

Roswell Daily Record

A traveling photo portrait studio and exhibition arrives in Roswell

By Christina Stock

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E Pluribus Unum: New Mexico Southeast

By [Christina Stock](#) - October 1, 2018 0



The mobile studio is rolling to town

In 2012, the Axle Contemporary team of Jerry Wellman and Matthew Chase-Daniel began a series of social engagement portrait projects, called E Pluribus Unum (which is Latin for "from many one").

"The first one was produced in Santa Fe, and exhibited as part of SITE Santa Fe's Time/Lapse: March 2012 exhibition," the artists said. The project has its

own kickstarter page, finding support along the way. "In 2014, we produced the project in Albuquerque and exhibited it in 516 ARTS' Heart of the City show. In 2016 we did the project on and around the Navajo Nation and created a big exhibition at the Navajo Nation Museum. So far well over 2,000 people have participated in the projects. Now, in October 2018 we will create the fourth project in the series, E Pluribus Unum: New Mexico Southeast, in the communities of Roswell, Lovington, Hobbs, Alamogordo, Tularosa, Ruidoso, Lincoln, Carrizozo, Carlsbad, Artesia, Portales, and Clovis. This project will be exhibited next year in one or more local museums or art centers in the area. Through this ongoing series of projects we are creating a portrait of the community of New Mexico in our time."

First stop for the unique traveling studio is Roswell. The public can get a first glimpse at the project as Wellman and Chase-Daniel will be part of the Eastern New Mexico State Fair Parade on Monday.

After the parade, the public is invited to participate in the project while it is parked at the ENM State Fairgrounds until Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the studio will drive around town to interact with the locals, ending the day at the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, 409 E College Blvd., where it will remain from 4 to 7 p.m. Snacks and refreshments will be offered.

AMoCA's director Nancy Fleming describes the project that is free to participate in. "E Pluribus Unum is a mobile photographic portrait studio," she said. "Participants enter the studio and are photographed holding a small object that has some special personal meaning to them. The black and white photograph is printed immediately in the solar-powered studio. One copy is given to the participant; another is pasted to the exterior of the studio-gallery. At the close of the project there will be an exhibition of all of the portraits and the project artists will publish a book with the photographs. "The Roswell Museum and Art Center will host an exhibition of the photographs in 2019," Fleming said.

Housed in the back of a custom retrofitted 1970 aluminum stepvan, Axle Contemporary is an art gallery on wheels. It was founded in 2010 by artists Chase-Daniel and Wellman, as a collaborative work of art, and an innovative vehicle for arts distribution. It has since grown beyond the confines of the mobile exhibition space, and also includes book publishing and alternative methods of creation and dissemination of contemporary arts in the public sphere.

Chase-Daniel was born in Cambridge Massachusetts in 1965 and lived in New York City in the 1960s. He later raised tadpoles, minnows and a raccoon, learned to fall off a horse and hunt morels, wild violets and rainbow trout in the Berkshire Mountains. In the mid and late 1980s, Chase-Daniel spent three years at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree. He left for Paris, France, where he lived three years to study cultural anthropology, photography and ethnographic film production at the École Pratique des Hautes Études & Sorbonne. Since 1989, he has lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, renovating old houses, growing green chard, and as he says, "making family and art."

Chase-Daniel's photography and sculptures have been exhibited across the US and in Europe. He is represented in Santa Monica, California by Craig Krull Gallery. He is the co-founder, co-owner, and co-curator of Axle Contemporary.

Wellman as an artist is rather a private person. His work speaks for himself. Wellman's paintings and drawings have been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Holly Solomon Gallery in New York City, Pierogi Gallery in Brooklyn, The Downey Museum in Downey, California, The Orange County Center of Contemporary Art in California, The El Paso Museum of Art, The Revolving Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. His drawings were selected for a traveling show sponsored by the Smithsonian. A sculptural installation "Emblems of Hidden Durations" was created for the College of Santa Fe outdoor sculpture series. Another sculptural installation "Tentative Phantom of the Clouds" was commissioned by the city of West Hollywood. The L.A. Weekly selected him to be a featured artist at the Los Angeles Art Expo. Wellman's video animation work has been presented at the Dallas International Video Festival, The Santa Fe International Film festival, The Kidseye festival in Newport, Rhode Island and won first place at the Magnifico Exhibitions at the Albuquerque Museum. Most recently Wellman co-produced a series of animated interstitials with PBS affiliate KNME-TV.

Other awards of note include: Art Matters Foundation Grant, Art Matters Inc. New York City NY. LINE Grant sponsored by the NEA and the state of New York Arts Council; to publish a book of writing and drawing. Disney Scholarship, CALARTS, Valencia, Critics Pick Santa Fe Reporter August 2004 Among Wellman's published work; Harvard University Press, catalog illustration, NADA Magazine, Chicago IL, "Shadows" by Jerry Wellman; a book of writing and illustration, the quarterly, American Painting. In March 2004 his second book of essays and illustrations, "What To Do With A Dead Piñon" was published. Reviews have included the LA Reporter, The LA Weekly, The Pasatiempo, The Santa Fean, The Wild Heart Journal to name a few.

Wellman has taught at the Pasadena College of Art and Design, CalArts and New Mexico State University. He was formerly the head curator at Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art. He is the co-founder, co-director and co-curator of Axle Contemporary Art Gallery.

For more information, visit axleart.com or call AMoCA at 575-623-5600.