

Re-imagining Miners Plaza

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by Maria Cocchiarelli

WALSENBURG — From May 5th through 11th, community activist/public sculptor Scott Pfaffman will begin a process to activate Miner’s Plaza, across the street from the Museum of Friends.

This “Mixing It Up” event aims to transform this underutilized community resource into a place where community feels invited to enter, stay, play, and be transformed by their experience. It is our hope that during this “wetting of the feet” process, Pfaffman will come up with imaginative ways to help accomplish this goal and beautify our community.

The residency will be followed by an exhibition at MOF that includes the combined drawings, photographs, and written statements by “Mixing it Up” participants. Urban designer Dick Farley’s Walsenburg street design charette drawings from 2016, Roof and Dick building’s historical photos, and concept drawings by preservation architect Jessica Reske and History Colorado of the future design for the MOF building will be on view in an adjacent gallery of the museum through June 15.

MOF is bringing public artist Pfaffman to Walsenburg to break the ice with potential stakeholders and begin to see the already-built park as a community asset. The Miners Monument is an excellent example of the potential for public space to become a celebratory place. These actions are intended to establish a dialogue that recognizes the audience’s role in “creating meaning and memory from the merely monumental”. MOF is dedicated to the integration and enhancement of the existing public sculpture in an open conversation about the content and meaning that audience members recognize and appreciate for future generations.

The plan during Pfaffman’s week-long residency is to get as many people as possible involved, including students, to discover their vision of what this space could be. The goal is to turn Miners Park into the spark for more creative placemaking in Walsenburg, to move toward a collective vision for parks, the riverfront, and other public buildings to be joined with a unifying and balanced aesthetic.



During Pfaffman’s one-week residency, other artists who are interested in community and Creative Placemaking will visit, including Mary Hoffman, formerly with Adams State University and classmate of Maria Cocchiarelli at the Colorado Creative Industries Change Leaders Training Event in 2017, and author and noted artist Jennifer Davis Carey, Executive Director of the Wooster Massachusetts Education Collaborative. Local artists, educators, and students are also invited, during planned activities, to drop in and offer their collaborative creative ideas .

With input from our community, guests, and visitors, we will plan advocacy and spark an effort to design a significant project to revitalize downtown Walsenburg. We are enlisting artists and designers to help community members recognize what a special place the Walsenburg Mining Plaza and Monument occupy and help others recognize it as an example of the transformative potential of art in public spaces.

This project is partially funded through the Colorado Creative Industries and Change Leaders Initiative, The Laura Jane Musser Fund Rural Arts Initiative, The Anschutz Family Foundation, numerous members, sponsors and the restoration of the building through the generosity of History Colorado’s State Historic Fund Grant.

