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Bee's *Knees*

Q uoting Einstein, artist **Nicola Parente** says, "If the bees disappear, mankind would have only four more years."

Therefore, the internationally exhibited Houston-based painter (a key player in the Gremillion stable) did something about it: He crafted an installation to call attention to the plight of the bumblebee. Parente's site-specific *Colony Collapse* inaugurates the project at **Micro Scope 1824**, a miniscule 8-by-10-foot gallery on the first floor of the **Spring Street Studios** complex. Part volumetric sculpture, part insistently humming video, the creation is formed from 2,700 prosaic recycled brown paper bags, the kind used for school lunches. The slightly menacing work calls the viewer to investigate the impact of the declining population of the world's bee colonies. (Parente's mission statement underscores the



\$8 to \$12 billion annual economic contributions of the honeybee to American agriculture; besides producing hives and honey, the bees are pollinators supreme.) Stay tuned for more meaningful Micro Scope projects curated by Spacetaker founder and FotoFest-exhibited photographer **David A. Brown** and glass master **Michael Crowder** — part of the pair's Invest in Houston initiative. Future creatives planned for the micro incubator include **Ian Anderson**, **Mark Masterson** and **Monica Vidal**. Meanwhile, we're mad for Parente's ode to one of the unsung heroes of Mother Nature — it's simply the bee's knees. *Through May*. Catherine D. Ansporn