



SOUTHERN UTAH MUSEUM of ART

## A New Installation Made its Nest Outside of SUMA

*Mike Whiting's Birdie Now Occupies the Sam and Diane Stewart Family Foundation Plaza*



Artist Mike Whiting standing next to *birdie* outside SUMA

[High-Resolution Images Available Upon Request](#)

**CEDAR CITY, Utah** – August 4, 2020 – Drivers on University Blvd have likely noticed a new large orange bird that has made its nest outside Southern Utah Museum of Art. Installed in early July, Mike Whiting's *birdie* sculpture brings color to the Sam and Diane Stewart Family Foundation Plaza. The installation will be on the plaza for the next year greeting those walking by or coming into the museum.

Appearing to have walked right out of an arcade and into Cedar City, the orange figure is reminiscent of forms found in early video gaming and computer graphics. The powder-coated steel bird, which is 96 x 96 x 41 inches, has a pixelated look that has inspired much of Whiting's works of art.

"My current work explores the visual connection between minimalism and early video games," said Whiting. "Video gaming and minimalism arrived at the same visual conclusion through different means and by opposite intentions."

Since graduating with his MFA in 2002 from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, Whiting has created a name for himself in the art world. His solo show *Mike Whiting - Pixelated*, at the Denver Botanic Gardens showcased him as a prominent sculptor in 2018, as the show became one of the top contemporary shows in the area.

The last sculpture to occupy the Sam and Diane Stewart Family Foundation Plaza was *Walking Through the Thorne Vine* by James Surls, another artist who has been exhibited at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Since June 2018, the plaza has provided a new space to bring art to the community.

"We are excited to use the Sam and Diane Stewart Family Foundation Plaza as a temporary outdoor gallery for contemporary sculpture," said Jessica Kinsey, SUMA director/curator. "By using this prime location for revolving installations, we are able to get people's attention as they drive or walk by SUMA. Between Surls and Whiting, the outdoor sculpture has attracted many new visitors to the museum."

Whiting will be participating in this year's Art Insights lecture series through the SUU Department of Art & Design on Tuesday, September 22 at 11:30 a.m. The talk will be conducted on a virtual platform, which is still being determined. If you would like to receive details on how to watch the talk live, please contact Jessica Kinsey at [jessicakinsey@suu.edu](mailto:jessicakinsey@suu.edu).

For more information about exhibitions and current virtual programs, check out SUMA's website at [www.suu.edu/suma](http://www.suu.edu/suma). Thanks to continued support from the Utah Division of Arts and Museums, Cedar City RAP Tax, Zions Bank and the Sam & Diane Stewart Family Foundation, admission to the museum is free and open to the public.

Sculpture Credit:  
Mike Whiting  
*birdie*, 2009  
Automotive paint on fabricated steel, 96 x 96 x 41 in.  
Courtesy of Plus Gallery, 2020

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### **About Southern Utah Museum of Art**

Southern Utah Museum of Art, on the campus of Southern Utah University, features the artwork of regional artists known for their landscapes, faculty and student artists from the SUU Department of Art & Design, as well as emerging and distinguished artists from around the country. Strengths of the nearly 2,000-object permanent collection include the body of work by Jimmie Jones that exemplifies his notable career in the regions, as well as a robust collection of

prints featuring well-known artists such as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Salvador Dalí, Katsushika Hokusai, Thomas Hart Benton, and others. Part of the Beverley Taylor Sorenson Center for the Arts, which also includes the Utah Shakespeare Festival, SUMA is free and open to the public.

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