

May 29, 2005

Artist And Jacobs School Supporters Christen 370,000-Pound Sculpture For Engineering Courtyard

By Doug Ramsey

With a loud thwack, artist Tim Hawkinson cracked a bottle of Chandon champagne on one of the boulders that make up the 370,000-pound sculpture called "Bear." The May 27 christening was part of a topping-off ceremony, after engineers and workmen maneuvered a huge rock 'head' on top of the 20-foot-tall teddy bear in the new engineering courtyard on the UCSD campus.



Artist Tim Hawkinson (lower left) and construction crew position the head on his giant rock bear. Behind 'Bear' are the Calit2 Building (left) and the Computer Science and Engineering Building, both under construction.

At Hawkinson's side for the christening were the Jacobs School of Engineering's namesakes, Joan and Irwin Jacobs, as well as Jacobs School dean Frieder Seible and Mary Livingstone Beebe, director of the Stuart Collection. "Bear" is the 16th public, outdoor art work commissioned by the Collection for the 1,200-acre campus.

"This is the newest addition to the Stuart Collection, and it's appropriate that it's in this space," said Joan Jacobs, co-chair of the Friends of the Stuart Collection Council. "It's a site-specific work, as all of the Stuart Collection pieces are, and it's the largest piece of the collection in mass."

Erecting the sculpture's eight, uncarved granite boulders – selected from a quarry in Temecula – was a time-consuming engineering feat in itself. Jacobs School structural engineering students tested the design to make sure that the final structure would be earthquake-proof, and dean Seible (who is also the founding director of the Charles Lee Powell Structural Research Laboratories at UCSD) did the final independent engineering check. "I think the bear is a beautiful contrast to our buildings and fits in perfectly," said Seible, beaming. "You can see the reflection of the bear in the windows of the buildings. It's absolutely marvelous."

The boulders were weighed before their final positioning, and the artwork turned out to be more than 20 percent heavier than expected. "When I



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[Video of final installation of 'Bear' with comments from Dean Frieder Seible, artist Tim Hawkinson, and Jacobs School namesakes Irwin and Joan Jacobs](#)
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turned out to be more than 20 percent heavier than expected. "When I heard about the concept, it sounded very exciting, but it wasn't quite clear how it would work out concerning the scale," noted Irwin Jacobs. "But this is perfect."

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Fully assembled 'Bear'

"Bear" is Tim Hawkinson's first permanent outdoor public project, and the two-story teddy bear will be visible from the three buildings surrounding the new engineering courtyard, now under construction: Powell-Focht Bioengineering Hall (which opened in 2002); the Computer Science and Engineering Building; and the six-story headquarters of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) and its UCSD Division. The latter two buildings will be dedicated this fall, when "Bear" will also get a formal unveiling as part of a public dedication.


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Hawkinson is one of America's most inventive artists, and art connoisseurs Irwin and Joan Jacobs were impressed with his creation. "It's a much more rounded and softer feel, so it will complement the buildings rather nicely," said Irwin Jacobs, founder and chairman of QUALCOMM Inc. "I think it's worked out well, and as you get some space to sit down around it, it will become a great social gathering spot." Joan Jacobs concurred, and predicted the artwork will resonate with students: "I think it will be adopted by students as a new mascot."

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