



E. L. Wiegand Galleries
Donald W. Reynolds Center for the Visual Arts

MEDIA CONTACT: Valerie Primeau | Director of Communications
775.398.7221 | valerie.primeau@nevadaart.org

NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES *SACRED TRANSFORMATIONS: THE ART OF DAVID BEST*, FEATURING A MONUMENTAL NEW TEMPLE BY THE CELEBRATED BURNING MAN ARTIST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Reno, Nev. (July 22, 2026) — The Nevada Museum of Art is proud to present *Sacred Transformations: The Art of David Best*, a major exhibition celebrating the work and legacy of American contemporary artist David Best, whose large-scale sculptural installations and community-based projects have shaped contemporary art and public engagement for the last four decades. Opening October 24, 2026, and on view through March 26, 2028, the exhibition offers the most comprehensive presentation to date of Best's artistic career.

Best is internationally recognized for creating some of the most iconic temple structures at Burning Man, the annual weeklong and art-focused gathering in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, as well as in communities across the globe, where these temporary gathering spaces became sites of reflection, remembrance, and celebration. *Sacred Transformations* brings together significant works from five decades of Best's artistic career while debuting two newly commissioned installations created specifically for the Nevada Museum of Art: a soaring, immersive temple and a companion shrine, transforming a two-story gallery space into a sanctuary for commemoration and celebration.

"David Best is best known for creating art out of discarded materials and turning them into spaces centering community and beauty," said Kolin L. Perry, Assistant Curator at the Nevada Museum of Art and exhibition curator. "This exhibition shows the full breadth and depth of his artistic practice, including the themes that influence it—life and death, human suffering and remembrance, and the traditions of Funk Art and Surrealism."

As the spiritual and conceptual heart of *Sacred Transformations*, the commissioned temple will be fabricated from reclaimed materials that have been meticulously transformed and painted gold. This material transformation elevates the discarded into the sacred and embodies themes of renewal, resilience, and metamorphosis. The accompanying shrine will feature intricate wooden latticework synonymous with Best's celebrated desert structures and offer visitors a space for contemplation and reflection.

While Best's temple structures are traditionally filled with messages, mementos, and personal reflections, and consumed in a ceremonial burn, visitors to the exhibition will instead be invited to write memories on commemorative tokens that will be brought to the annual end-of-summer Burning Man event in Northern Nevada.

Surrounding the temple and shrine are a presentation of works that showcase Best's artistic evolution over five decades. Featuring drawings, collages, mixed-media assemblages, sculpture, archival materials, and prints, Best creates works that bridge darkness and light, and destruction and rebirth. His hybrid figures, elaborate

patterns, and richly textured surfaces draw from a wide range of influences while remaining unmistakably his own.

The exhibition also celebrates the longstanding relationship between David Best and the Nevada Museum of Art. Since the founding of the Museum's Institute for Art + Environment in 2009, the Museum has assembled the world's largest archive of Burning Man materials, including extensive documentation of Best's temple projects.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication dedicated to Best's career and artistic practice—the first in more than thirty years—featuring a new essay by Mark Van Proyen, Associate Professor of Art and Critical Thinking at the San Francisco Art Institute.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in San Francisco in 1945, David Best emerged from the Bay Area's vibrant artistic and countercultural communities, studying at the College of Marin and the San Francisco Art Institute. His work developed alongside influential artists including Edward Kienholz, Bruce Conner, Viola Frey, Manuel Neri, Joan Brown, and Robert Arneson, whose commitment to artistic independence helped shape Best's distinctive visual language.

ABOUT THE NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

The Nevada Museum of Art is the state's only art museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Founded in 1931, the Museum is distinguished by its focus on the relationship between art and environment. Located in Reno at the intersection of the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin, the Museum features programming and collections organized around thematic areas including the Art of the Greater West, the Altered Landscape, contemporary art, and work ethic in American art. In 2025, the Museum completed a major renovation and expansion with the Charles and Stacie Mathewson Education + Research Center, further strengthening its role as a hub for learning, scholarship, and community engagement.

The Museum's Institute for Art + Environment is an internationally recognized research center that supports the practice, study, and awareness of creative interactions between people and their natural, built, and virtual environments. The Institute houses archives, special collections, and rare books connected to the Great Basin Native Artists organization; artists Beverly Buchanan, Judy Chicago, Helen and Newton Harrison, Michael Heizer, Walter De Maria, Lita Albuquerque, Trevor Paglen; and organizations including Burning Man, High Desert Test Sites, Desert X, and the Center for Land Use Interpretation.

Learn more at nevadaart.org.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Nevada Museum of Art acknowledges the traditional homelands of the Waší-šiw (Washoe), Numu (Northern Paiute), Newe (Western Shoshone), and Nuwu (Southern Paiute) people of the Great Basin. This includes the 28 Tribal Nations that exist as sovereign nations and continue as stewards of this land. We appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on these Indigenous homelands.