder, Colorado, USA. Image credit: Lianna Nixon.

References

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