

Studio Gang's "Hive" was inspired partly by the Washington, D. C. Women's March

Edward Gunts | July 6, 2017



Studio Gang's Hive was inspired partly by the Washington, D. C. Women's March.
(Courtesy National Building Museum's [Work Zone Cam](#))

What color is your hive?

For the new Hive exhibit at the National Building Museum, architect Jeanne Gang and her firm, Studio Gang, chose two colors, a silver shade for the outer surface and magenta for the underside and the floor.

The team selected silver, Gang said, because it was a good complement to the marble columns and walls of the former Pension Building, now home of the museum, which provides the backdrop for the installation that opens July 6.

And the magenta?

"The magenta was inspired by the Women's March" in Washington, D. C. last January, Gang said during a press preview this week. "It kind of connects back to that."

The color choice was an aesthetic decision, Gang explained.

Besides playing off the marble in the museum, she said, "magenta was so present at the Women's March, when you saw the hats," Gang said. "You couldn't help but be inspired by the color. We wanted to bring that out."

The Women's March took place on January 21, one day after Donald Trump was inaugurated President of the United States, and drew hundreds of thousands of people to the National Mall. It was also around the time when Studio Gang was starting to plan its Washington exhibit, which became the Hive.

The pink hats worn at the Women's March were conceived as part of an initiative called the Pussyhat Project. It was started by West Coast residents Krista Suh, Jayna Zweiman, and Kat Coyle, who envisioned marchers wearing knitted hats that would make a visual statement about the event while also keeping themselves warm. "If everyone at the march wears a pink hat, the crowd will be a sea of pink, showing that we stand together, united," they said on their website.

Pink is an appropriate color for the hats because it's associated with femininity and womanhood, the organizers wrote. "Pink is considered a very female color representing caring, compassion, and love—all qualities that have been derided as weak but are actually STRONG. Wearing pink together is a powerful statement that we are unapologetically feminine and we unapologetically stand for women's rights."

On Monday, Gang led a tour of the Hive, demonstrating some of its acoustic components, including tubulums and wind chimes.

Hive is a series of chambers made of 2,578 wound paper tubes, and the tubes have nine different diameters. Visitors can enter the chambers or walk around them to see how they were put together. One chamber, 58 feet high, is the tallest structure ever built inside the museum.

Gang said the installation, like much of Studio Gang's work, represents an effort to create spaces that encourage people to "gather and interact." She described how the museum has planned a series of programs and activities that make use of the hive, including yoga circles and drum circles. "We're really hoping to create a community, even if only a temporary community of people who come into the museum," she said.

Hive is the fourth "summer block party" exhibit at the National Building Museum and the first designed by a woman-led team. Other summer exhibits were designed by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG); Daniel Arsham and Alex Mustonen of Snarkitecture, and James Corner Field Operations.

Hive opens July 6 and runs through September 4. The museum is located at 401 F Street N. W. in Washington. Jeanne Gang will give a talk about her firm's work on Thursday starting at 7 p.m. at the museum.