



EDDIE MOORE/JOURNAL

Jerry Wellman, right, and Matthew Chase-Daniel are co-owners of Axle Contemporary mobile art gallery. They took the van to Arroyo Hondo on Friday.

Dream Come True

Mobile Gallery To Deliver Art at Street Corners, Parking Lots

By KATE MCGRAW
For the Journal

Reluctantly, they rejected the alluring flatbed truck. Too high. Said no to the retired school bus — too long. Shook their heads over the box truck. It was just too boring.

It was one of those "We'll-know-it-when-we-see-it" things. And when they saw the 1970 Chevy all-aluminum step van, artists Jerry Wellman and Matthew Chase-Daniel knew it was the perfect vehicle for their latest concept: a mobile art gallery.

The medium-size (18 feet long, 7 feet wide) van began its life as a Hostess Twinkies delivery van. For a while, it was used by handyman Dave Hodges, Colorado Springs' foremost '80s-era Elvis impersonator. Colorado Springs is where Wellman and Chase-Daniel found it. It had a Chevrolet



The name — Axle Contemporary — accurately describes this art gallery-in-a-step-van that will bring its inaugural show to the Railyard on Friday.

350 Camaro engine installed by a mechanic whose son totaled the Camaro body (the kid is fine).

They drove it back to Chase-Daniel's spread in Arroyo Hondo. "It's a little slow on hills," he reported. "And it doesn't have power steering or power brakes," Wellman added. "The minute I drove it, I flashed back to my dad's

three-quarter-ton pickup." Now the erstwhile delivery van has settled into its new home in New Mexico and is ready for its close-up.

They lifted the roof and added rows of clerestory windows, and beamed the new ceiling, installing track lights. Painted the 10-foot-by-6-foot interior exhibit space with clean white paint that contains iron, so artworks can be displayed with magnets, no frames or glass necessary.

They created a flat file over the driver's seat that can store additional artworks, and a fold-down table where they can be spread out. The van is even wired for a solar panel, in case they can acquire one later.

And, after many weeks of hard sweat equity, many days spent getting the permits, business license, tax ID number and insurance, and \$5,000 in actual cash outlay, the mobile art

See EXHIBITING on PAGE 3

Exhibiting Deliverance of Art

from **PAGE 1**

gallery is opening with a group show Friday in the Railyard Arts District.

Wellman and Chase-Daniel call it Axle Contemporary.

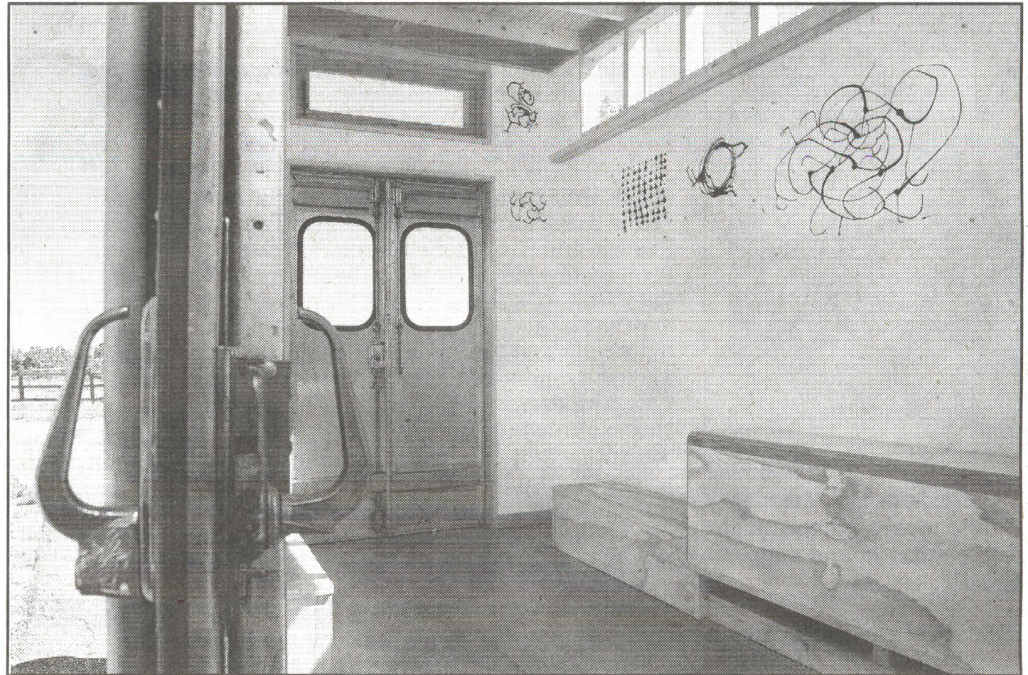
By Saturday morning, the two told the **Journal**, it may be at the Farmer's Market, or up on Canyon Road ... or in a parking lot somewhere along St. Michael's Drive.

The project is a dream come true, and, like all dreamers, Wellman and Chase-Daniel can get a little high-flown explaining it. It all has to do with the many notions of "mobility," Wellman said, including movement around on wheels, yes, but also the idea of taking art across economic borders. "We want to take art where galleries haven't been," he said. And to take the art itself across limits that successful artists impose on themselves when they have to meet regular galleries' overhead.

Mostly, they want to have fun. "My dad gave me a lot of advice, but one of the best pieces of wisdom he gave me was to have fun, fun, fun in life," Wellman said.

The first show should be fun. Besides Wellman and Chase-Daniels, the other artists showing in "Transmissions" — another multiple play on the motorhead theme — are Paula Castillo and Eliza Naranjo-Morse. "It'll be pretty densely hung," Chase-Daniel said. The show is all works on paper by the artists, which means there's a symbiosis of sorts for Castillo, better known for her welded-steel sculpture, with a show of her recent sculpture opening nearby at William Siegal Gallery, also in the Railyard.

Wellman and Chase-Daniel assume there'll



EDDIE MOORE/JOURNAL

Axle Contemporary gallery will host different art exhibits in the modified delivery van.

If you go

WHAT: "Transmissions," group show at Axle Contemporary

WHEN: Opening Friday 5-8 p.m. Through Oct. 14.

WHERE: Corner of Guadalupe Street and Paseo de Peralta, Railyard Arts District

CONTACT: www.axleart.com, twitter.com/axleart, facebook.com/axlecontemporary

be a natural parade of visitors between the show at Siegal and the show at Axle Contemporary. "We want to acknowledge the support of the galleries that understand and support what we're doing," Wellman said.

Future shows, Chase-Daniel said, may include the flash drawings of tattoo artists, stills from

independently made films, art by architects and scientists, or costume drawings. The edges are being pushed here, he said. "That's the point."

"It's kind of art as commerce, but it's also commerce as art," Wellman said. The pair has eight special appearances lined up to carry them through the spring of 2011, and they foresee taking Axle Contemporary to businesses that have special promotions, to schools, to festivals.

Wellman thinks it would be a hit at parties, too. "They have those Tupperware parties," he said. "Why not have a party with an art gallery in your driveway?"

The two artists also have an interest in science, technology and mathematics as creative endeavors. "Our slogan is WWLD: What Would Leonardo Do?" said Wellman.

Chances are the ultimate Renaissance Man would

love Axle Contemporary — and the fact that while the art may be ink on paper, the little van comes complete with a credit card machine. They'll take check or cash, too. And you can find more art from Axle Contemporary's shows on the website, www.axleart.com.

Also on the website: links to Twitter and Facebook accounts. Twitter will be the best way to find out where Axle Contemporary is at any given time, Chase-Daniel said. They can park in a private lot or driveway as long as they have the owner's permission. And provided they stay off the Plaza and its peripheral streets, they can park on a city street for up to two hours in one location, municipal officials told them.

"It's all going to be pretty variable," Chase-Daniel said. "We want people to show up and make it a destination — but we're also committed to having people stumble on it."