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Global Economics

Companies & Industries

Politics & Policy

Technology

Markets & Finance

Innovation & Design

Lifestyle

Business Schools

Small Business

Video & Multimedia

Markets Overview

World Markets

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Colorado Convention Center Adds \$235,000 of Art

DENVER, March 24, 2014 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ – The Colorado Convention Center, already known for its innovative public art that includes the 40-foot high Blue Bear peeking into the building, just added eight new pieces to its permanent collection.

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The additions are the result of a public-private partnership between the City & County of Denver and the convention center's management firm, SMG, which commissioned the \$235,000 project. Denver-based art consulting firm NINE dot ARTS was hired to select and install the new work.

The pieces, created by established and emerging local artists, were able to make use of the vast space in the convention center to create dramatic and engaging works. A 95-by-95 foot mural by Mindy Bray, titled "The Heavy is the Root of the Light," covers an entire wall behind a two-story escalator. The painting is based on photographs of the Platte River at nearby Confluence Park, the site where gold was first discovered leading to the founding of Denver in 1858.

Another piece by Sandra Fettingis entitled "I Know You Know That I Know" is 160 feet long and spans an entire hallway in the convention center. The painting creates an environment that envelops the viewer in a

repetitive pattern-filled corridor.

"Convention centers are also learning centers where people come to be engaged and broaden their knowledge, so it's appropriate that art be an important part of the building's environment," said Kent Rice, executive director of Arts & Venues for the City of Denver, which oversees the Colorado Convention Center. The new convention center art became a cornerstone for the launch of Mayor Michael B. Hancock's new cultural plan for Denver, IMAGINE 2020.

"Convention centers today must provide practical, green, efficient and easy to use space, but art and atmosphere are just as important to create surroundings that are conducive to learning and to conducting business," said John Adams, general manager of the Colorado Convention Center.

Leaders from Denver Arts & Venues, VISIT DENVER, SMG and the Denver arts community served on a committee that worked with NINE dot ARTS to select the new pieces. The new additions focus on Denver artists and galleries and showcase both the city's artistic forefathers such as Roland Bernier and Phil Bender as well as its next generation of creatives like Derrick Velasquez, Ian Fisher and Mindy Bray.

Martha Weidmann, CEO and Co-Founder of NINE dot ARTS, said, "Half of the artists in the new slate are under thirty-five, which is impressive considering most public artists are over forty. For many of the artists this was the largest scale permanent installation they have ever worked at, including veteran artist Roland Bernier who installed the largest piece of his nearly 60 year career. The art committee showed an amazing vision and faith in Denver's emerging talent to knockout results."

The new art adds to downtown Denver's growing reputation as an art center. "Denver has a very progressive public art program, so as people walk from our 8,500 downtown hotel rooms to the convention center, they will encounter many other public artworks. There are also five art museums within walking distance of the center, so it's wonderful to keep this feeling of being surrounded by art as you come into the building," said Richard Scharf, president & CEO of VISIT DENVER.

Art has also become a symbol for the Colorado Convention Center. VISIT DENVER has incorporated one of the convention center's older artworks, a 40-foot tall Blue Bear, officially titled "I See What You Mean" by Lawrence Argent, into an icon for the city and the lead element in the Bureau's advertising campaign.

"The first thing you see coming into the convention center is the Blue Bear, and now as you walk through the two million square foot building, you will continue to encounter art everywhere you go," Scharf said.

New Colorado Convention Center Public Art

- "The Heavy is the Root of the Light" by Mindy Bray
- "I Know You Know That I Know" by Sandra Fettingis
- "Untitled" (Ocular series) by by Mike McClung
- "Wall of Words" by Roland Bernier
- "Boulder Creek Autumn 08 #1" by James Cook
- "Atmosphere No. 27, 37 and 44" by Ian Fisher
- "Untitled 88" by Derrick Velasquez
- "License Plates" by Phil Bender

About VISIT DENVER, The Convention & Visitors Bureau

Celebrating more than 100 years of promoting the Mile High City, VISIT DENVER is a nonprofit trade association that contracts with the City of Denver to market Denver as a convention and leisure destination, increasing economic development in the city, creating jobs and generating taxes. A record 13.6 million visitors stayed overnight in Denver in 2012, generating \$3.6 billion in spending, while supporting nearly 50,000 jobs, making Tourism the second largest industry in Denver. Learn more about Denver on the VISITDENVERwebsite and at TOURISMPAYSDENVER or by phone at 800 2 Denver. Follow Denver's social media channels for up-to-the-minute updates at: Facebook.com/VISITDENVER; Twitter.com/IKnowDenver; Instagram.com/VISITDENVER and YouTube.com/VISITDENVER.

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With press or photo inquiries, please contact:

Rich Grant: (303) 571-9450 or rgrant@visitdenver.com
Debbie Park: (303) 571-9451 or dpark@visitdenver.com
Sarah Welch: (303) 571-9418 or swelch@visitdenver.com

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