

City of Richmond, Virginia

Public Art for Community Gardens Finalists

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Submitted: Apr 7 2022 7:12AM



Evaluations

Overall Rating

81.29

Rating Method: **Cumulative**

Range: **0 - 100**

84

Charles Caldwell

Apr 7 2022 9:59AM

Artistic Excellence: 18, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 9, Number of functional needs incorporated: 10, Budget completeness and accuracy: 9, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 8, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 3, Community engagement plan: 24, Tool shed security plans: 3

"1.water

2.sunshade

3.seating

4.tool storage

Seems like a practical attractive proposal that fulfills most of the stated needs of the project"

89

Duron Chavis

Apr 7 2022 11:04AM

Artistic Excellence: 25, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 8, Number of functional needs incorporated: 9, Budget completeness and accuracy: 10, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 9, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 5,

Community engagement plan: 19, Tool shed security plans: 4

90

Randee Humphrey
Apr 7 2022 11:31AM

Artistic Excellence: 24, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 10, Number of functional needs incorporated: 10, Budget completeness and accuracy: 8, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 8, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 5, Community engagement plan: 20, Tool shed security plans: 5

"There are multiple functional elements included in this design, as well as more abstract intentions around expressions of community narratives, gardens as places of memory, interdependence and mutual aid, and neighborhood resilience and food justice. It seems very well thought out, incorporates specific community input, and the process and budget for construction and installation fit the scope of the overall project. I also appreciate how the artist defines a personal connection with a specific garden. While the same design might be suitable for any of the locations, there seems to be a distinct relationship for the artist to this space and time in Manchester's evolution. I view the fact that the artist is embedded in the neighborhood and has been a witness to its changes as a definite strength of this proposal."

77

Maggie Small
Apr 7 2022 12:30PM

Artistic Excellence: 16, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 8, Number of functional needs incorporated: 9, Budget completeness and accuracy: 9, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 9, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 4, Community engagement plan: 18, Tool shed security plans: 4

52

Matt Lively
Apr 7 2022 12:50PM

Artistic Excellence: 18, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 5, Number of functional needs incorporated: 6, Budget completeness and accuracy: 6, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 5, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 0, Community engagement plan: 11, Tool shed security plans: 1

"A lot of ongoing maintenance ..."

94

Kate Rivara
Apr 7 2022 1:34PM

Artistic Excellence: 25, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 10, Number of functional needs incorporated: 6, Budget completeness and accuracy: 10, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 10, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 4, Community engagement plan: 25, Tool shed security plans: 4

83

Ilesha Adu-Darko
Apr 11 2022 7:21AM

Artistic Excellence: 12, Enhances garden's aesthetic experience: 10, Number of functional needs incorporated: 10, Budget completeness and accuracy: 7, Installation plan completeness and appropriateness: 10, Easy and cost-effective maintenance: 5, Community engagement plan: 25, Tool shed security plans: 4

Community Garden Finalists

1. List your first, second and third choice for the garden you would prefer to work with.

If possible I would like to install at Alice Fitz Garden. It's right down the street from where I live. I know the neighborhood and the neighbors. I've collaborated with the gardeners there. I also know that the neighborhood is rapidly developing and greenspaces are being depleted. I feel the need to tend and amplify the spaces we have remaining in Manchester. Alice Fitz and the surrounding community are close to my heart and I would love to be able to work closely with them to design a lasting memory-structure.

My second choice would be Gilpin Garden. I've also helped out in this space with bed construction and planting. I'm familiar with the layout and some of the gardeners. I would feel comfortable and excited to work with the community there.

Broad Rock is my third choice only because I have less familiarity with the community around the garden and neighborhood there. I would still be excited to get to know them and create a collaborative vision.

2. Describe your project.

The installation has a primary role as a shelter, rain catchment and storage for the garden. The shed/storage design is spacious (8'x10') and will have room for shelves and racks for tools. I've been in a lot of sheds in various community gardens in the past six months and seen varying levels of organization and clutter. Having enough space to organize is extremely important. It's also important for gardens to keep bulky items like wheelbarrows and lawn mowers so that they don't have to request them from the city. Items like this tend to disappear if not secured so a spacious shed is essential.

The shelter is also key to this design. There will be a six foot overhang extending from the shed supported by wooden beams (total 6'x10' space). There are three benches within, enough to comfortably seat a gathering of about six people. The shelter will be open air with "walls" on either side, made up of floating shadow boxes with negative space between. The boxes will be supported by metal bars fitted into the wood of the boxes and anchored to the posts on either side of the wall. The boxes will be filled with objects, writing and photographs displaying the narrative of the community. For this, I'm hiring a fabricator to work with me in assuring that the design is structurally sound.

Placed among the boxes will be a little free food pantry and seed library. These have been important elements emerging in gardens throughout the city and I want whatever garden this installation goes to, to be equipped! The relevance of mutual aid was highlighted by the pandemic but has long standing roots within the concept of community gardens. It's important to build food justice into our infrastructure. Free seeds are part of this mission as well as a pantry stocked by neighbors.

The extended roof of the shelter will be helpful in catching more rain to use to water the gardens. I plan on having a gutter on that longer side of the roof that feeds into a water cube. The cube will be placed on the side of the shed opposite the doors. The gutter will be routed to the cube. I will also build a simple platform to elevate the shed a bit off the ground so that gravity can work its magic and it can be more useful for watering the gardens.

The theme tying the design together aesthetically is memory and community narrative through object assemblage, imagery and written statements. I want to invite the community to tell their story through donating words, objects and images. These elements will then be tied into the larger design.

Over the last few years, Manchester has seen rapid development erase many greenspaces. I had a park across from my house that is now condos. With the imminent development of Tricycle Garden, an Urban Farm and beloved greenspace, I feel a deep need to tend and highlight the public greens remaining. With all of the new folks moving in, the stories of who made a space such as a community garden, may be covered up. With this installation, I aim to uplift the importance of those community narratives by making a container to hold them for the coming years.

The items that people donate will be associated with their memory of place, whether that be the city at large, in the garden itself or anything in between. I find that objects, especially objects that are well used, come with stories. I can imagine the first trowel used in a garden, a piece of fabric that was once a work shirt, a figurine loved by a child who has grown older all being displayed along with photographs and hand written statements. Once they are all stitched together, the piece will feel like a sacred vessel that folks can enter and hang out in.

All along the outside of the structure I want to have excerpts from people's stories written in hand painted lettering. I want those statements to tie in with the garden and the local community.

I can see people reading them while resting after a long day of planting and then moving closer to observe the smaller details. I can imagine a group caught in a rainstorm finding shelter under the roof and looking carefully at the assemblage of objects. I can imagine moms resting on the benches while their kids play. And I can imagine how handy it will be to store tools and equipment in a spacious shed!

I'm very excited to dive deeper into this project and know that something I helped create is meeting the needs of a community while also telling stories and highlighting the human beauty that is already present!

3. Describe your strategy for engaging the public.

I plan to reach out to the community from the get go, by informing the gardeners and neighbors of the project. All three sites are community hubs that I've had the opportunity to set foot in, some more than others. I plan to be on site, speaking to people before and during construction. I plan to engage people using social media as well as signage, letting people know about the project and how they can be involved.

As a main part of the project, I want to weave people's narrative directly into the structure. I plan to organize and lead multiple volunteer days to discuss and build. One of the main ways I want to engage is by putting out a call for folks to donate objects that tell a story or hold a memory of their life in the garden, the neighborhood or Richmond overall. This could be an old, no longer useful key, a marble found in their backyard when they first moved in, a pair of old shoes they've used to walk the neighborhood. The objects will be placed within interconnected shadow boxes, making up the walls of the shelter. Additionally, I will collect written stories and quotes. I will then decorate the outside of the structure with snippets of these statements. The statements will also be included alongside the objects. The idea is to preserve the personal narrative of the place so that no matter who comes and goes from the neighborhood there is some element of intact, community history intact.

In order to collect these objects, I plan to have storytelling events where neighbors can gather in the garden space and talk about memories of place. From that, participants will bring back an object in their possession attached to a story that they're willing to place into the installation. It may also be a photograph or piece of writing.

I plan to paint quotes from different voices in the community around the outside of the structure. Before I make a decision about the content of the quotes, I want to meet with the community. After we decide what will be written, I will draw the outlines of the lettering and community members can fill them in. The lettering will wrap around the structure and be woven in and around the space of the shadow boxes.

I aim to involve the community throughout the process by having these conversations and gatherings. Being a book artist, as well as a public engagement artist, informs this way of working. I see this project as a way to create a form whose narrative can be filled in by the people who will be using it. I have the structure in mind and the skills to accomplish the construction. The community involvement comes when folks write their stories into the piece itself.

Nestled into the wall of shadow boxes, there will be a little free seed library, and a little free pantry both being important elements of community gardens. Community gardens are part of food justice, resilience and mutual aid, as I have seen first hand at Fonticello Food Forest and so many other gardens! This will give the piece ongoing relevance to the community.

4. Attach a detailed budget, not to exceed \$30,000.



5. How do you plan to ensure the security of the tool shed component?

I have a couple of options I've looked into. I have looked at hasp and disk padlocks. I have also looked into installing steel bars with a padlock. These options, properly installed, offer the most security. I know that it is important to have solid and strong wood for the equipment to be braced into. I realize the security of the storage shed is important. I also want the garden stewards and gardeners to have a say in the security measures in place. I want to leave the final decision up to the people who will be storing their tools there. I will make sure the budget can cover the locking system we come up with.

6. Describe your installation plan.

Hiring: I'm planning on hiring Shelia Gray as my subcontractor and Colin Magness as my fabrication assistant. I'm planning on hiring Johnny On the Spot Services LLC for creating the gravel foundation for the structure. I'm planning on using the Richmond ToolBank to rent out tools throughout the project, especially on volunteer days. They charge 3% of the tool cost a week. I'll be renting space at VisArts for woodworking.

Timeline: (Dates are flexible)

June 5 - 11

In early June, I would like to start seeking out the community members whose stories I would like to work with by using social media and the garden network.

June 12 - 18

This first week I will meet with the Garden Steward and gardeners and do a site walk to understand the best placement and orientation of the installation.

I'll install signage in the garden describing the project.

On the 17th or 18th, I'll host the first Garden Storytelling gathering, described previously. During this, I hope to spark people's imaginations about what they can display in the shadow boxes. They will be asked to bring something to the next gathering.

June 19 - 25

I will gather materials for shadow boxes: plexiglass and wood.

I'll be hosting the second gathering on the 24th or 25th. I would like folks to bring their chosen donation. We will share what it is we want to tell. I want everyone to hand write the story associated with the keepsake so that excerpts can be chosen to decorate the structure.

June 26 - July 2

This week I'll begin constructing the shadow boxes. I'm unsure of the sizes of the objects and so I'm unsure of the width and length of wood needed. I plan on using $\frac{3}{4}$ " boards of varying widths. I will cut slats for the plexi using a table saw, then glue and brad nail the boxes together. The boxes will be varnished. I'm planning for the assembly process to take two weeks.

$\frac{3}{4}$ " Boards of varying widths and lengths

4 large sheets of plexiglass 3x6'

Wood glue and nail gun

Outdoor varnish

July 3 - 9

I will continue and finish constructing boxes this week.

We will have the gravel pad installed by Johnny On the Spot Services. We will map out the footprint of the structure ahead of time. They will level the ground and create an in-ground 2x4" frame filled with $\frac{3}{4}$ inch gravel.

July 10 - 16

We will begin construction on the floor of the shed. I'll be using 2x6" wood at 12" intervals across the 10' length of the floor as joists. I'll use 3 sheets of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood for the base.

We'll then be framing out the walls with 2x4" boards spaced 16" apart. I'll be using plywood sheathing and siding to create the exterior of the walls with a layer of Tyvek between. We will install the door and lock.

With post hole diggers, we will dig 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' holes to anchor the posts into. We will pour concrete to secure them.

After that, I'll be working on framing the roof. I'll be making rafters with 2x4s spaced 9" apart. I'll then use 7/16" OSB as roof sheathing. I'm planning on using v crimp metal panels to finalize the roof.

Floor:

10 of 8' 2x6"

2 of 10' 2x6"

3 sheets 4x8' $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood

16 Joist Hangers

Framing nails

Simpson screws

2" wood screws

Shed and Shelter Material:

2x6: 1/3, 4/7', 30/8', 9/10'

2x8: 2/6', 4/8'

2x4: 34/7'

1x4: 10/10'
 9 Pc 4x8-1/4" Plywood Sheathing
 8 Pc 4x8- Plywood Siding
 Posts: 4x4: 3/2', 6/4', 2/6', 2/7', 1/8'. 2/9'
 Concrete
 Door and hardware
 Hardware:
 3 1/2" Framing screws
 2" Framing screws
 Roll of Tyvek
 Roof Material:
 7/16" OSB
 V Crimp Metal
 Ridge Cap
 Flashing
 Lock:
 Steel disk padlock
 Heavy Duty Hasp
 July 17 - 23

I will then assemble the shadow box wall with the help of the fabricator I hire. On each wall, three 3/4" steel rods will be run at varying intervals from one 4x4" post to the other. The large rods will support the larger boxes.

Smaller 1/4" steel rods will be welded to the 3/4" rods and connected to smaller boxes. One of these larger boxes will be a seed library, the other will be a free pantry.

We will be using a tap and die set to create threads in the steel. Nuts and washers will be used to anchor the steel into the boxes. After the boxes are fitted in, the plexiglass will be slid into place and the box will be sealed with a thin bead of silicon.

6 lengths of 6' 3/4" Cold Rolled Steel

30' of 1/4" Cold Rolled Steel

2 4x4" Posts

Nuts and washers

Tap and die set

Concrete

Silicone and caulk gun

July 24 - 30

The structure will be painted with a base coat. Benches will be constructed for seating within the shelter.

Benches:

4ct 1x8" x 6' boards

6ct 1x4" x 6' boards

4ct 2x3" x 8' boards

2" Finishing nails

2" wood screws

July 31 - Aug 6

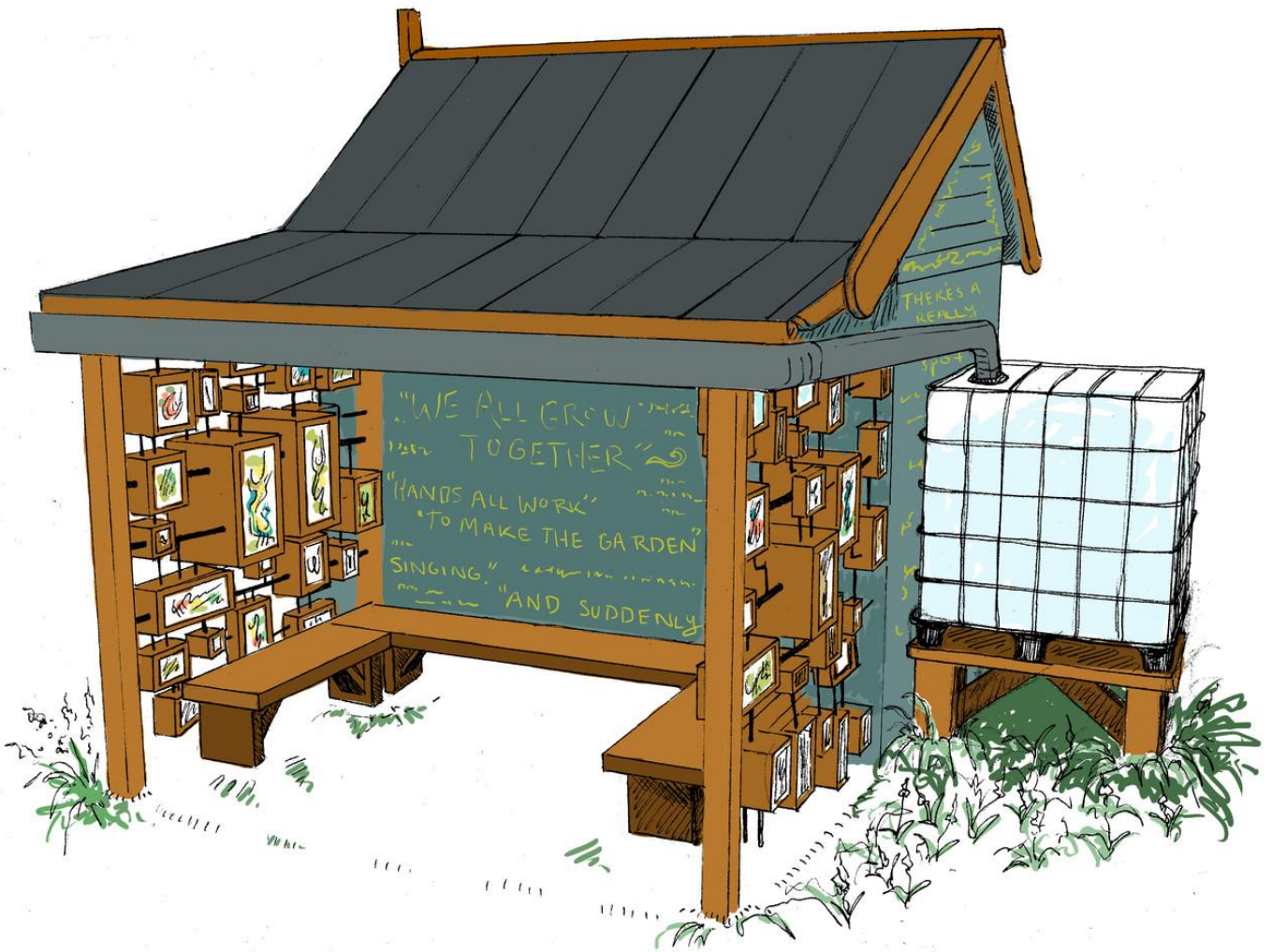
The details will be painted on the structure. I plan on working with the city to install the water cube and gutters.

Aug 7 - 13

There will be a celebration on the 12th or 13th of August to commemorate the installation!

7. Describe anticipated maintenance requirements.

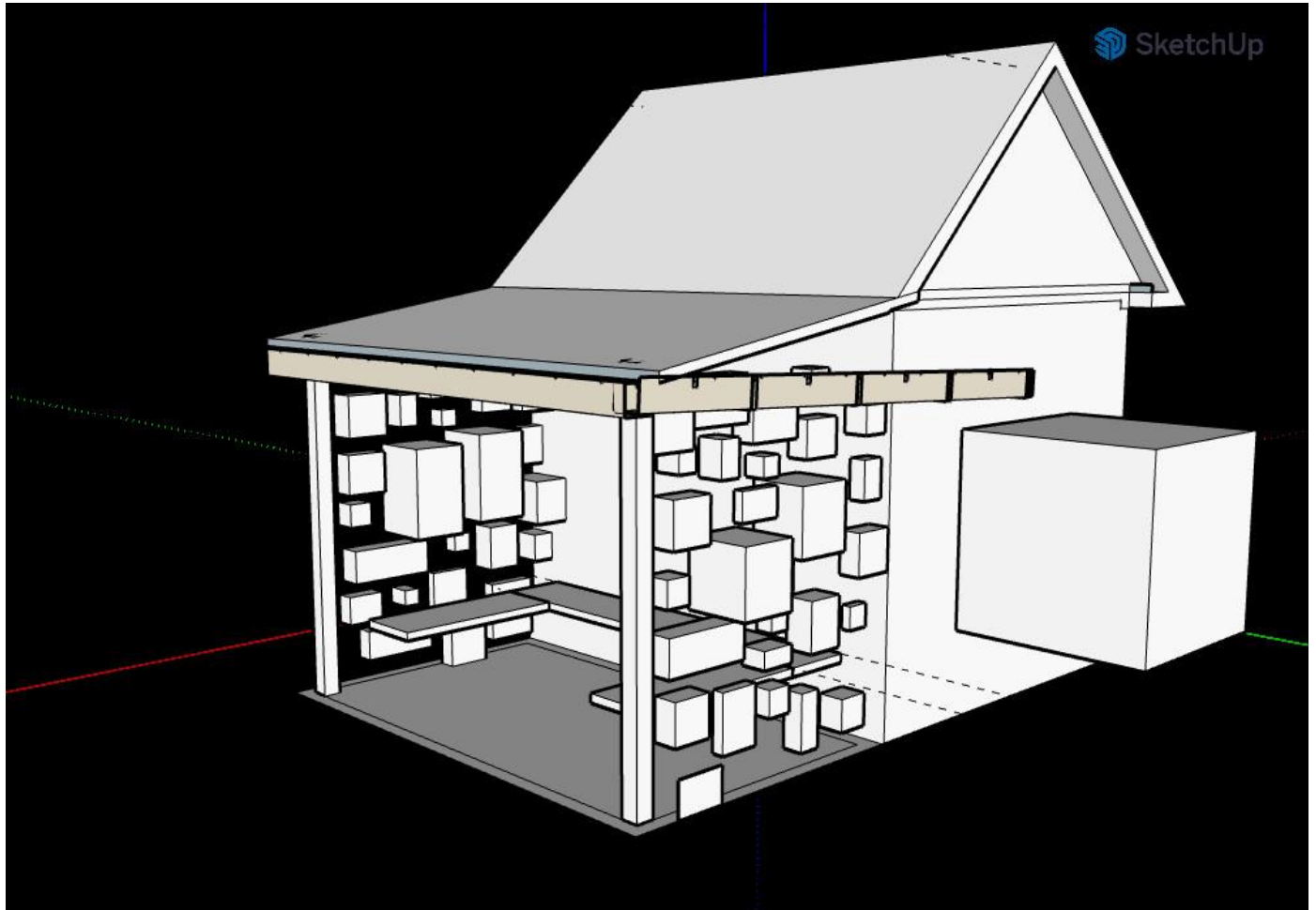
I aim to build an installation that stands the test of time. Of course there will be general upkeep! The city will need to touch up the paint on the shed as it wears over time. I can make sure the paint colors are written down and leftover paint is left with the maintenance department. The varnish on the wooden boxes will have to be touched up. The steel bars will have to be repainted. After a long while some of the plexiglass may have to be replaced within the boxes. I plan to make the boxes accessible to be removed if this sort of repair is needed.



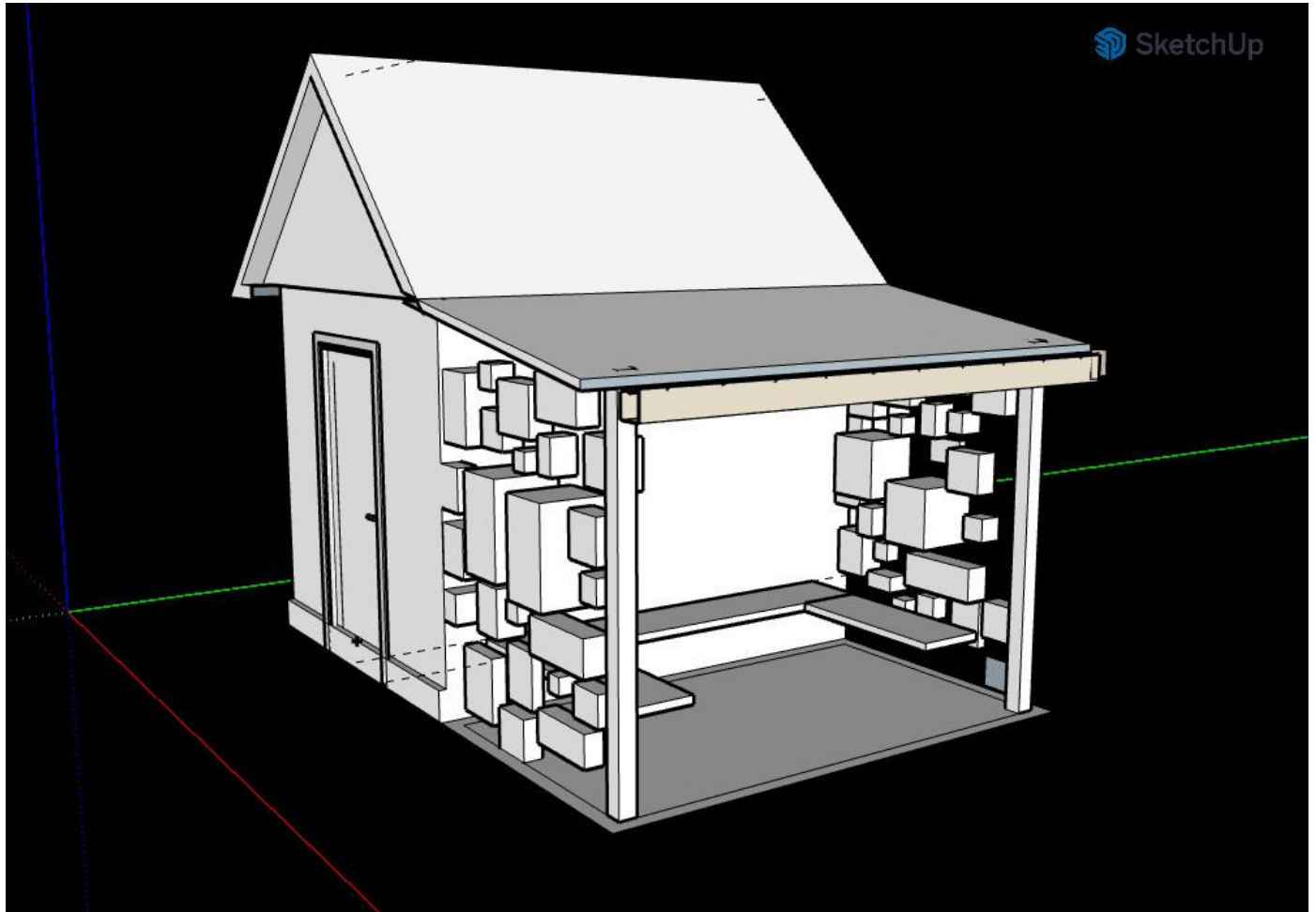
"Seed Keeper Reliquary inside"



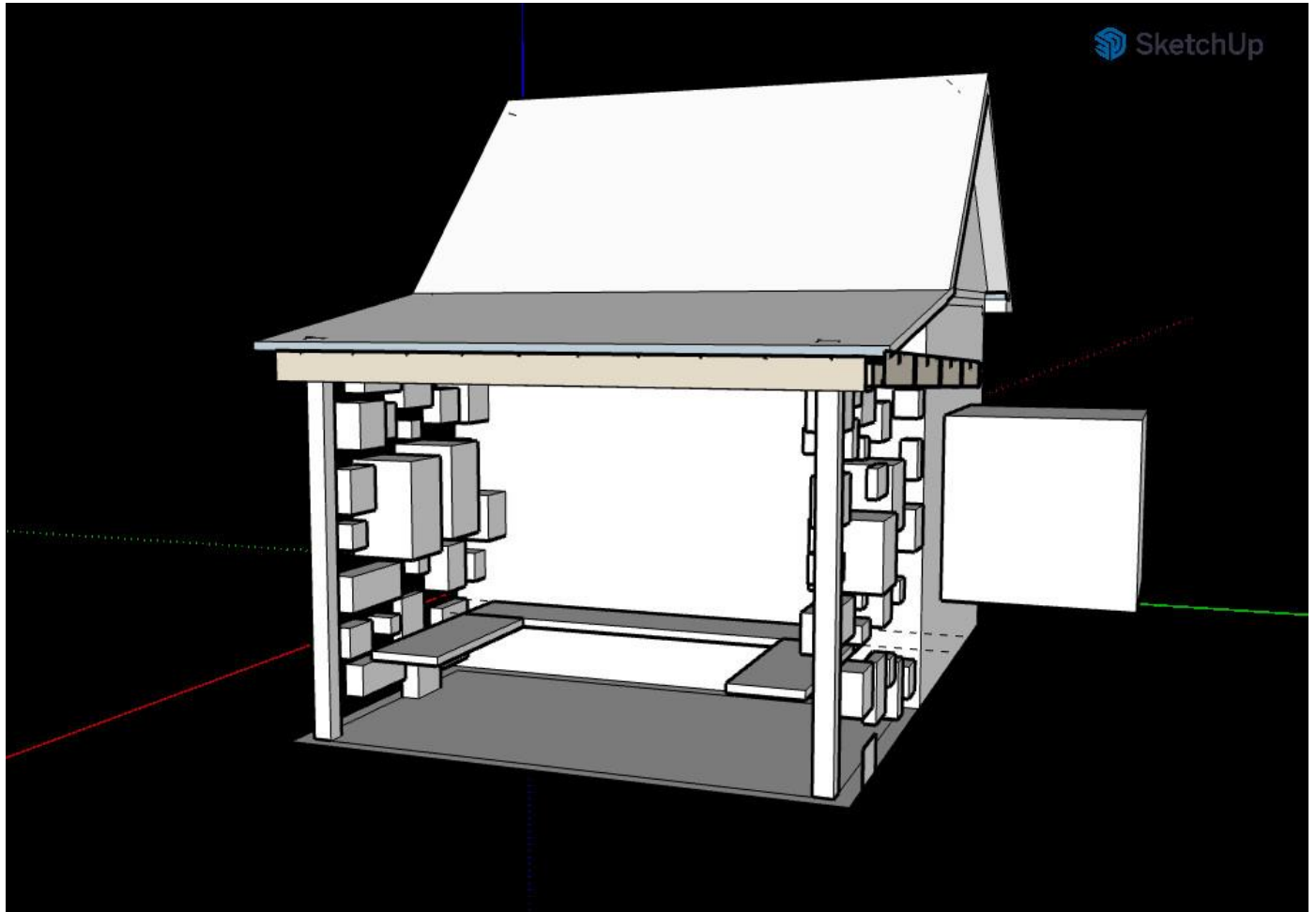
"Seedkeeper Reliquary"



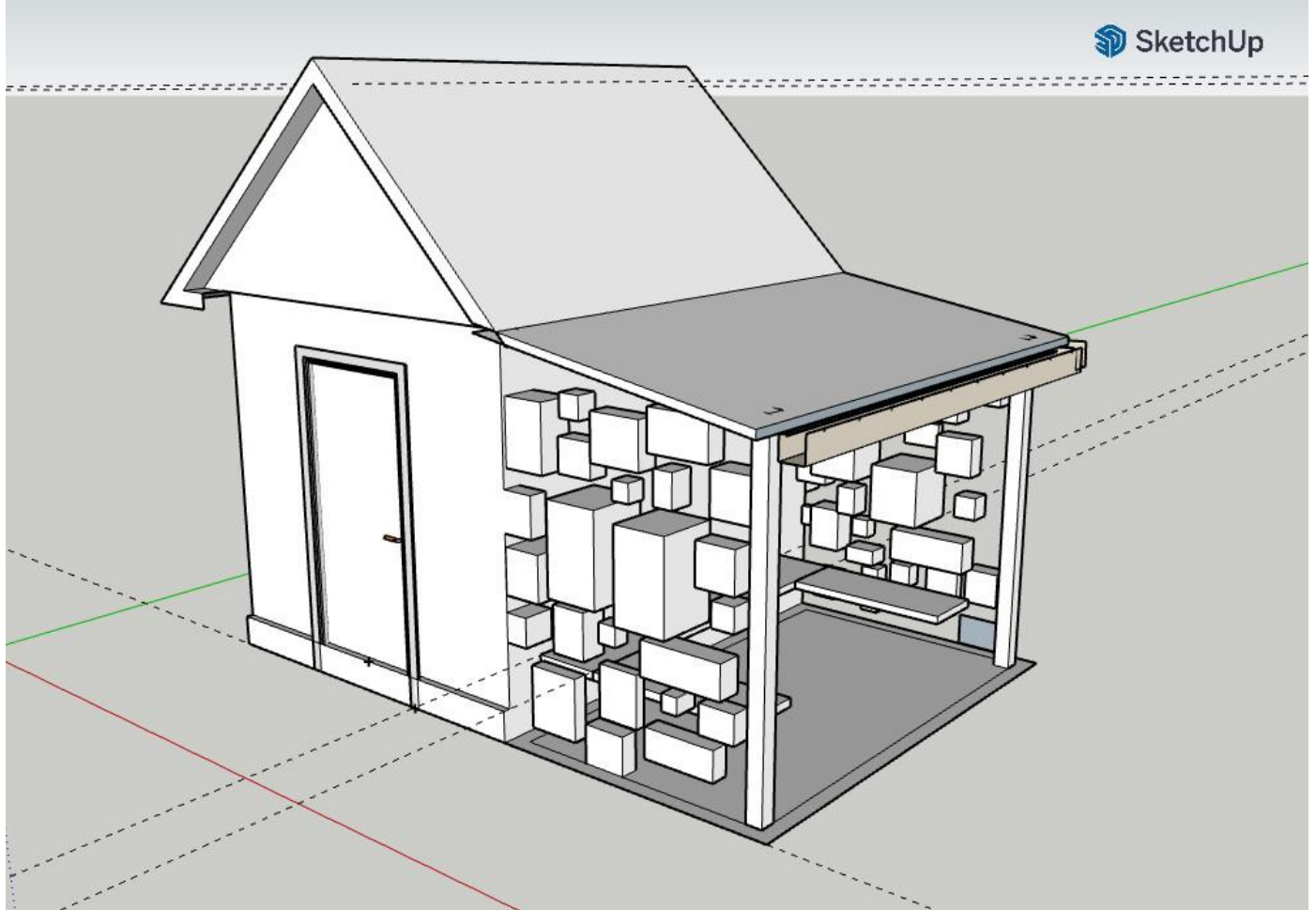
"SeedKeeper Reliquary (3)"



"SeedKeeper Reliquary (1)"



"SeedKeeper Reliquary (2)"



"SeedKeeper Reliquary"



"reliquary 2018"



"reliquary 2018"