

Let's GO!

Photography booth featured at Downtown festival

BY KEIKO OHNUMA

To build buzz for its annual Go! Downtown Arts Festival, now in its seventh year, the Downtown Action Team plans to shift the focus this fall from the buying and selling of art toward “a street fair concept,” said Chris Goblet, deputy director of the DAT.

One of the first new ideas to bear fruit is The Darkroom, an exhibit of photographs that will present new ways to look at Downtown. Photographer Valerie Hollingsworth of the DAT has been recruiting colleagues like Pat Barrett, Wes Naman, Steve Bromberg, Kip Malone and John Yost to shoot images of downtown that will be exhibited in a darkened room, tent, or gallery – the venue is yet to be determined.

The subject matter might be anything from nightscapes to street scenes – “not necessarily just buildings, but things that represent Albuquerque,” said Goblet.

The idea is to not to replace the photography that will continue to appear in some of the festival’s 150 juried art booths, but to move toward better integrating Go! with the environment of downtown itself.

“We’re presenting it as a challenge to these photographers to shoot Downtown and get back to



DOWNTOWN ALBUQUERQUE. Photo by Wes Naman, Naman Photography.

us,” said Hollingsworth. “And so far what we’ve got is amazing.”

Among the other image-enhancing activities Goblet envisions for the festival this year: art installations in alleyways, “to show that downtown alleys are more than just dumpsters or a place where homeless people sleep;” exhibits that turn empty storefronts into art studios for

the weekend; and site-specific artwork at sites such as loading docks, to encourage people to “really start looking at downtown in a different way... as a safe, friendly environment to enjoy art.”

The ultimate goal of integrating neighborhood improvement with the arts, he says, is to win designation of Downtown as an Arts and Culture District via legislation signed by the governor last year. (Silver City and Las Vegas are the only communities thus named so far.) That should spawn more galleries, studio space and entertainment venues – an art nexus – Downtown.

Started in 2000 as an open studio tour, the Go! Downtown Arts Festival will take place again this year on Gold Ave. between 2nd and 5th streets over the weekend of Sept. 26-28. All events are free, including 40 live performances, children’s art workshops, and 150 art booths and art events. A food court and beer garden are also planned. For information, contact the Downtown Action Team at 243-2230.

—Keiko Ohnuma is a freelance writer.

