

ART HAPPY Top: Opening night of "Go Figure," a group exhibit organized by seven Loveland artists. Bottom: Sculptor Bunny Hanley checks out the Loveland Sculpture Invitational.



**NEW YEAR'S PICK
SOUND REVIVAL**

If you're a fan of the **Denver Sound**—a genre of alterna-country-bluegrass-gothic-rock that carved out a devoted, if eclectic following over the past decade or two—you may have heard that this particular music style is a thing of the past. Think again: A local band that pioneered that quirky, melting-pot sound, **Slim Cessna's Auto Club**, is back this winter with a new album after a four-year recording hiatus. Check out the 10th anniversary of its sold-out New Year's show at the venerable Bluebird Theater, where we're betting the 10-year milestone and edgy new jams will ring in 2011 with some serious Mile High style. —JD

Listen Up



WHAT: Catch tunes from the upcoming album (as yet unnamed, to be released in March) at the holiday shows.

WHEN: December 30 and 31

WHERE: Bluebird Theater

Space to Grow

Why Loveland's art scene is bigger than one controversial exhibition.

When an enraged Montana woman took a crowbar to satirist Enrique Chagoya's politically charged portrayal of Jesus at the Loveland Museum Gallery this fall, the city was thrust into the national spotlight for all the wrong reasons. But Loveland's thriving arts community has reason to believe that the Front Range town will continue to be an artistic hot spot for more substantive reasons.

In September, Loveland scored a major first in Colorado's art scene: a coveted partnership with Artspace, the nation's largest nonprofit real estate developer. Within a few years, Artspace hopes to open a \$10 to \$15 million downtown facility with 45 affordable live/work units for artists and their families, plus exhibition and meeting space. "[Loveland's] large artist community would love to live and work downtown," says Wendy Holmes, a senior vice president at Artspace, "which would contribute to the continued development of the downtown core."

It's no surprise that Artspace responded to Loveland, where sculptures stand guard on thoroughfares, murals span city blocks, and colorful installations sprout from sidewalk planters. Public art, supported by a city ordinance that sets aside a percentage of construction spending for purchasing art, has also paved the way for tourism: In 2005, Loveland earned the number two ranking in John Villani's *The 100 Best Art Towns in America*—trailing only Santa Fe, New Mexico. Creative evolution, including the Artspace vision, has become a priority. "Artspace is an exciting project for us," says Mike Scholl, Loveland's senior planner. "It will certainly put us on the map nationally as an artists' destination." —MARYJO MORGAN



BOULDER BUZZ

GREAT MINDS

If you had five minutes to captivate an audience with a subject of your choosing—anything at all—what would it be? That is the challenge for **Ignite Boulder**, a bimonthly event featuring average folks who present topics ranging from high-altitude baking to why waitresses are the best equipped to survive in a post-apocalyptic society (note: because they have skills you

don't learn in corporate America—like hiding food for future survival). "We like that anyone can do this," says Ef Rodriguez, Ignite Boulder's lead organizer. "These are people you've never heard of, talking

about things you don't know about. [Boulder] is the only place I know that could sustain this."

Ignite, which launched in Seattle in 2006, kicked off in Boulder in 2008 in a University of Colorado classroom. In only two years, it's become the largest of 200 worldwide Ignite events, routinely selling out venues such as Boulder Theater and the 1,321-seat



CHECK IT OUT: December 8 at Boulder Theater, \$10. www.ignite-boulder.com

Chautauqua Amphitheater. "Geeky topics are our sweet spot," Rodriguez says. "We want social

value blended with entertainment." The upshot? Some talks are heady, others witty, and some preachy—but all are engaging. —KATY NEUSTETER