

ALL ABUZZ

Sticking up for the bees: Artist painstakingly brings attention to Colony Collapse Disorder

BY [WHITNEY RADLEY](#)

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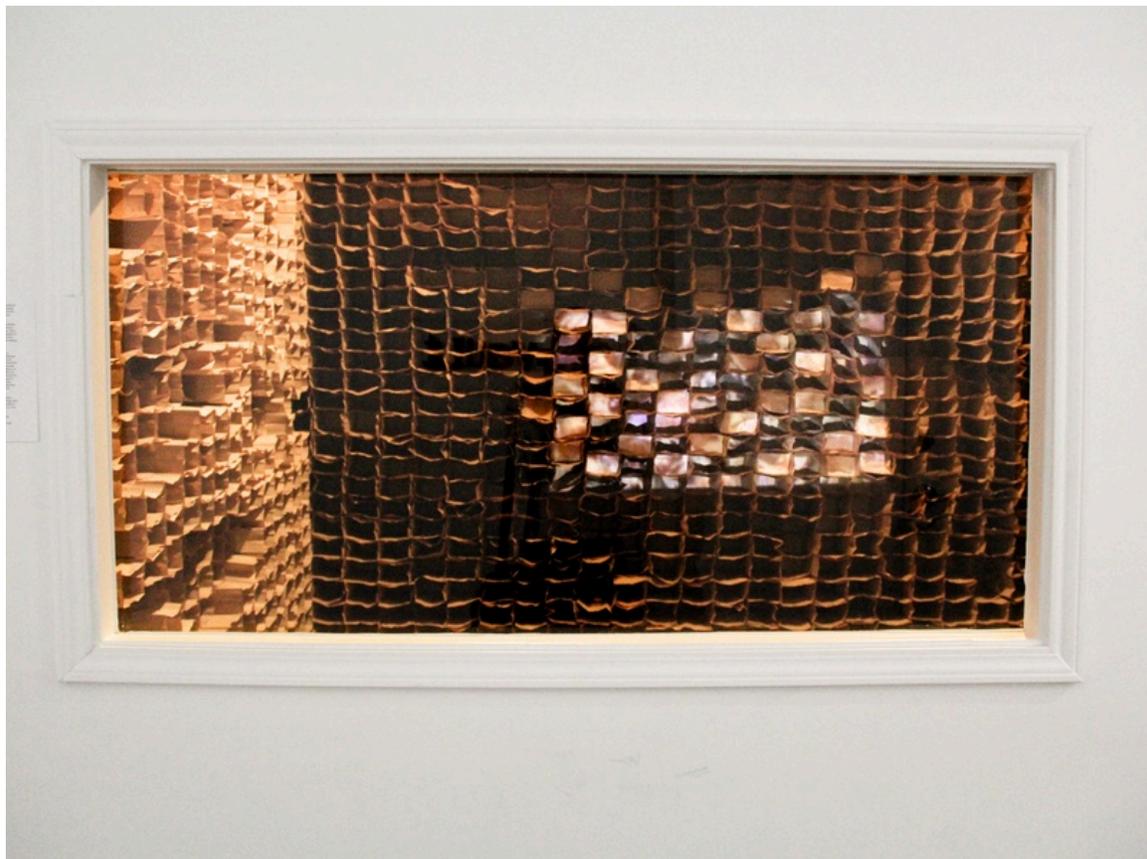


Photo by Adrienne Raquel

[The Micro Scope 1824](#) project space at [Spring Street Studios](#) is abuzz — literally — with *Colony Collapse*, a site-specific installation by Nicola Parente.

Although Parente typically works in abstract painting and fine art photography, the Italian-born, Houston-based artist tells CultureMap that he tries to get out of the studio every few years to work on socially and environmentally-minded [projects](#).

His current focus rests on the honey bee — or rather, the bee's tenuous existence.

To bring attention to bees' decline, Parente assembled a colony-like environment.

"This has been on my mind for six years or so," says Parente, pointing to a [recent study](#) conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health that links Colony Collapse Disorder, a phenomenon in which adult bees abandon their hives, to the widely-used pesticide [imidacloprid](#).

The report determined that continued use of the pesticide could have disastrous effects on the remaining bee population in the United States, and would inevitably lead to even more disastrous economic and environmental repercussions.

To bring attention to the bee's decline, Parente assembled a colony-like environment in the 8-foot by 10-foot experimental gallery space. He used only a projector, double-sided tape, a handful of pushpins and more than 2,700 recycled paper lunch bags.

It was a tedious task, Parente says, and a meditative one. "Each time I unfolded a bag, I would think of what it would be like if we didn't have bees, if we didn't have honey."

The exhibition is on view Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. through the end of May. An official opening will take place on April 13 from 6 to 8 p.m.