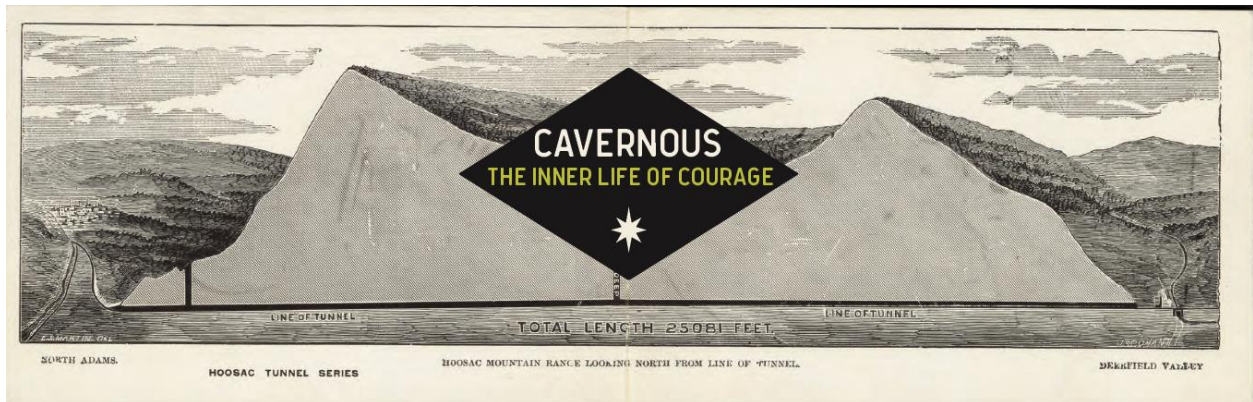


Cavernous: The Inner Life of Courage

Kidspace exhibition features artist Wes Sam-Bruce



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — On June 17, 2017, Kidspace opens ***Cavernous: The Inner Life of Courage***, Colorado-based artist Wes Sam-Bruce’s lively installation that uses the Hoosac Tunnel as a metaphor for brave endeavors. The Kidspace gallery will explore what it takes to be courageous and persevere in the face of mountain-sized obstacles. Visitors are invited to play in a tunnel-like structure built specifically for the museum. A free opening celebration takes place with the artist on **Saturday, June 17, from 11am to 1pm.**

Sam-Bruce, renowned for producing interactive artworks, found the North Adams icon to be a fascinating historical site to explore. According to the artist, “The Hoosac Tunnel construction can be viewed as a representation of an act of courageousness: a journey through the unknown — dark, cavernous, difficult, loss, successful, light-giving, connecting, a triumph, tenacity, and grit.” Being central to the North Adams community, he views the tunnel as a symbol of the legacy of a group of people who then and now have acted courageously through the many chapters of the city’s history.

Sam-Bruce will spend a month in residency at the museum conducting local history research and building an artwork that will feature a cavernous mountain, tunnels, and thresholds. Visitors can make their way through the installation, an uncharted space composed of repurposed wood, text, and drawings, finding themselves surrounded by content that delves into the human experience; they have not only entered the mountain, but also, as Sam-Bruce puts it, “the space of one’s innermost self — the root of courage.”

“For the courage-themed exhibition, I was looking for an artist who could construct a bold work of art that would enable visitors to play, take risks, and perhaps bring out the audacious aspect of their inner selves,” Director of Education and Kidspace Curator Laura Thompson notes. “Courage is sometimes viewed in idealistic terms such as hero-worshipping and visions of utopia. Wes recognizes the challenges that may arise that discourage everyday brave acts. Using a wide range of materials and storytelling

techniques, Wes' tunnel will realize a paradise for children to imagine the possibilities for productive and peaceful communities."

Visitors can flex their "courageous muscles" throughout the exhibition, and further test them at the Kidspace ArtBar in various art-making activities for all ages, from creating their own sculptures to playing with materials such as clay and paint. The ArtBar also includes a series of tabletop play elements — mountains, houses, trees, and scaled figures (similar to a model train set) — so that visitors can continue to play and engage with the exhibition. They can also create their own miniature mountain cabins to either take home or contribute to the set.

Cavernous is the third component of Kidspace's *Art 4 Change*, a four-year project that explores problem-solving through empathy, optimism, and courage. The guiding principle for these exhibition projects is Albert Einstein's statement that "[We] cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." In other words, without empathy, hope, and courage, societal problems can seem overwhelming. In an era of narcissism and cynicism, therefore, an experience with Sam-Bruce's work provides the opportunity to strengthen our collective sense of bravery, tolerance, and kindness.

The free opening celebration takes place on Saturday, June 17, from 11am to 1pm. Meet the artist, make some art, and enjoy some refreshments. Admission to Kidspace is always free; the ArtBar is open on weekends and during school breaks.

About the Artist

Wes Sam-Bruce is an artist, educator, designer, writer, and poet. He's best known for his exploratory and story-soaked sculptural installations. Like entering another world, abandoned home, cavern system, or one's own inner life, his installations act as living metaphors to prompt physical engagement and character development with the viewer. They also conjure strong emotional connections, empower self and world awareness, offer insight into the human condition, and enchant authentic and imaginative play in both adults and children.

Ranging from vast village-like installations in partnership with museums and dynamic communities, to the small act of writing a poem or taking photographs alone at a river, Sam-Bruce's work investigates the nuance of the human experience, mystery, connections to language, landscape and place, the unfathomable depths of our inner lives, and the threaded-ness of a single thing to everything else. His work has many mediums, the ideas taking their final physical form to fill in the open space of a gallery wall, installation, or poem.

Previous collaborators include the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, CO; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Maui Arts & Cultural Center, HI; and The New Children's Museum, San Diego, CA; as well as many different community centers, various schools, the river next to his house, the forest behind his childhood home, and many other known and unknown people, places, and things.

Images

A collection of high-resolution images is available here: bit.ly/SamWesBruceCavernous

Sponsorship

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About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making, displaying, and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. MASS MoCA will nearly double its gallery space on May 26, 2017, with artist partnerships that include Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and James Turrell.

Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under, through May 21, 2017. Beginning May 22, gallery admission will be \$20 for adults, \$18 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, spring – fall. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays

Summer Hours (beginning June 24)

10am to 6pm, Sundays–Wednesdays

10am to 7pm, Thursdays–Saturdays