



Title: Courtship

Artist: Lauren Collver and Michael Collver

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Brief Artist Biography: Michael Collver is the STEAM education teacher at Blacksburg High School and lead mentor for the MCPS Robotics Team here in Montgomery County VA. I live in Christiansburg with my wife and 4 children. Lauren is an 9th grader at Blacksburg High School. She is currently involved with track, robotics and technical theatre.

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Art Statement: Throughout the yards, gardens, pastures and woodlots of Virginia you will most certainly encounter spiders. Quite often we notice their webs first by walking into them on a hike or first venture into the backyard in the morning. What are less noticeable but certainly just as omnipresent are jumping spiders. Jumping spiders do not spin webs and wait for prey to become ensnared. No, they actively patrol a territory in search of anything that moves that might be small enough to overpower and eat. They are the pouncing panthers of the spider world. Fortunately jumping spiders such as the Daring Jumping Spider (*Phidippus audax*) only reach 2 centimeters at maturity and are not known to bite humans. On the contrary, such spiders are often featured in cute videos on youtube highlighting their elaborate mating dances or their tolerance of being a pet like a cat. With their furry body, big eyes and metallic green face they are relatively adorable. It is this more engaging, animated side of spider-ness that we want to capture and put on display this year. This installation will consist of steel bicycle parts, rebar, a reclaimed fire extinguisher tank or other steel vessel(s). The tank will be the body of a large spider form to which bicycle frame sections will be bolted to simulate the bases of arthropod legs. Extending from these to the ground will be formed sections of rebar steel. Keeping with the focus on performance, this spider will be waving its

forelimbs in the air to get the attention of would-be mates. If time permits we will make 3 spiders, one female and two competing suitors. It is hoped that we can find a place where the upright front legs will catch a breeze and rock back and forth. This installation will be constructed with safety in mind. All edges will be rounded and painted with weather-resistant enamel paint so visitors can get close enough to pose with the sculpture and have low center of gravity so that even if it were not staked to the ground someone could climb on it without fear of it tipping over. The waving arms will be limited in their motion and pinch points avoided. The eyes will be of recycled flood lamp bulbs meant for outdoor use so that the glass will be thick and impact resistant.

