

Journal North



AN EDITION OF THE ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 13-19, 2015

X

JOURNAL NORTH

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

A&E

THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 13-19, 2015 | PAGE 6



This video screen capture is from Woody Vasulka's "Järmark."

Mobile art gallery takes things to a new level by filling large building with new works by NM artists

ACCESSIBLE



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AXLE CONTEMPORARY

"There is No Such Thing as Death" by Alexandra Eldridge is photography and mixed media on antique Chinese scroll.

BY JACKIE JADRNAK
JOURNAL NORTH

After more than four years of taking art to the public in a silver step van that once delivered Twinkies, Axle Contemporary is exploding into the largest immobile gallery in Santa Fe.

At least for a little over a month.

Called Axle Indoors, the show will fill the entire 8,500-square-foot Peters Projects with art from more than 140 northern New Mexico artists who have shown with Axle Contemporary in the past.

But when Peters Projects director Ylise Kessler called it a Who's Who of contemporary artists working in Santa Fe, Axle's Jerry Wellman quickly demurred. "There are so many wonderful artists in Santa Fe," he said, and not all of them have shown work in the traveling gallery yet.

OK, Kessler amended, it's "more of a finger on the pulse of what's happening in Santa Fe at this moment."

While the exhibit will contain works of artists who have shown in Axle Contemporary, it will not include items the truck already has exhibited. It's all new work, Wellman said.

Some 250 artists who participated in truck shows in the past were invited to submit up to three new pieces for the exhibit; of those, two said no, about 150 said yes, and the rest didn't respond, said Matthew Chase-Daniel, co-founder with Wellman of Axle Contemporary. "Maybe they never got the message," he dead-panned.

The show is the brainchild of Kessler, who said she wanted "to do something different."

Last July, the Peters Project was formed in the space that was once the Gerald Peters Gallery. That Gallery's



"Seed Pods" by Suzanne Sbarge is mixed media that will be in the Axle Indoors exhibition.

ACCESSIBLE // EXHIBIT HELPS TO BUILD COMMUN

FROM PAGE 6

more traditional collections moved to the building on the north side of the parking lot, while the Peters Project is focusing on contemporary art.

"I'm still trying to get the word out that we're here," Kessler said.

While the art will still be available for sale to buyers, she said she also wants to make the gallery into a place where people can simply look at and talk about the art.

"Santa Fe needs a venue that people feel comfortable in," she said. If kids want to come and make noise, that's fine, she added.

This is the first show of a series that is designed to engage the community with a number of different themes, perhaps attracting people who have not gone into a local gallery in recent years.

The next one, which will open March 27, will feature blown-up images normally used in the course of determining diagnosis and treatment at the University of New Mexico Cancer Center, Kessler said. Activities connected to that show will include scientists' lectures and children's workshops.

That will be followed by a show that will feature emerging artists who completed the SITE Scholars program associated with SITE Santa Fe, she said.

Both these shows and the work by Axle Contemporary represent new ways of pre-



"Subjacent II" is a toned gelatin silver print by Willis Lee.

sending and marketing art, according to Kessler.

"The way art is being presented and sold is really shifting and morphing because of the Internet and art fairs," she said. "Galleries are evolving, but no one knows exactly how."

One direction is to change from being elitist to being inclusive, she said.

"Everyone is tired of the

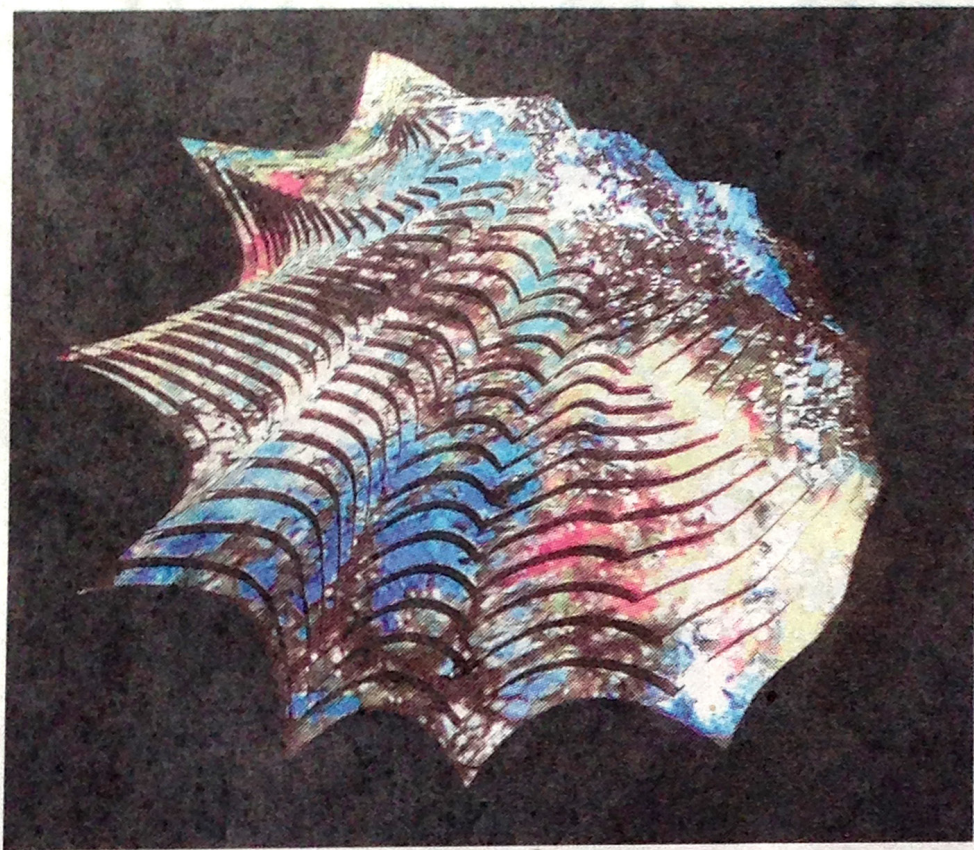
same-old, same-old," she said.

Accessibility

It's been about five years since Wellman and Chase-Daniel got the idea for taking art to where people congregate. The first Axle Contemporary exhibit opened in September 2010.

"Matt and I are old friends. We wanted to do something

ITY BY FEATURING NEW WORKS BY NEW MEXICO ARTISTS



This untitled image is a video projection on Baltic birch by Susanna Carlisle and Bruce Hamilton.

different where art can be accessed by more people," Wellman said.

He had a casita trailer that they thought about gutting and filling with art, but it seemed too small. They found a two-ton flatbed truck that they thought about, but decided it was too big.

Then they saw an Internet ad for a step van and went to Colorado Springs to see it, and it was just right.

They raised the roof, put in skylights and designed the walls so works could hang by magnets. "We drive and park it all over the city," Wellman said.

And not just Santa Fe. The van has taken exhibits to Española, Taos, Albuquerque

and elsewhere.

"We chase people around," Chase-Daniel said, meaning that the van tries to appear wherever people might gather, whether it's a special event in the Railyard or just the parking lot at the Genoveva Chavez Community Center or La Montanita Co-op.

Coffee shops are good, Wellman added. And they always get permission for the sites where they park, he said.

"It's always fun when they just pop up," Kessler said. "A lot of it has to do with creating community."

In recent shows, Axle Contemporary has delved into what's termed "social

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Axle Indoors

WHEN: Opening reception, 5-7 p.m. today

On exhibit through March 21

SPECIAL EVENT: Poetry and performance art, 1-4 p.m. March 14

WHERE: Peters Projects, 1011 Paseo de Peralta

HOW MUCH: Free admission

engagement" art. That's art in which the public participates, instead of just watching.

An example was Axle's Potato project in September at Taos' Paseo event. The duo picked up a couple of hundred pounds of organic potatoes for people to carve into stamps, dipping the shapes into edible dyes and stamping the images on paper. Then the potatoes were made into a soup and served to patrons.

"We served 200 bowls and had 500 prints," Chase-Daniel said.

Another was the Royal Breadshow, where small porcelain sculptures were baked into loaves of bread that were decorated works of art themselves, then sold to the public with a portion of the proceeds donated to The Food Depot.

Axle Contemporary also presents poetry and performance art, so the Peters Project will feature those works 1-4 p.m. on March 14.