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**WELLS FARGO  
CENTER FOR  
THE ARTS**

## **Wells Fargo Center for the Arts Announces New Outdoor Sculpture Garden Featuring Monumental Art Pieces By Contemporary Regional Artists**

**Inaugural exhibit “Root 101” showcases works  
by highly acclaimed local artist Bruce Johnson**



### **Opens to the Public June 6, 2015—Free and Accessible to the Community**

SANTA ROSA, CA (April 9, 2015) –**Wells Fargo Center for the Arts** (50 Mark West Springs Road) announced today the opening of a new outdoor **Sculpture Garden and Art Walk** that significantly expands the Center’s visual arts programming. The Sculpture Garden will present rotating works from contemporary regional artists that focus on monumental outdoor art incorporated into a landscaped natural setting, which will form a transition from the Center’s campus to the Sutter Hospital campus. The Sculpture Garden, which will be free and accessible to the public, will feature the distinctive redwood sculptures designed by highly acclaimed local artist **Bruce Johnson** for the inaugural exhibit opening to the public on June 6, 2015.

(more...)

This installation will be the unifying focal point for the various other aspects of the visual arts pieces that are already on display at Wells Fargo Center for the Arts. The visual arts have always been an intrinsic component of the programming at the Center dating back to 1981 when the Museum of Contemporary Arts was housed onsite. Although the works relocated in 2006, other significant paintings and sculpture displayed at the Center include works by thirteen local and regional artists such as Robert Ellison, Dennis Leon, Diana Meehan, and Roberto Santo. With the new Sculpture Garden, the Center's walkable campus can now easily be experienced as an integrated Art Walk, incorporating all the visual arts and elevating the profile of the Center as a comprehensive center for the visual and performing arts and a community resource. The physical concept for the garden, how best to adapt the current space to most successfully display artwork, its design, and planning is by Bill Mastick, Quadriga Landscape Architecture and Planning with offices in Santa Rosa, San Francisco and Sacramento.

"This is an exciting time for Wells Fargo Center for the Arts as we debut our new Sculpture Garden and elevate our commitment to the arts and our community," observed Rick Nowlin, the Center's Executive Director. "This is our gift to the community and we look forward to this space becoming a popular destination, inviting people to enter, walk through, or experience as an oasis for relaxation and reflection."

It's taken two years of planning, design, construction and collaboration between Wells Fargo Center for the Arts, its neighbor the new Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital and private donors to bring the vision of this new Sculpture Garden to fruition. Located at the northeast end of the Center where a natural path connects to the Sutter Hospital campus, this area that is dedicated to outdoor art offers an open-air space for visitors to stop and enjoy the sculpture, experiencing a sense of restorative calm in a true nexus of healing and art.

**"Root 101," the inaugural exhibit by Bruce Johnson** is comprised of colossal wood sculptures made from salvaged old growth redwood, which he has been working with for 50 years. Three years ago, Johnson acquired 80 tons (four truckloads) of huge salvaged redwood stumps and chunks, some trees over 1,000 years old near a tributary to the Eel River. "There is something primal and archetypal about these huge water washed forms," observes Johnson. "Within the form of roots and swirl of grain you can see and touch patterns of nature and feel the fractal expression of growth and energy. These materials are the heart of the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts exhibit." [Download notes from the artist.](#)

Johnson's installation is the ideal choice to kick off the Center's concept for the Sculpture Garden, one defined by a sense of exploration and discovery. Johnson compares the upcoming exhibit to a solo bicycle trip he took across the United States: "On the bicycle I followed existing roads and I left almost no mark or trace. As a sculptor I must make my own path and I have left a significant trail of sculpture behind me. Sculptures are more permanent than footprints. If you follow the trail you may see what I see or you may see something new. The journey is more than the destination." This notion of fluid movement and contemplation fits the goal Wells Fargo Center for the Arts has for its new Sculpture Garden.

Bruce Johnson's sculptures will remain on display for two years. After that, the Sculpture Garden will feature rotating exhibits showcasing contemporary regional artists. The Center is forming a Visual Art Advisory Council that will make recommendations to the Center regarding artists for future exhibitions.

### **About Sculptor Bruce Johnson**

Born in Oregon, Johnson grew up in the San Francisco Bay area. He attended UC Davis where he received a BA and acquired his Teacher's Credential. His studio is in rural Sonoma County, on a coastal ridge.

Despite his rural location Johnson has found international recognition with large-scale sculpture in Italy, Spain and Taiwan as well as many private and public collections in the U.S.A. Johnson is also a master builder. Of special importance to him is his work on sacred buildings such as the Sea Ranch Chapel, the historic chapel at Fort Ross, a Moon Gate at the Asian Art Museum and especially the exquisitely beautiful *Poetry House*. <http://formandenergy.com/>

**About Landscape Architect Bill Mastick (Quadriga Landscape Architecture)**

Bill brings 26 years of professional design and project management experience to Quadriga and focuses his efforts on institutional, urban, and corporate projects. Bill currently sits on the City of Santa Rosa Design Review Board, Waterways Committee, and Highway 101 task force. He has a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and has participated in advanced study at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

**About Wells Fargo Center for the Arts**

A 501(c)(3) non-profit arts and events center, Wells Fargo Center for the Arts is home to world-class performances, nationally recognized education programs, contemporary visual art, and many popular civic events. The Arts Center is located in the heart of the Sonoma wine country and ranked among California's top performing arts presenters. Together with its resident companies, the Center presents more than 100 performances in music, dance, theater, renowned speakers, and comedy; provides education programs serving 30,000 children and adults; and hosts more than 1,000 community events a year. Owned and operated by the Luther Burbank Memorial Foundation, the Center relies on charitable community donations to achieve its mission – to enrich, educate, and entertain.

[www.wellsfargocenterarts.org](http://www.wellsfargocenterarts.org)

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(photo of Bruce Johnson and sculpture on page one by Vi Bottaro)

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