FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 5, 2014

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“Inside/Out” Light-based Public Art Installation Project Selected for UNM Pit Glass Stair Tower

Santa Fe, NM – New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs and the University of New Mexico (UNM) are pleased to announce that the Local Selection Committee (LSC) for the UNM Pit Public Art Project have selected Brooklyn based light artist, Ivan Toth DePeña to create a permanent light installation to be placed in the glass stair tower of the renovated UNM Pit Athletic Facility.

The UNM Pit LSC specified that they were interested in finding an artist/artist team to “create a permanent light installation within the stair tower at The Pit on the university’s south campus. The artwork commissioned for this project will enliven the building through a dynamic nighttime installation programmed to convey the excitement of activities held at the facility.”

The UNM Pit Local Selection Committee (LSC) members were:
- Suzanne Mortier, University Landscape Architect, UNM
- Scott Dotson, Associate Athletics Director, UNM
- Maria Dion, Group Manager, Office of Capital Projects, UNM
- John Pate, Pit Renovation Architect, Molzen-Corbin Architects
- Ryan Henel, UNM Student
- Chris Fenton, Director Health Sciences Center (HSC) Art Program, UNM
- Connie Vance, UNM Real Estate Manager, Science and Technology Park
- Debi Dodge, Molzen-Corbin Architects

After narrowing down the field of 64 submissions to five (5) finalists, the LSC invited the finalists to present their proposals to the committee at an open meeting on January 22, 2014 at the Letterman’s Lounge at the UNM Pit Athletic Facility. The LSC felt that DePeña’s piece (digital images pictured above) was the best fit for their vision of the project.

The five (5) finalists were:
Larry Bell from Taos, NM
Ivan Toth DePeña from Brooklyn, NY
Robert Drummond from Las Vegas, NM
Norman Lee from Houston, TX
Tim White-Sobieski from Brooklyn, NY
DePeña, inspired by the idea of architecture being a living, breathing organism injected with life as it is used by its visitors, intends to reflect the activity and excitement happening within the building with ever-changing multicolored LED lights illuminating the glass skin of the Pit’s new stair tower. The lights will change as a result of input from various sensors (motion detectors, infrared cameras, sound meters, output data from the scoreboard, etc.) essentially giving the building the ability to wear its heart on its sleeve.

UNM’s Pit is recognized as one of the top college basketball venues in the United States, and as one of the loudest. A frequent host of both men’s and women’s NCAA tournaments, it is often featured prominently on television, giving the project national exposure. The stair tower, when lit, will be visible from all over Albuquerque, even the metropolitan downtown area.

The projected is expected to be completed before UNM’s 2014-2015 men’s and women’s basketball seasons begin.

About Ivan Toth DePeña:
Ivan Toth DePeña is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. With a Master’s Degree in Architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design, DePeña’s production as an artist is informed by his experience in art, architecture, technology and design. Combining many sources of media, form and materials, DePeña seeks to blur boundaries and create projects that exist within a new and amorphous hybrid of various creative disciplines. His studio output includes (and often fuses together) painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, public art, installation and incorporates a hands on methodology combined with high tech output and fabrication. Depeña’s work exemplifies the harmonic moment when various creative disciplines come together seamlessly.

His recent public art projects and exhibitions include, “Reflect,” a permanent light-based installation for the Stephen Clark Government Center Lobby in downtown Miami, "You and What Army" at the New Britain Museum of American Art 2014, “Aesthetics and Values 2011” at the Frost Museum in Miami, “Miami in Transition” at the Miami Art Museum and various group and solo exhibitions throughout the US. Current projects include a public commission to design a large-scale, outdoor sculpture for the new Northeast Regional Library in Aventura, Florida. In addition, Depeña is also working on a large-scale indoor sculpture for the new Reitz Union Expansion at the University of Florida Gainesville Campus and a permanent outdoor sculpture for a light rail station in Denver, CO. Current projects also include several large-scale private commissions and the preparation for upcoming museum and gallery exhibitions.

In recent news, Depeña has been awarded a prestigious Knight Arts Challenge Miami Grant for his proposal for a collaborative series of augmented reality public art projects throughout South Florida, as well as a finalist for the prestigious Cintas Fellowship 2013.

You can read more about DePeña at his website http://www.ivandepena.com/.

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About New Mexico Arts’ Art in Public Places Program:
The Art in Public Places (AIPP) program enriches New Mexico’s public spaces through innovative and diverse public art.

Since its inception in 1986, the program has placed more than 3,000 works of art in all of New Mexico’s 33 counties. Our goal is to reflect the diversity of the arts in New Mexico, the Southwest, and the nation while building a dynamic public art collection for the State of New Mexico.

About New Mexico Arts:
New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.