

## ARTIST

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"That's how we met, and I've always been a fan of his work," said Pritchard.

The connection grew between the two and they considered doing something bigger.

"I just wanted to create a sort of temple-like structure somewhere downtown, [and be] a homage to the mountains and a place for people to walk into it, meditate, be one with it," said Pritchard.

From afar, the sculpture will look only black to the naked eye, but as you move closer you will start to see colors of blue, green and purple to name a few. It will be called "The Crawler."

"A lot of my work has dealt with creating depth and dimension, and in the last, almost 10 years now, sculpture has been something that I've been quietly experimenting and practicing with," said Campbell.

"The Crawler" will be placed in the Art Park of the Palm Springs Downtown Park in front of the Palm Springs Modern Art Museum. Pritchard thought it would be a great place since Campbell has a strong connection to the museum having done an art residency there and has work in the permanent connection.

"I designed the sculpture first with no intention of meaning," said Campbell. "But it became something that visually looks like it would get up and crawl around. Then it got me thinking in terms of how we have the ability to kind of crawl around our environment and go out and do what we want, and it's important that we explore that in life. I think that's a significant part of the name is that idea of getting down there and exploring your environment."

Since this is the 42-year-old's first sculpture, he has needed to figure out how to translate his vision to a much larger scale.

"My work deals with dimension of depth," said Campbell. "And in my mind, being able to step into a work of art has always been kind of a fantasy [for me], like being able to get into a painting and walk around."

The idea of creating a sculpture that can look different throughout different times of the day, but only up close, was Campbell's way of bringing minimalism to his creation.

"I started seeing a lot of shade structures here in the desert, and it made me consider minimalism," said Campbell. "The idea of just this beautiful shadow casting across a beautiful colored wall."

Campbell is seeing his dream realized through this new project as it is something he has never done before.

"In terms of life changing, I think that anytime I approach a project, it's a shift in some way, and this is a major project, and I'm



Photo courtesy Ryan Campbell

The sculpture above is a scale model of what "The Crawler" will look like in the Palm Springs Downtown Park.

very grateful for the opportunity to do it," said Campbell. "And it is life changing."

The project was made possible by the approval of the Palm Springs City Council and by funding from the Palm Springs Public Arts Fund. He is excited to contribute to the community with his sculpture, after not seeing much representation of public art in the city.

"I remember moving here and there wasn't a whole lot going on with public art," said Campbell. "It was pretty minimal, and walking around downtown and saying passionately, 'It would be really amazing to have a sculpture or mural here,' and to have those things realized has been so incredibly special and continued my motivation to keep me going."

The sculpture will not only sit in a prime spot in the downtown park area but will also be 12 feet high.

"The idea of choosing the 12-foot height came about by the desire of having people be able to step into this space within the

sculpture and stepping into this alternate space that allows them to have an experience of their own," said Campbell.

## AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY

Since childhood, Campbell had a passion for making art.

"It was just in me from day one," said Campbell. "But there's a lot of instances, now looking back and reflecting. My health was always an issue as a kid, so I was home a lot."

Campbell was born with several birth defects.

Even while struggling with his health, Campbell will always remember the time when he fell in love with art. He was in the second grade, and he grabbed a handful of Crayons to start to color, and said, "I love this, I want to scribble scabble for the rest of my life."

"I literally said it out loud," said Campbell. "But from that moment on, there was something about art that I just understood, it was just something that made perfect sense

to me."

As he grew up, the young artist would spend time at Venice Beach and the scale and color of the graffiti he saw there inspired him to officially start his artistic career.

"I was actively doing graffiti for about 15 years," he said.

His love for art and creation just grew from there, and by the time he was in high school, "I was doing everything I could to make art."

He thanks his art teacher for fueling his passion and developing his art.

"She took me in as a young struggling wannabe graffiti artist, and really taught me some fundamentals," said Campbell. "After high school I really pursued art on my own terms and learned a lot about art making graffiti."

"LCHS prepared me in so many facets of what was to come in my life," said Campbell. "I love La Cañada."

He has now developed his style as an artist and has since only done work that falls into the category of geometric abstraction.

"The name of the body of work that I've created is called the line segments, and that's exactly what they are, they're segments of lines grouped and composed to create these gaps and spaces, these imaginary spaces people can step into," said Campbell. "So, I would say that my work deals a lot with light, space and color. Above all, I'm a colorist at heart."

"I realized that line(s) are a universally understood symbol," he said. "Anyone anywhere can understand the concept of a line. I wanted to make pure forms of art that are for everyone, everywhere. The viewer can assign their own meaning. That's what makes art so intriguing, everyone sees something different."

His health challenged him yet again when he was diagnosed with temporal lobe epilepsy in 2017.

"My epilepsy played a big role in how I look at art," said Campbell. "It helped me find these striking visceral moments of beauty in the pitch black of the void... Most of my work is started with a pure black ground in which I build geometry and motion with color searching for one moment of beauty to remain in."

Campbell has family who still resides in the La Cañada Flintridge and La Crescenta area where he likes to visit occasionally and eat at his favorite food spots, like Berge's Sandwiches.

The artist is now waiting for materials this month to start the process of creating the sculpture at the beginning of October.

"In this project, there's been more working parts, dealing with more people with more capacities of creating a piece," said Campbell. "There's a lot of working parts, it's not just hammering away at a canvas and just paint, there's a lot more action."

## TREATMENTS

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at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, and who works as a clinical research psychologist at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, emphasized the fast-acting nature of ketamine, whose effects kick in 24 hours after a patient's first dose, versus the slow-acting nature of traditional anti-depressant medication used to treat depression and other disorders.

"If we think about struggling with significant suicidal thoughts, depression, PTSD, any of these things, to have the potential of feeling significantly better within 24 hours rather than two to four to six to eight weeks, that in and of itself is quite literally lifesaving in many instances," Averill said in her speech.

In addition to being slow-acting, Averill said anti-depressants such as SSRIs have high rates of limited or no response, continued symptoms, distressing side effects and a reduced chance of improvement with each time a patient tries them.

While the last few years had shown a

plateau or even decreases in suicide rates, Averill said these rates increased in 2022.

"We are facing a mental health crisis unlike really anything we have dealt with before in modern times," she said. "We are facing elevated rates of PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse and unfortunately suicide."

Averill noted ketamine's success in reaching treatment-resistant patients, who have not seen results through traditional mental health care.

"I am very careful to say that [treatment-resistant patients] have been failed by the interventions that health care has to offer; [the patients] have not failed," Averill said. "That is a very important distinction. ... Sometimes that message gets a little muddled and honestly can further contribute to people's symptoms."

A major neurological implication of mental health disorders is the disruption of synaptic connectivity, which are pathways our brains use to send us messages. Averill explained that these pathways are connected to learning, memory and evaluations of experiences.

Ketamine creates rapid synaptic connectivity, which can alleviate the

symptoms of depression, PTSD and suicidal thoughts. Referencing a study on the effects of ketamine on brain connectivity, Averill showed data that the brain connectivity of patients who responded to ketamine treatment was "almost identical" to the brain connectivity of a baseline group, meaning people who do not suffer from mental health disorders.

While Averill's talk focused on ketamine, she also touched on a few other drugs being studied for mental health treatment such as MDMA, also known as Ecstasy and Molly. In addition to causing increases in serotonin and dopamine, MDMA also raises oxytocin levels, a chemical associated with intimacy and connection. Averill said this is a critical piece in MDMA treatment.

"We know that in stress and trauma and suicidal thoughts and behaviors, there is often that isolating sense of not belonging, not being loved, not being able to connect with others, not trusting others ... sometimes not trusting ourselves ... [and] not having empathy or compassion for ourselves or others."

She concluded her talk by emphasizing that treatment for mental health disorders is

a very personal process and there is no one size fits all. While these findings on ketamine are exciting for the future, she clarified that they may not be for everyone and that current treatments are still valid for those who are content with the results.

In addition to Averill's talk, the conference hosted sessions with other mental health care professionals on topics such as evolving crisis response, grieving and loss, suicide risk factors, firearm suicide prevention and suicide in college students. The conference had more than 300 attendees both virtually and in person, said Marie Filipian, the community benefit manager at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.

"Hosting a suicide awareness and prevention conference is important because it brings together mental health professionals, nurses, community members, individuals with lived experience, first responders and law enforcement to improve awareness of individuals who may be at risk, assist in ending the stigma and silence associated with suicide, gain access to resources and emphasize the significance of suicide prevention initiatives," Filipian told the Outlook Valley Sun.