



## IRON AGE

Exhibit showcases artist Tom Joyce's metal sculptures

### Cielito Lindo

Family band builds audience after move to Chicago

PAGE 9

### Music man

Farmer morphs into master mandolin maker

PAGE 12



Tom Joyce works on a charred drawing as he brands iron into a soundboard.

# HEAVY METAL

## IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** "Tom Joyce: Everything at Hand"

**WHEN:** Noon to 5 p.m.  
Tuesday through Sunday  
through Dec. 31

**WHERE:** Center for Contemporary Arts, 1050 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe

**HOW MUCH:** \$5 general; free to members, CCA Cinematique ticket holders, active-duty military and children under 12 at ccasantafe.org or call 505-982-1338



Exhibition showcases artist Tom Joyce's explorations of iron

"Everything at Hand," an exhibition by sculptor Tom Joyce, is on display at Santa Fe's Center for Contemporary Arts.

EDDIE MOORE/JOURNAL

BY KATHALEEN ROBERTS

ASSISTANT ARTS EDITOR

Iron streams through Tom Joyce's blood like molten fire.

His sculptures swell from the molecular to the colossal. The most common element on Earth, iron moves through the cosmos, our veins, our machinery and even our memory.

Open at the Center for Contemporary Arts, "Tom Joyce: Everything at Hand" showcases that amalgam through forged and cast iron sculpture, photography, video, charred drawings and installations born of flame. The exhibition of 37 pieces runs through Dec. 31. It stretches through CCA's Tank Garage and winds through its new outdoor sculpture garden.

The show encompasses more than 225,000 pounds of work in a hybrid of science and art.

The MacArthur "genius" grant artist has been forging metal in fire since he was 14 years old in El Rito. Today he moves into evolving technologies like laser scanning and 3-D printing.

Joyce mines metaphor from materials. The Arroyo Hondo-based artist excavates iron on both a micro and a macro scale, illuminating textures and patterns in ghostlike apparitions. He works with the industrially forged remnants of large-scale manufacturing, maintaining studios both here and in Brussels. His initial training came through a local blacksmith who was forging replacement parts for the old Palace Press printing press in Santa Fe.

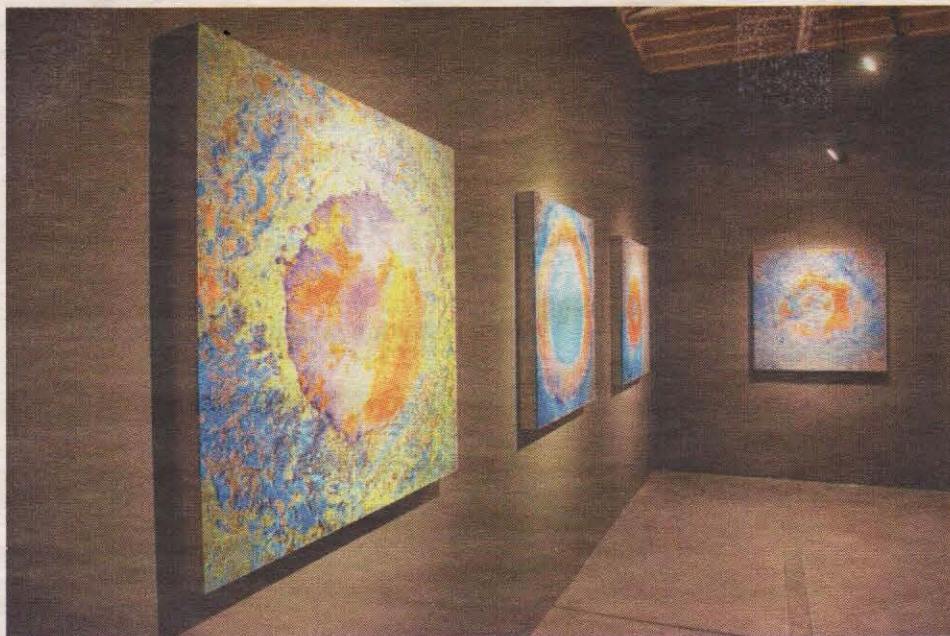
"The hammer given to me at a critical juncture in my youth opened doors I never would have imagined," he said. "It allowed me to break all the rules. I knew what to do with it before the instructions were given. It was like an extension of my hand."

Words like "placenta" and "umbilical" pepper his language.

It all starts in a Chicago-area factory, where Joyce refashions freshly severed "offspring" into new works expressing the indispensability of iron. Much of it was originally intended for aerospace and medical use.

To prepare for the show, he worked from 5 a.m. until midnight for five months, losing 22 pounds in the process. He moves his mammoth sculptures using a crane and a forklift.

The stainless steel sculpture "Stack VI" resembles collapsible forms toppling one another in a fractured



EDDIE MOORE/JOURNAL

Part of Tom Joyce's "Well" series, dye sublimation photographs on aluminum at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe.

DNA spiral. It weighs 42,500 pounds.

"It's like its moment of birth into the world," Joyce said. "It's tied to an umbilical cord to a mother's birth. The iron, too, has a connective tissue. I consider what I'm working with its offspring."

He compares "Berg XV," forged from high-carbon steel, to the fetus of a calving iceberg. It weighs 16,000 pounds.

"Each piece is balanced on its strongest point to create buoyancy," he said.

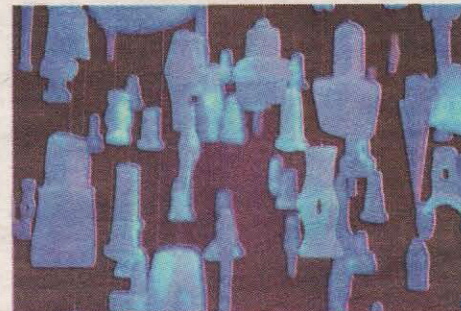
Dipping his hand into a pants pocket to retrieve a piece of white chalk, he begins drawing a cylinder on the sidewalk. He pours iron into a cylindrical ingot mold and it shrinks, crackling its interior onto the surface.

Joyce spent two years alternately forging and cooling "Aureole VI" from forged stainless steel. The temperature extremes create a crackling effect akin to drained mud in a pond.

"It goes into shock," he said. "Just think of the human body. All these erosive factors have an impact on the skin."

The result resembles the hurling bodies of meteoric iron in space as they shatter into Earth's atmosphere. They shed billions of years of skin as they shatter, he said. To complete the micro/macro metaphor, iron atoms embedded in our red blood cells enhance our ability to extract oxygen from the air.

"Thicket II" is a constellation of stainless steel and cast iron alloy structures born of Joyce's original tool — the hammer. The precise tangle of silver steel rods and cast iron alloy structures



"3-D Tools" by Tom Joyce at the Center for Contemporary Arts.

grow from brown centers resembling the heads. Joyce created 23 to reflect the human genome.

"They're made from an alloy of everything I've ever made before," he said. "In essence, these hammers are the nuclei of my work."

His "Well" series of dye sublimated photographs on aluminum could be celestial swirls, microscopic plankton or a cellular structure.

A black lit mobile of 185 discarded and obsolete tools reveals the ephemeral slip of knowledge. He created the translucent objects from resin-bonded sand molds.

The last room of the exhibition is an upside-down version of his studio. His work desk, massive tools and lights dangle from the ceiling like stalactites.

Joyce knows his artwork will long outlive him. But he harbors no illusions of immortality through sculpture.

"They can be here for geologic time, like meteorites," he said.