

Exhibit traces landscape evolution

By DAN MAYFIELD
Journal Staff Writer

From looking at how the oil industry has shaped South Texas to chronicling the distribution of garbage in Los Angeles, the Center for Land Use Interpretation has, for the last 15 years, narrated humans' interactions with our environment.

Now, the center has turned its critical lens on New Mexico for an exhibit with the giant LAND/ART Project. LAND/ART is a six-month series of exhibits, site-specific art pieces, and more that are all tied to land and land use.

"We're not historians in the normal sense," said the center's founder and director, Matthew Coolidge. "We look at the modern landscape."

For LAND/ART, the center has moved a "mobile exhibition unit," or a commercial construction trailer, to the edge of a wash near Mesa del Sol. The trailer is being filled with videos, photos and more to explain how New Mexico has become what it is architecturally, environmentally and geographically.

"We started back in '94, and a couple people got together to form the organization with an interest in explaining the built landscape," Coolidge said. "We look at all types of landscapes, but the one thing that unites all our projects is a landscape that looks at the anthropogeomorphology, the human-built and modified landscape."

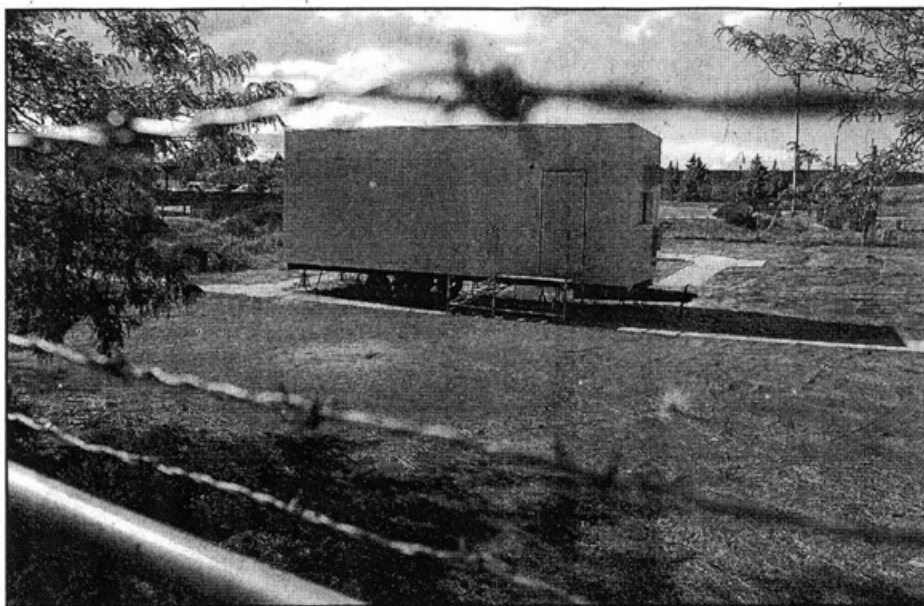
Anthropogeomorphology may be a mouthful, but it's simply the study of how humans have changed the landscape. The center has looked at the Trans-Alaska pipeline, the patterns of urban parking spaces and published the book "The Nevada Test Site: A Guide to America's Nuclear Proving Ground." From the polar ice caps to the top of the highest mountain peaks, humans have made their mark and the center's database has information on much of it.

In an urbanized area like Albuquerque, the stamp is larger and, Coolidge said, accelerated by technology.

"We looked at the idea of New Mexico as the progenitor of high technology that is often associated with the atomic program," he said. "But it's a manifestation of a broad cultural idea of technology being a spiritual manifestation, almost like solar worship, a supplement of worship of technology."

The center looked at the state in terms of its scale and how the atomic age shaped our land, from Kirtland Air Force Base to the barren wastelands of White Sands National Monument.

"Most of what you see in terms of land use is post-World War II," Coolidge said. "The bomb, produced in New Mexico, is



PAT VASQUEZ-CUNNINGHAM/JOURNAL

This trailer, the Center for Land Use Interpretation's Mobile Exhibition Unit, will be filled with videos, photos and more to explain how New Mexico evolved architecturally, environmentally and geographically.

If you go

WHAT: The Center for Land Use Interpretation Mobile Exhibition Unit

WHERE: The end of Los Picaros Road

WHEN: The hours, and more information about the unit, will be announced at the opening of "Second Site" at 516 ARTS, 516 Central SW, on Saturday, Aug. 1, from 6-8 p.m.

HOW MUCH: Free. For directions and more information, visit www.516arts.org or call 242-1445

great storytelling."

The Mobile Exhibition Unit will show all of this, and more. It doesn't, he said, go back in time; other museums do that better. The images and concepts the center deals with, instead, focus on the immediate past. The center tries to keep an objective eye toward simply showing the changes, or the human stamp, and let viewers decide what it means.

"Our programs are images, texts, videos that describe different types of places," he said. "We get commissioned to do projects that are regional and in other cases we look at thematic things from across the country."

Detailed information, including hours and exhibit specifics, will be announced at the opening of "Second Site," on Saturday, Aug. 1. "Second Site" is a gallery-wide exhibit at 516 ARTS that will tie in the various site-specific pieces of LAND/ART.

The Mobile Exhibition Unit is at the end of Los Picaros Road, in the valley of the Tijeras Arroyo.

LAND/ART works

Many of the site-specific works that are part of the LAND/ART Project will open on Saturday, Aug. 1.

"Second Site" is an exhibition and a reference area for the various site-specific exhibits opening this week, including works by Anne Cooper, Bill Gilbert, Basia Irland and more. The show also will feature a model of the selected public-art piece for the city of Albuquerque's next land-based art project. There will be an opening reception for the show on Saturday, Aug. 1, from 6-8 p.m. at 516 ARTS, 516 Central SW. 516 ARTS is open Tuesdays-Saturdays from noon-5 p.m. Call 242-1445 or visit www.516.org for more.

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith and her son Neal Ambrose Smith are creating a 4-acre corn maze at the Wagner Farm in Corrales. The maze will show how people once raised corn for humans and animals and provide information about the indigenous flora of Corrales. The corn maze will be open through October. Contact Wagner Farms, 6445 Corrales Road, at 898-3903.

Richard Levy Gallery will host a reception for "Air Cube +" and a group exhibition. Featuring an international slate of artists, the show opening will be from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 1, at 514 Central SW. Call 766-9888 or visit www.LevyGallery.com.