

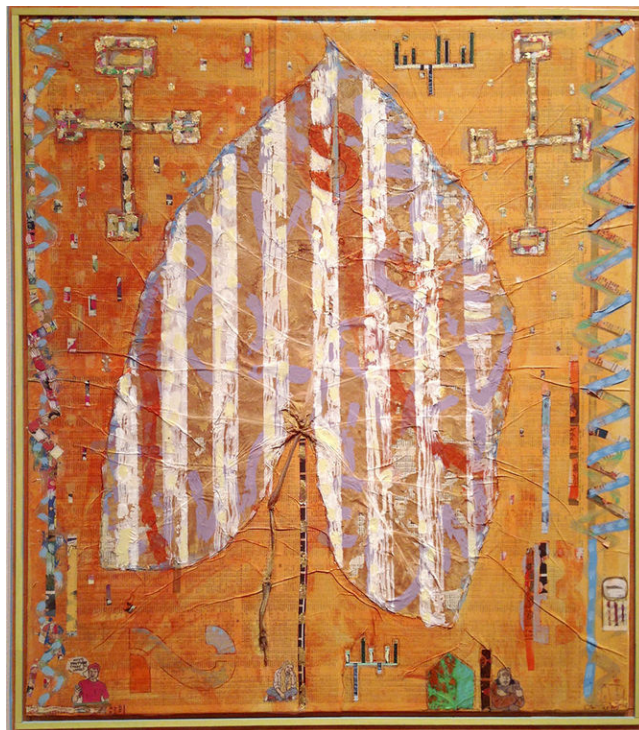
# Art in Review: "Axle Indoors" at Peters Projects

Michael Abatemarco | Posted: Friday, March 6, 2015 5:00 am

***Axle Indoors*, Peters Projects, 1011 Paseo de Peralta, 505-954-5800; through March 21**

Five years ago, local artists Matthew Chase-Daniel and Jerry Wellman came up with the novel idea of an art gallery on wheels, and Axle Contemporary, Santa Fe's only such venue, was born. You never know where it might turn up: in the parking lot of Harry's Roadhouse; parked in the Railyard by the Farmers Market; or at the corner of Palace and Lincoln, outside the New Mexico Museum of Art. In their first year, the gallerists worked with video artists Woody and Steina Vasulka, sculptor Paula Castillo, multimedia artist Meridel Rubenstein, and santero Charlie Carrillo, among others. The numbers of original exhibits have grown in the years that followed — so, too, has their list of artists. Because some of Axle's projects were too large to be contained within the confines of its retrofitted 1970 aluminum step van, the van's exterior has sometimes been used as an artist's canvas. In the last year, Chase-Daniel and Wellman were involved with projects at the Institute of American Indian Arts, SITE Santa Fe, the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve in La Cienega, and the Center for Contemporary Arts. They did special events, like *The Renga Project*, for which local poets contributed weekly stanzas and local artists made drawings in response. That began in 2013, and was expanded to include a book of all the drawings, a writing workshop, and a panel discussion at the New Mexico Museum of Art.

When Chase-Daniel and Wellman invited all their past artists to participate in *Axle Indoors*, a Peters Projects exhibit commemorating their first five years, about 150 of them responded, and the result is an exhibit of more than 500 works. Axle has installed just about everything that has come its way. The show commemorates the gallery's past exhibits without re-creating them. Most of the art on display is either new or has not yet been formally shown. The exhibit fills all the gallery space at Peters Projects, as well as its lobby, where Cannupa Hanska Luger's mixed-media sculpture *Leave Me a Home* — the skeletal figure of a Buffalo Dancer — greets arriving visitors. On a wall outside



## Nature & Culture

Craig Anderson: Nature & Culture #1, 2015, acrylic and collage on panel

the entrance to the main gallery is a to-scale photo reproduction of the back of Axle's van. Peters Projects' curators managed to group the large number of works together in its galleries with some logic, but without pairing them simply by medium, or in haphazard arrangements. The only exceptions are a few works in new media that are set in a darkened back room in order to show them to full effect. These include an untitled video sculpture by Bruce Hamilton and Susanna Carlisle. Photography dominates in one small room, though it is broken up by some works on paper and small sculpture pieces. Clearly, every effort was made for each section in the exhibit space to be cohesive while still offering variety.

Chase-Daniel and Wellman, who have some of their own art in the exhibit, have curated more than 75 shows for their van — but *Axle Indoors* showcases how well their collaborative curatorial eye also adapts easily to a larger venue. Hanging the show was a community effort, with the pair enlisting, among others, Craig Anderson, a former CCA director, and Frank Ragano, who runs the annual *Currents* new media festival, to help install it. Two mixed-media paintings by Anderson, from a series titled *Nature & Culture*, are in the exhibit. The enthusiastic outpouring from so many artists confirms Axle's status as a permanent Santa Fe art-scene fixture with owners who are much loved. It's also encouraging to see Peters Projects — which maintains a focus on national and international artists, with work less known in Santa Fe than in larger U.S. cities — turn its attention to local and regional artists, many of whom have no regular representation. This provides an opportunity to see works that are seldom viewed in a gallery setting. There are exceptions, however. Artists Jennifer Joseph and Erika Wanenmacher are showing pieces that were previously exhibited in solo shows at Phil Space within the last year. The list of participants reads like an overview of Santa Fe's well- and lesser-known contemporary artists, though it's far from exhaustive: Multimedia artist Jamison Chas Banks, Taos-based photographer Jonathan Blaustein, gallery owner and artist Jay Etkin, painter Eugene Newmann, sculptor and installation artist Jamie Hamilton, multimedia artist Kathleen McCloud, glass artists Stacey Neff and Elodie Holmes, and photographer Patrick Nagatani are included. Because each artist was permitted to submit up to four works, viewers can get a greater sense of these artists' conceptual interests and distinctive use of mediums. Mark Saxe's inlaid stone sculptures are an odd assortment of designs — some based on electronics — in which polished stonework combines with rough, broken sections that lend dramatic contrast. Like her other wall hangings, Nancy Ziegler Nodelman's *Free Will* is a monochromatic work made from recycled materials and found objects. There's ceramic sculpture as well, along with numerous abstract and conceptual pieces and figurative and narrative works, some of them displaying greater artistic accomplishment than others — which is to be expected in a show of this size.

In its role of introducing Santa Feans to less-known members of their local art community, few shows are as inclusive or comprehensive as *Axle Indoors*. Since its founding, Axle Contemporary has also worked with numerous poets and performers. These contributors were of course not part of an exhibit of the visual arts. So Chase-Daniel and Wellman have decided to include them by hosting an

afternoon of alternative art forms at Peters Projects: Past Axle participants Chuck Calabreze, Lauren Camp, Deborah Casillas, and others will read from their poetry, and performance artists Madelin Coit, Ross Hamlin, Mara Leader and Jason Goodyear, and Molly Sturges will offer their live work. The event, which takes place on Saturday, March 14, at 1 p.m., is free of charge.