



As seen in the June/July 2011 issue of the Santa Fean magazine...

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Although Cyndi Conn had carved her own space in the contemporary art world, she's chosen to reside in the margins. An independent curator and consultant, founder of LAUNCHPROJECTS (a private exhibition space dedicated to emerging artists), and former visual arts director and curator of The Center for Contemporary Arts, Conn is an ardent promoter of the unconventional. "There is a profound need to make art—especially unproven, unmarked forms—accessible and intelligible to a broader audience and market," says Conn.

With an investigative eye, Conn mines "the nerve endings of contemporary art" in search of outliers working independently of mainstream taste. Her curatorial, arts administration, and marketing background uniquely enable her to navigate both sides of the art market's proverbial coin. As a liaison among artists, collectors, and the greater art community, she provides a receptive home to emerging contemporary work. She is, in this regard, the future of where art and its entrepreneurs are headed.

The physical manifestation of this goal was LAUNCHPROJECTS, whose physical presence on East Palace lasted three years (2008–2011), but the existence of which will probably live on in some other incarnation (another future manifestation of the art market). Considered a great success in the community as well as nationally, LAUNCHPROJECTS recently closed its doors. Conn, though, will sally forth with the same paradigm-shifting philosophy, the same trend-bucking practice—only minus the confines of a white-cube space.

Still based here and committed to Santa Fe's stature as a heavy hitter in the art world, Conn will continue to curate, lecture, and advise clients and artists internationally. Like the theme of her lecture series titled "Women Artists as Risk-Takers: Georgia O'Keeffe, Louise Bourgeois, and Yayoi Kusama," Conn embraces risk and innovation. A bit coy about what her next move will be, she aims to stay in the art world, only on her terms. "I like to take on new and challenging projects because once something works it's not as exciting," says Conn, perhaps hinting at her most recent project. "I feel lucky, I live my passion, and that's what I'll do for the rest of my life." —EL

