

metroactive ARTS



State Of The Art

UNDER CONSTRUCTION The New Museum Los Gatos is still a work in progress. It is slated to open to the public June 6.

The **New Museum Los Gatos** to explore the intersection of art and history

BY TAD MALONE

THESE DAYS the New Museum Los Gatos (NUMU) may look like a warren of empty space and ongoing construction. But it will soon be one of the premiere art and history museums in the Bay Area.

The two-storied space is located next to the Los Gatos library in a quiet corner of the Los Gatos Community Center. With the help of first-time contributors, what started as a small oddity collection in the '60s, has turned into a large and multifaceted museum, specializing in exploring the intersections between art and history.

On April 16, the museum invited members of the media on a tour of the soon-to-be complete facility.

NUMU, as the museum is called, will hold its grand opening on June 6.

The planned 16,000-square-foot space will be divided into different areas for exhibits, workshops, a studio and even a “cabinet of curiosities.” The top floor will feature four galleries for rotating exhibits, each with a particular focus: social justice, technology, local interests and the fusion of art and history. The premiere exhibit will be “Giants of the Sky—The Rise and Fall of Airships,” which looks at the role of dirigibles and blimps in both art and popular culture, and features art by Jenny Robinson and Stacey M. Carter, among others.

The bottom floor, which opens in September, will feature a revival of the original Los Gatos cabinet of curiosities (a collection of oddities), art studio and maker space, where people will be invited to learn printmaking and photography, as well as attend

art lectures. It will also feature a categorized art collection and an after-school workshop for kids.

“The Town of Los Gatos has given tremendous support,” says Lisa Coscino, the executive director of NUMU regarding the patronage that made the museum possible. The museum isn't without big-name collaborators either. The Grammy Group, The Smithsonian Museum, SETI, NASA Ames and The Aschenbach Group have all made donations.

The second planned exhibit at NUMU will be “Woody Guthrie: The Power of Song Writing to Affect Social Change,” an in-depth look at the legendary folk musician's songwriting and its impact on both social change and awareness. Featuring material from the Guthrie archive in Oklahoma, the show aims to provide insight into both the musician and the endurance of his songs. Keeping with the museum's inclusive theme, the exhibit will also satisfy core-curriculum arts standards for local schools.

Also scheduled for May, the exhibit “See Music, Hear Art” is

a collaboration with the Eye For Sound smartphone app, which connects music and visual art through a phone's digital camera. The show will juxtapose artwork with accompanying songs. It also will feature musicians such as Tom Morello, the guitarist from Rage Against the Machine and Serj Tankian, the lead singer of System of a Down.

One of the more locally focused upcoming shows is “The Gem of the Foothills: A Living History of Los Gatos.” The exhibit takes a look at Los Gatos from past to present, focusing on both unique aspects of the town, as well as its neighborhoods. Like most of NUMU's shows, interaction between audience and exhibit will be emphasized. The show will feature five different stations with typewriters for visitors to tell their own stories—they too will become part of the exhibit.

In September there will also be an as-yet-untitled show focused on the history and aesthetics of those late, lamented and loved local tourist attractions—Frontier Village, Santa's Village and Lost World.

Taking its cue from The Brooklyn Museum of Art, The New Museum of Los Gatos is primarily an art and history museum, but it's also heavily oriented to the interactive and educational, with all of the shows emphasizing either interaction or collaboration.

“We want to be the artistic bookend to the library next door,” Coscino says. NUMU is also taking a direct approach to the growing problem of the slow disappearance of school arts departments by providing a range of services, including art classes, chances for collaborations with artists and student featured exhibits. The museum is currently hosting the local high school's junior art show—an annual event.

To further make the point, admission to the museum for anyone under 18 is free. “We are helping where schools can't facilitate,” Coscino says.

JUNE 6	NUMU GRAND OPENING
Free	New Museum Los Gatos numulosgatos.org