



THIS MONTH,  
DAZED  
THROWS SHAPES  
WITH  
EMBROIDERED  
PHOTOS,  
ROCK  
HOLOCAUSTS,  
ARTY BEES  
AND GEOMETRIC  
FASHION

THREADS

### A TASTE OF HONEY

Cutting-edge sculptures made by... bees?

Hilary Berseth has about 30,000 assistants at work in his studio. The Pennsylvania artist begins each sculpture by creating a curvaceous framework of wax and wire, in which he then sets loose a colony of bees who fill the framework's gaps with wax of their own. The results are impossible to predict until the lid is taken off at the end, and Berseth is generally reluctant to compare the strange shapes of his work to more familiar real-world structures, "but I did have a hive that came out as a cross between the egg sacs in *Alien* and a flower painting by O'Keefe."

So, do the bees realise anything unusual is going on? Berseth points out that each bee only pays attention to her own corner of the hive. "As humans we tend to think about order as a property of top-down intelligence. But in bee colonies there's no such thing. So my interventions can satisfy the natural parameters of the individual bees, even while the overall arrangement of the hive might be something quite unnatural. It would be nice to think they didn't notice, but who knows? They're probably smarter than I think – worker bees remember and communicate the positions of food sources. Perhaps they're just humouring me."

*Text Ned Beaman*

*Right: Programmed Hive, courtesy of the artist*

