BREAKING
New Ground

story by STEPHANIE HAINSFURTHER

CCA
CENTER FOR
CONTEMPORARY ARTS
SANTA FE

SITE
SANTA FE
The Center for Contemporary Arts sees the upcoming *Tom Joyce: Everything at Hand* exhibit opening July 28 as a matchless fit for CCA's vision. Tom Joyce is a sculptor and artist of international renown who opened his studio in Santa Fe in 1977 and says, "I've grown up with CCA." This exhibition will present new work representing Tom's lifetime of forging iron, and featuring themes based on the tools he's used, then and now. Also on display in the solo show will be experimental, large-scale drawings and photographs, mixed-media installations and video projections.

"We are the organization that discovers these artists and shows them to the world," CCA Executive Director Stuart Ashman says. "Santa Fe truly is a contemporary art community on a par with other parts of the contemporary art world, very well known and growing."

Not so in the 1970s, when a smattering of commercial art galleries carried only traditional Southwestern art and crafts. The Armory for the Arts on Old Pecos Trail provided a collection of buildings that housed many groups more interested in the contemporary artists of New Mexico, including the CCA, which was officially founded in 1979.

"CCA was born out of The Armory for the Arts, showing the newest artists and of course establishing the Cinematheque," Stuart says. "In 2009, CCA renovated the Tank Garage, thanks to two big donors and created a place to show contemporary artists to and from New Mexico. We have shown that Santa Fe is a contemporary art center, not some isolated outback."

More than $2 million in capital improvements went into CCA's campus that year. Now, there is a new entrance and new sidewalks. With the Tom Joyce solo show, visitors will be able to wander through the exhibit from the Tank Garage into a new outdoor sculpture garden with tall trees. So far this year, more than 20 visual arts exhibits were shown in the gallery and the Cinematheque at CCA. Films in the Cinematheque are out of the mainstream, and the center hosts film fests like the current New Mexico History Museum's Radical Southwest: A Film Series. Public programs include live music performances by contemporary and classical artists.

Beyond architecture and programming, Stuart reflects on how the CCA and other arts organizations consistently reach into the community in ways that reflect their own entrepreneurial energy and attitude. "In a city of 80,000 people, we've got 13 museums and 220 galleries," he says. "Santa Fe is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network because of its three folk art markets. The Siler Arts District is being spurred on by Meow Wolf, which started here at CCA. Cyndi Conn, executive director of Creative Santa Fe, used to be the [Visual Arts] curator here [at the CCA]. Organizations like CCA inspire people to think even bigger, about housing, business, energy and creative community."

Two venues historically devoted to the contemporary side of the arts in Santa Fe are building on their reputations—artistically, and literally—with forward-looking exhibitions and additions to some already impressive innovations.

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Thinking bigger is a given for SITE Santa Fe as its building renovation at the Railyard continues, with a reopening set for Oct. 5. SITE will expand not only its square footage—up to 36,000 square feet inside and out—but also its audience outreach and hours of operation. "One of the original visions is that SITE becomes a gathering space for community as well as a space for contemporary arts," SITE's Phillips Director and Chief Curator Irene Hofmann says. "This is a place where everyone belongs; that's a key element."

To that end, the front gallery, which will be part of SITElab, will always show a standalone, public exhibition accessible from the new lobby. The lobby, gift shop and snack bar will be open every day, a new and welcoming idea. "In the past, we were closed parts of February and March, June and July, and on Mondays and Tuesdays. Now, we're never closed," Irene says. "You can have lunch, see [an art] show, shop, meet a friend, even before you buy a ticket—every day of the week."

The larger reopening exhibits this fall will showcase Kota Ezawa’s animation-style illustrations of 13 masterworks stolen from Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in 1990 and never recovered. Kota is a Japanese-German artist based in San Francisco best known for a three-minute, computer-animated video of the O.J. Simpson verdict, now in the permanent collection at The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The second October visual arts offering curated by Irene, Future Shock, will reference Alvin Toffler’s concepts from his 1970 book, which popularized terms such as “adhocracy,” “post-industrial society” and “paradigm shift.” Within a 16,000-square-foot gallery, 10 artists will examine DNA testing, artificial intelligence, transient workers, space exploration, the global economy and other ‘future shocks’ visited upon us today. Artists include Tom Sachs, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Regina Silveira and Andrea Zittel. "Because there are only 10, there will be a substantial group of art from each," said Hofmann.

Performing arts at SITE will also get a boost with an expanded auditorium of 200-plus seats, increasing audience size and modes of performing, and having a real impact on programming. According to Cultural Project Director Ayumi Sugiyama at
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