

News Release

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New Mexico Museum of Art Readies for The Railyard Renaissance

Santa Fe, New Mexico - After more than a century at its current location on Santa Fe's historic downtown Plaza, the New Mexico Museum of Art prepares for a renaissance and expansion to The Railyard. The Museum embarked on a journey beginning in 2014 to reengage its founding vision and explore future opportunities. The outcome was a transformational idea for an additional space specifically for contemporary art to complement the historic location on the Plaza, creating "One Museum, Two Locations."

New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary

Through a generous \$4 million gift from Santa Fe philanthropists Ellen and Bob Vladem, a powerful public-private partnership resulted in the New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary now under construction in The Railyard.

"Future generations will know and appreciate Ellen and Bob Vladem's generosity within the Santa Fe community and New Mexico," said Mark White, the executive director of the New Mexico Museum of Art. "Their gift enables the museum to attain its vision for a modern, cutting-edge, and world-class center for learning and art appreciation."

By integrating modern technology and concepts into the New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary, Santa Fe will be home to one of North America's most innovative spaces for creating, learning, and appreciating contemporary art. What the original 1917 building did for Santa Fe in the 20th century, the New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary will do for the 21st century.

New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary will have a dynamic Education Center where artmaking, classes, hands-on activities, and performance-based arts can occur. The original 1917 building lacks a dedicated education area. The new space will allow the museum to pursue its educational mission with modern exhibition spaces suited for contemporary art, a dedicated artist studio, expanded collection storage, and a remarkable collection viewing area.

"Expansive and flexible exhibition space is transformative to our mission of art appreciation and education. Large-scale installations, immersive multimedia projects, performance-based works, and increased storage capacity are central to 21st-century artistic practice. These enhancements will preserve New Mexico's cultural treasures for future generations," said White.

The Vladem Contemporary will feature:

- Nearly 10,000 square feet of new exhibition space in two separate galleries;
- A new artist in-residence program utilizing an on-site artist studio welcoming five artists each year, including two New Mexico artists along with three United States- or internationally based artists;
- An Education Center accommodating up to 100 people for an array of programming;
- Exterior Displays to include a dynamic video projection system for public outreach and a Window Box Project featuring three installations per year with local emerging artists that advance the mission of promoting accessible and inclusive contemporary art;
- State-of-the-art climate-controlled collection storage, including cold storage for photography that will extend the lifespan of the museum's expanding 8000-piece collection;
- Visible storage available to visitors with behind-the-scenes accessibility; and
- Outdoor spaces for community gatherings, including a spectacular second floor terrace with city and mountain views.

"The Vladem Contemporary's programs and amenities are sure to inspire artists and audiences looking to engage with contemporary art in a fresh, fun, and a vibrant new setting," added White.

New Location: The Railyard

The New Mexico Museum of Art Vladem Contemporary brings a complementary focus to the thriving cultural community already located on The Railyard.

Like other railroad-related locales around the U.S., Santa Fe's station, tracks, equipment, and neighborhood declined during the latter half of the 20th century. By 1987, the area required redevelopment; a renewal plan began the same year. The intent was to maintain the rugged, industrial look of the old rail complex. At the same time, it would provide local business opportunities and create a series of vibrant public spaces.

Today, the New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter service harkens a romantic bygone era as trains regularly arrive and depart from the historic Santa Fe Depot. The 90-minute trip from Downtown Albuquerque passes through tranquil landscapes that have made New Mexico iconic for centuries. Soon, The Railyard will be home to a restored historic Santa Fe Southern Railway as a revamped interactive sightseeing train owned and operated by notable author George R. R. Martin, creator of the "Game of Thrones" phenomenon, and two other private investors.

More than 100 years since its inception, the City of Santa Fe is the owner of the railyard property, which is now home to an eclectic mix of tenants serving the diverse interests of the community, from deeply rooted nonprofits such as the Santa Fe Farmers' Market, the Railyard Performance Center, the internationally renowned SITE Santa Fe, and El Museo Cultural de Santa Fe, to an array of restaurants, shops, contemporary art galleries, and the 11-screen Violet Crown Cinema.

Future housing developments include a new dormitory for students attending the New Mexico School for the Arts, the only four-year public high school serving artist-scholars across New Mexico, which provides a rigorous, award-winning pre-professional arts and academics program.

The New Mexico Museum of Art Vlodem Contemporary design blends the old and the new. The museum honors the historic 1930's railroad-adjacent Ilfeld Warehouse, which was later a state archives building, but adds a new second story crossing the original structure. The warehouse footprint aligns with the historic railroad tracks, while the new addition aligns with the current streetscape. The design features a large outdoor courtyard and rooftop deck with sweeping views of Santa Fe and the nearby Sangre de Cristo Mountains. These spaces are sure to become a favorite for community gatherings and events.

"As a northern anchor to The Railyard, the New Mexico Museum of Art Vlodem Contemporary will draw community, artists, and audiences from across the city, region, and beyond." added White, "We are dedicated to bringing the museum to the center of New Mexico's dynamic, diverse, and visionary creative community."

The Vlodem Contemporary, currently under construction, is scheduled to open in August 2022.

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