

# MetroABQ Real Estate Newsletter

Created by Chris Lucas,  
Realtor for 17 years & loving it.

Including Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Corrales, Placitas, Atrisco Valley, Los Lunas & the East Mountains.

November

Stonehenge, Placitas-Style

Transcendental Art A Window Away

Taylor Ranch Tenancy





### **Stonehenge & Sustainability**

You expect to see a lot of rocks in New Mexico, but not often ten feet high, stacked vertically, & twice a year aligned with the summer & winter solstices. Welcome to another unique corner of New Mexico, in the town of Placitas. The eclectic monuments above & below mimic the stone circle structures of England's prehistoric megalith known as Stonehenge.

On a warm Sunday last September, we met up with a group of people, all there to see the Placitas Stonehenge, & also to see a unique, environmentally green-envisioned Owner's Residence, steps away...



### **Above & Below**

Yearly, on the longest day of sunshine, & also during the longest night of darkness, celebrations take place all across the planet. The winter & summer solstices are powerful. What they may mean to each person is different. To a former owner of the stone sculptures above, the solstice duality meant a lot--enough to create a special place with enormous rock sculptures in her/his back yard, to view the annual solstices. The image directly above was taken in September, midway in the year between the two solstices, & only a few weeks shy of one of the other yearly cosmic dualities, the autumnal equinox.

As with any art worth saving, the large sculptures have ultimately been passed along to a new owner who bought the property. The architecturally sophisticated sculptures share a 1.65 acre lot with an architecturally sophisticated owner's residence, images & details below.



Mike, the new owner of the Placitas Stonehenge, said he is guided by the belief that people should have a symbolic relationship with the earth & nature. As a national sustainability & green building expert, he is working to make it a 'net-zero' emissions residence. To do so, he's replacing the existing fossil-fuel systems with new solar panel & battery-powered systems. You can just make out the smoky blue colored photovoltaic panels on the house image above, created (from [Fotovan.com](https://www.fotovan.com)), in the

middle-left section, near the juniper bush. He is also remodeling the home for better water efficiency & energy savings.

"Outside, native trees & landforms have been left untouched" & drought-tolerant plants are being planted; "junipers & piñon pines grow around small arroyos that still channel water through the property, rather than around it." -[From the owner](#).





From the outside, the house looks interestingly funky. The architecture of the front [Torreon-like cone structure](#) is unique, in the image two above, & the very healthy ocotillos are the perfect fingers climbing up the cone.

In the image directly above, notice the upper deck on top of the building & the smaller balcony sitting off the circular 21' diameter family room, which occupies the top floor of the cone. Some water/energy efficient things to note--the water runoff from the family room balcony is collected via the dark brown & angled gutter running to a catchment system; & the efficient white mini-split heating/cooling mechanical line that runs straight down from the edge of the cone.

Finally, leaving the Placitas Stonehenge & soon-to-be-green-refabbed 4500sqft host house, you pass a baby goat, full to overflowing with hen & chicks, below.





**Placitas is fun** to drive around, especially because there is no pre-defined grid pattern. Instead, the community has organic roads that generally adhere to the contour of the natural landscape. Speeding is risky because it's unknown what is around the next bend, even [some wild horses](#) perhaps.

I'm always excited to drive the twisty & oftentimes steep northern foothill roads of the Sandia Mountains. Getting to the Placitas Stonehenge property, for example, is a scenic trek that brings you past several excellent hiking/biking trails, & up & down some serious elevation. You can see the Jemez & Santa Fe Mountains, the Sandias, & as far west as the eye can see, plus many hills & valleys in between.

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### Sublime Scenes

The University of New Mexico campus is always full of surprises. The grounds are open & public, so you can walk anywhere outdoors--that's not locked or restricted--on the nicely verdant 800 acres. It's an excellent place to find public art, mostly sculptures, & there are a lot of sculptures to find there.

As you wander though, you will also find other works of art that are easily seen from the outside of some of the buildings, by looking in the windows. One series of paintings, by renowned Transcendentalist artist & UNM professor [Raymond Jonson](#), sits just inside the recently built Physics, Astronomy & Interdisciplinary Science building, or PAÍS Complex. It's very accessible--you can see half of the paintings without even going inside...

Transcendentalism, one of the American Modernist art movements, was created in the 1930's by Raymond Jonson & [Emil Bisttram](#), among other prominent artists. The initial group lived mostly in New Mexico, except for Agnes Pelton, [who is featured here](#). The state of NM, specifically in Albuquerque, Santa Fe & Taos, was the national epicenter of the movement. Their manifesto encouraged artists to focus on pure artistic abstraction, & strove to represent "[sensuous experiences of the cosmos & nature](#)."

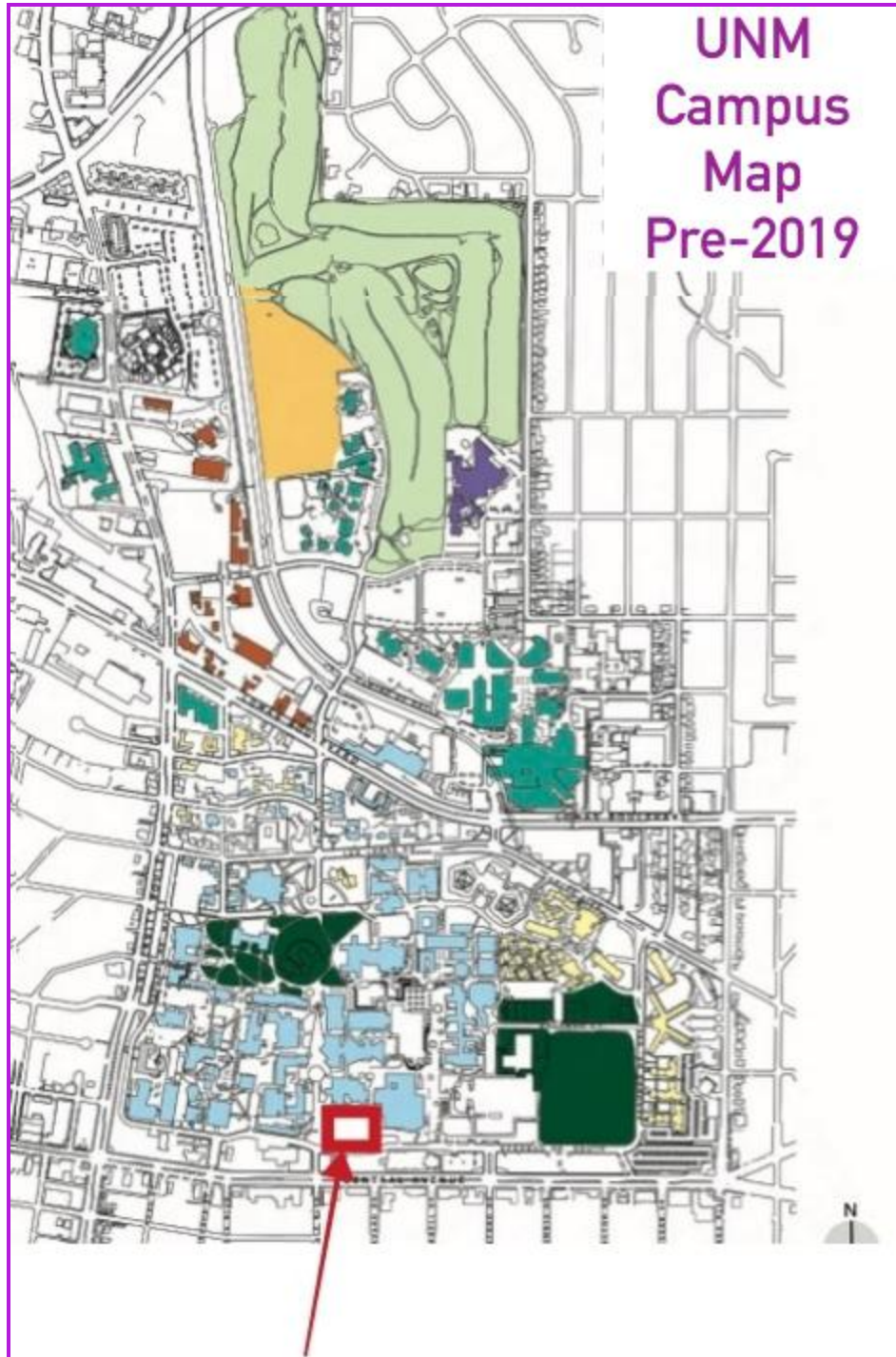
Just above is the 90-year-old image 'Engineering,' completed by Jonson in 1934. It is a fine example of artwork from the Art Deco period, New Mexico Transcendentalism-style.



The series, called [\*The Cycles of Science\*](#), includes six paintings, each featuring Jonson's vision of the disciplines of Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Engineering, Astronomy & Mathematics, which are the titles of each piece. The image at the top of

the article shows three of the paintings, & was taken from outside, through the windows at the south entrance to PAÍS. Some of the images can also be seen from a window in the PAÍS courtyard, below. Notice the reflection of the glass of the building in the image.

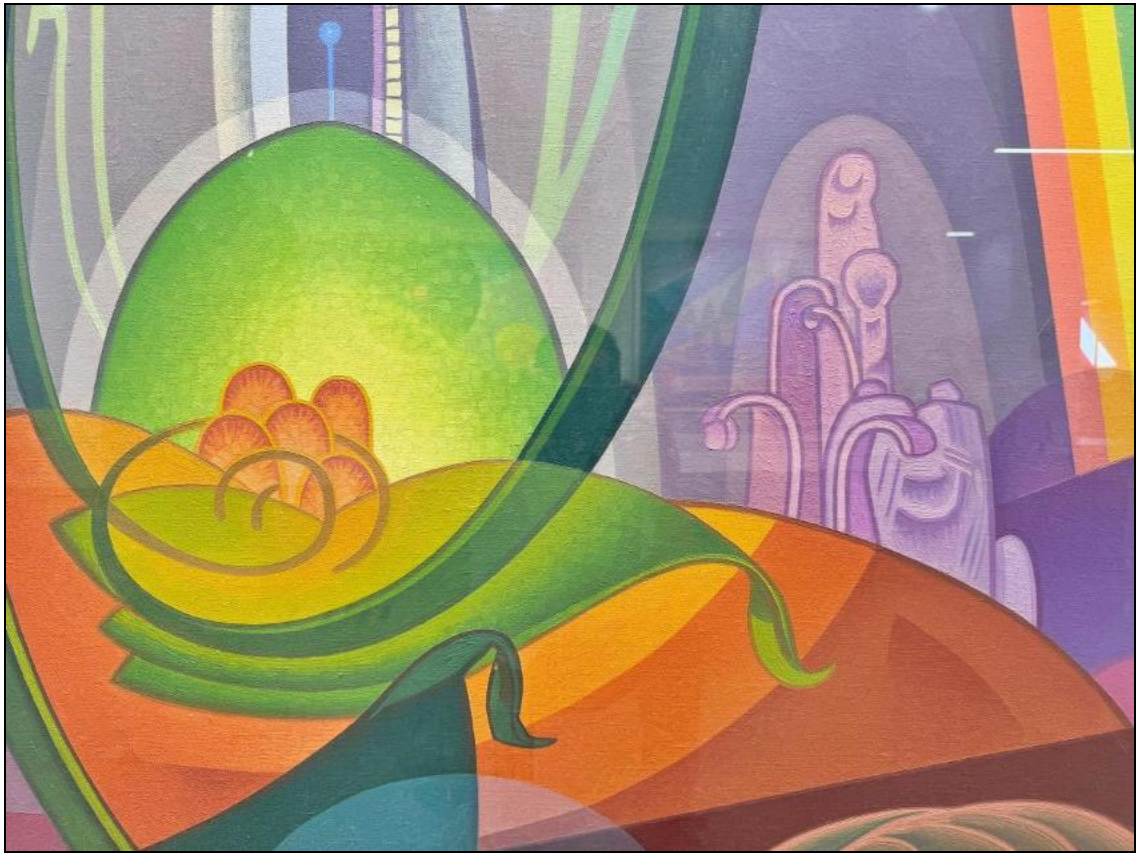
There's hardly a better place for the series to hang, than in the lobby of the physics & astronomy building.

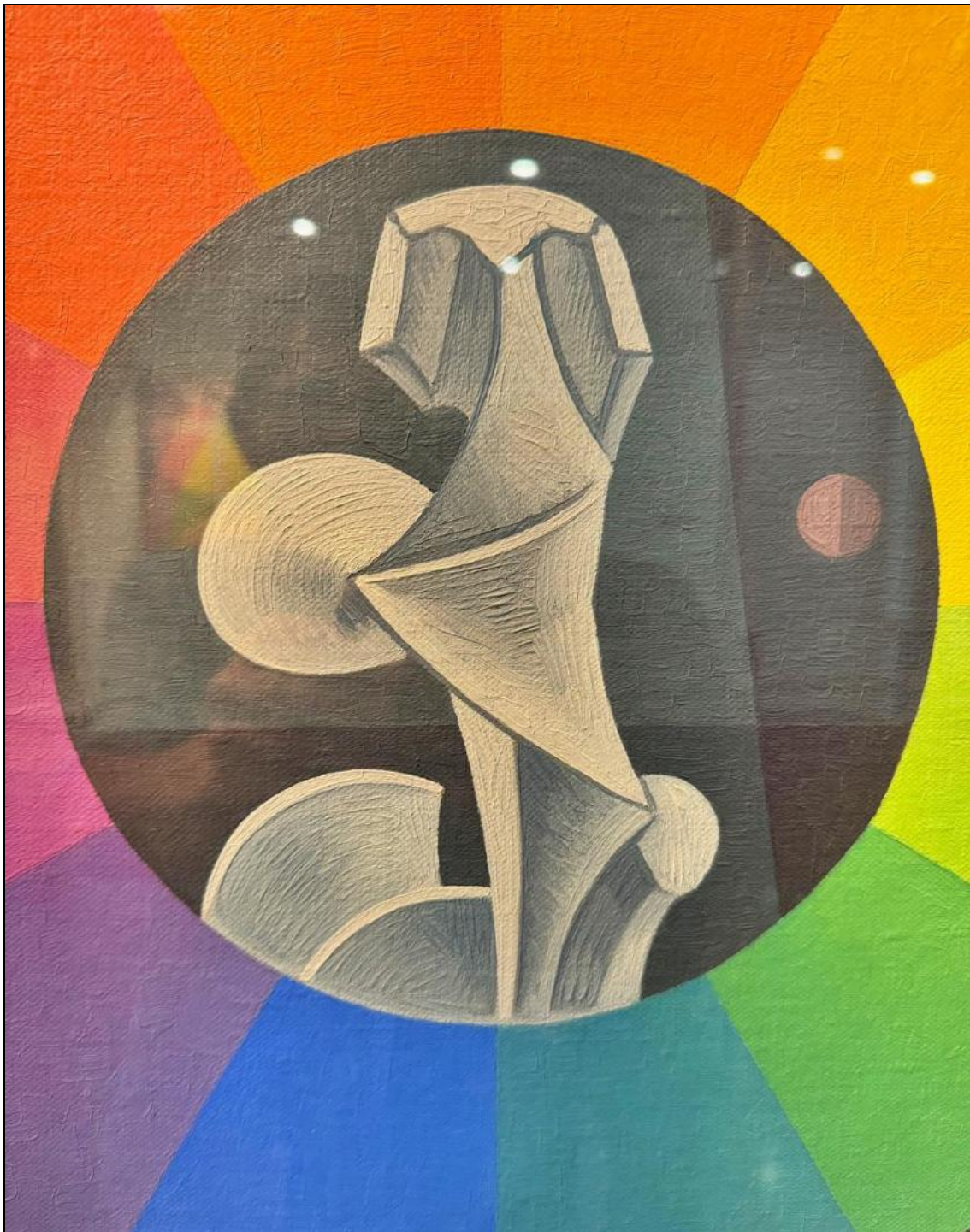


Standing in front of the massive PAÍS building, just inside the UNM Central Campus at Central Ave & Yale, reminded me that until 2019, the land that the new complex sits upon

had been the home of [a huge, long-dormant water reservoir](#) owned by the city. Incidentally, the reservoir was redesigned in part by renowned architect George Pearl in the 1980's, when it won an award for "Renovation." The red rectangle on the bottom of the pre-2019 map, above, was where the 8 million gallon reservoir sat for seventy years. Now it houses modern research labs & classrooms, below...







### So Smooth...

The paintings seem so smooth from a distance, as if they were silkscreens or computer generated. The two images directly above are detailed scenes taken from two of the paintings. Notice the brush strokes & texture up close. These images are parts of the "Biology" & "Mathematics" paintings.

It's interesting & fitting, that [works from the Transcendental Movement](#)--the goal of which was "to carry painting beyond the appearance of the physical world, through new concepts of space, color, light and design, to imaginative realms that are idealistic and spiritual."--found their way into the lobby of the modern physics & astronomy

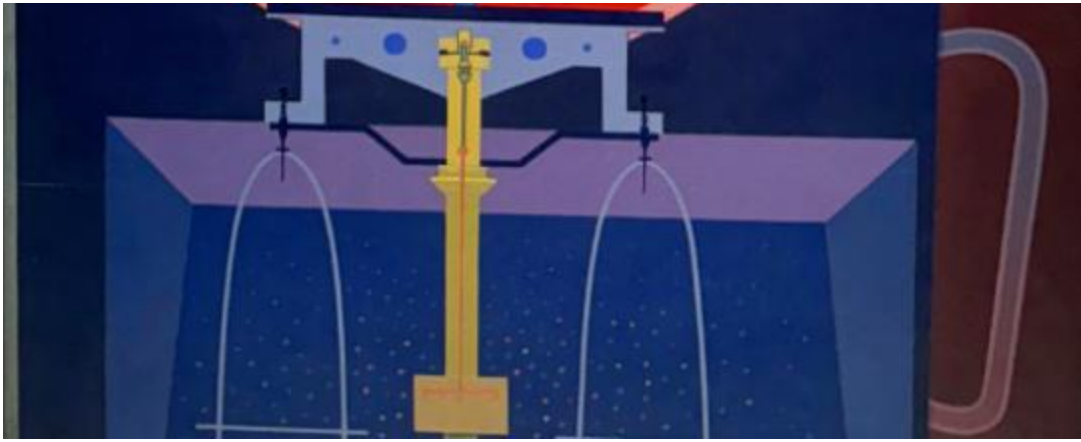
building.

Below, a patron is admiring the work in the lobby gallery; the 2nd image is called simply "Chemistry."

Wanting to see all six, I called the PAÍS receptionist & was told: "You are more than welcome to come in & photograph those paintings. Usually, our building is open from 8am to 5pm, Monday -- Friday, for anyone who wants to stop by." Good to know.







### **Renting in Taylor Ranch**

It's not all winding streets & large yards, although it began that way...When envisioned, Taylor Ranch, in the mid-northwest of the MetroABQ, fit the description of an exurban community--an area outside the typically denser inner suburban area, at the edge of a metropolitan area, which has an economic & commuting connection to the metro area suburb.

These days, there is a little more residential density in Taylor Ranch--more shopping centers, grocery stores, restaurants & every other service necessary, without having

to travel too far. As evidenced by the image above, Taylor Ranch townhomes are playing a larger role in West Side development. Townhomes can be surprisingly private & quiet; most have outside courtyards, patios & often balconies.

The above image was taken from an owner's balcony on the top of Sumac Drive NW, facing the south Sandia Mountain-scape. The six-year-old neighborhood sits above & behind the Flix Movie Theatre west of Coors Blvd, so there's easy access to two cross-Rio bridges. As most townhomes have been built only in the last decade, the current crop is all modern & fully-updated. The home on Sumac Drive, below, also has a very private 1st floor space that fits the definition of a Lanai room, New Mexico-style: a "roofed, open-sided outdoor space that's usually attached to a house & serves as an extension of the home's living space. 4123 Sumac Dr townhome is currently for rent; click [here](#) or on the image below for more information. The [3D Tour is here](#) is below that.

Wisely, communities adjust & evolve to stay relevant. That slow transformation has been happening in Taylor Ranch longer than one might realize. The community has been comfortably folded into the suburban west side of town, & is becoming more relevant, evolving nicely, ...





As interest rates fluctuate, many people are seeking mid-to-long-term rental solutions. Good property management--**for both tenants & owners**--is more essential than ever. Going on a year-long sabbatical? Call me--I quickly find good, temporary & long-term tenants for all the properties I manage.

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I am a dedicated seven-days-a-week real estate professional, representing clients for over 17 years--  
I love this city!

I continuously seek out the hidden gems at any price-point for my Buyers, & am a tireless promoter for all of my Sellers' listings. I love talking real estate.

**Chris Lucas**  
Broker/Property Manager

**505.463.5317**

[ChrisLucasABQ.com](http://ChrisLucasABQ.com)  
[jebalucas@gmail.com](mailto:jebalucas@gmail.com)

**Chris Lucas**  
**Real Estate**



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**Mailing address:**

Chris Lucas Real Estate

PO Box 40081

Albuquerque, NM 87196

To reach Chris, call or text: 505.463.5317

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