

# SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

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## Merit Award for gallery re-do

Paul Weideman Jan 7, 2018



OTA Contemporary Gallery for Prull Builders and Craig Hoopes, architect.

Kate Russell

The remodeled gallery now known as OTA Contemporary was given an AIA Merit Award last month. The gallery in a prominent location at the corner of Canyon Road and Paseo de Peralta was elegantly modernized by Hoopes + Associates Architects.

“The owners had a vision for this building. We were just the implementers,” said the firm’s principal, Craig Hoopes. “What is wonderful is I think this building shows that contemporary architecture can happen within the Santa Fe vernacular.

The gallery, at about 3,000 square feet, was transformed from a previously existing wood-frame Spanish-Pueblo Revival-style gallery. The new building shows a good deal of glass, stucco, and concrete, with larger windows. “I think people are struck by the fact that they can see into one of the galleries on Canyon Road,” Hoopes said. “If you walk around Florence or Rome, there's art all around you, but you get to Canyon Road and you can't see inside most of those galleries.

“The whole plaza was also redone, so there are places for people to sit or to gather. I think the owners, Ed and Kiyomi Baird, have made a significant gift to the city with that. OTA is Kiyomi's maiden name. She's an artist and wanted to have a space to show art she felt needed to be seen, and also a place for performance art and conversations about art.”

During the Dec. 14 awards, Juror Carlos Jimenez told the AIA assembly that this project “begins with that kind of singular architecture of Santa Fe, which is a building constructed to appear to have a certain let us say pedigree of time and antiquity... The architects, he said, were able to open up the building, to reconquer the building with spatial and volumetric possibilities, and we were very impressed by the refinement of the language and the subtlety of all the techniques that they used and in fact we discussed many details that we found not only interesting but we all were very keen on using in our own work because we didn't know you could do this with a jamb or do this with a baseboard.”

Jimenez also lauded the way the architects “were able to create a fluidity within the galleries, because the original building was rather episodic in its broken masses. The way they unified all the galleries as if it was a much larger volume was quite striking.”

Build time was less than four months, but that was preceded by six months securing permits and permissions, including from the Historic Districts Review Board. “This was not a historic building,” Hoopes said. “We think it dates to about 1993. But we had to conform to the regulations.”

Inside, the wood floors were ripped out and concrete floors were honed to brighten them. The entire building is not just more open, but brighter. Hoopes said the previous inside was “stark,” even with kiva fireplaces and exposed ceiling beams. “There were a lot of small rooms to maximize the wall space to show art and sell art. But art today tends to be larger and you need to step back and look at it and think about it.”

On the outside, there was a wraparound portal on the east and north that was removed, and there was a portal on the west that the builder ripped out. “That made the sidewalk walkable. Two people could not walk down that sidewalk because of the portal columns that were spaced six feet apart: it just didn't make sense to me.

“What's great about it is it's fresh, it keeps in the vernacular: it meets every condition that the guidelines for building in the historic district have. At the same time it conveys a modern image.” — Paul Weideman

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