

BY SAMANTHA TISDEL WRIGHT

A Strange New Day for the Telluride Transfer Warehouse

The Love Song of Mr. C.F. Loebnitz

Charles Loebnitz, circa 1910, seated in his gasoline 1-cylinder engine-operated Curved-Dash Oldsmobile on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Fir Street in front of the Transfer Warehouse. The longtime owner and manager of the Telluride Transfer Company was serving a term as Mayor of Telluride at the time.

(Photo courtesy of the Telluride Historical Museum)

Men and horses pose in front of the Transfer Warehouse, soon after it was built in 1906. Mr. Loebnitz appears to be the second man in from the right.

(Photo courtesy of the Telluride Historical Museum)



Dear Mr. Loebnitz,

Our audience will arrive at dusk, near the Summer Solstice of 2021.

As they settle in their chairs, I'll be sitting behind the improvised Quonset hut stage near the alley entrance, studying your ruined walls, feeling as if I, too, am held together with 2,000 bolts and some dabs of mortar. The daylight will fade. The first of the evening stars will emerge. The cold mountain air will mix with stage fright to raise goosebumps on my skin.

Author Craig Childs, who has invited me here to join him in this show called *Bright Night*, will spin his stories wildly across the stage, into the stone container that is the Telluride Transfer Warehouse. The subject is emergence, alignment and cosmological creation.

In between stories, Craig's friend Russ Chapman, who has driven down from Montana, will spill his music and generous humor into the thirsty night, as wildfires burn nearby.

Backstage, I'll rehearse my lines for a poem about the planet Venus — whose transit across the sun in 1639 helped establish the size of the Solar System — wondering if I will freeze mid-poem, if I can pull this off. I'll glance up from the roofless ruin into the deepening sky, and there will be Venus herself, winking down at me.

Your walls will hold what we need them to that night: Stories. Music. Poetry. Laughter. A beer booth, with a friendly bartender. A quietly attentive audience. Midsummer magic.

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The things these walls hold have been shaped by time.

In the beginning, they held the steamy sweat and nickering of a hundred horses. Rogue rays of sunlight latticing dusty air. Wagons, sleighs, and buggies.

Teams of snorting mules starting for the mines with their burden of provisions: Apples from the West End. Barrels of whiskey. Kegs of beer.

Belladonna and laudanum for the Popcorn Alley girls. Horse rakes and hay presses for the ranchers. Bundles of mail. Wagon parts. Miles of coiled steel cable and telephone line. Boxes of explosives. Anthracite, precious as black diamonds, to keep the lusty embers of this mountain outpost hot and throbbing.

And inside a fireproof vault connected with your upstairs corner office: rolls of cash, stacks of coins, deep drifts of bank deposit slips, inventories, bills, and neatly kept leather-bound ledgers.

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Forgive me, Mr. C.F. Loebnitz, for spying on you from the future. I was curious. It didn't take more than a few minutes on the Internet for me to find out, for example, that the C in your name is for Charles, and the F is for Ferdinand.

You were born to German immigrants in Ohio. Came to Telluride with your wife Christina, in the late 1800s. You worked as a grocer for a little while, before buying into the Telluride Transfer Company in 1898. You had four daughters, later in life. One of them, Mary, died in 1920 when she was just 14. She is buried in Lone Tree Cemetery.

Though your bones have rested under a gravestone in San Diego for the past 70 years, I thought you might like to

know how this humble warehouse that was once the nerve center of your business empire has transformed lately into the strange new heart and soul of Telluride.

A friend has called the warehouse "A safe space for not only artists to exhibit their works, or to read poetry, or to play music, or to dance, but for the whole community to gather in, over the past year-and-a-half of the pandemic."

Yes, the future has pandemics, too. And yes, you'll be happy to know, Telluridians still love to gather.

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Not that our pandemic is anything like the horror you must have endured, when the so-called Spanish Flu swept the globe, and slid its cold, bony hands around the throat of Telluride in October 1918, back when the Transfer Warehouse was just 12 years old.

Day after day, lonesome horse-drawn hearses — did you drive one of them? — made their way up Colorado Avenue, with only a handful of family members in attendance since the others were often too sick to mourn. People peeked out the windows through their curtains or shades when they saw the hearse go by, then slammed the curtains down, scared that someone in their family would be next. Often, they were right.

The cemetery filled with fresh graves.

Our Covid-19 pandemic has brought its own set of shape-shifting horrors, but Telluride has largely been spared the worst of it, so far.

Then, as now, reaction to the disease swung wildly between fear and doubt. Now, as then, the best way to slow the spread of the virus at first was to drastically limit the number of social interactions between citizens.

And that, for this gregarious town, was a kind of death in itself. Which is where the Transfer Warehouse comes back into the story.

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Folks around here have always called it the Transfer.

It rose from the ashes of a terrible fire that destroyed the Red Men's Opera House at the corner of Fir Street and Pacific Avenue in November 1905. There had been a show there that night — perhaps you saw it? — featuring the "Damon troupe of colored plantation singers and musicians."

A strangely strong wind was blowing from the east that night. By the time the firefighters put water on the blaze, the interior of the opera house was a seething mass of flames.

It must have been a terrible night; many neighboring structures that belonged to the Telluride Transfer Company also burned to ash: sheds, stables and barns. The stone storage shed we know today as the Stronghouse was damaged but survived, as did 15 or 20 of your beloved draft horses that escaped in time.

In the fire's aftermath, the Telluride Transfer Company used some of its insurance money to buy the land where the opera house had stood. And with spring's arrival, in 1906, the Transfer boys began clearing away the wreckage to make way for their new stone barn, on the corner of South Fir Street and Pacific Avenue.

Built to withstand a San Francisco earthquake, it would boast state-of-the-art ventilation, with air ducts in the walls,

Previous page: A yarn installation by the Minneapolis-based artist Eric Rieger, also known as HOTTEA, glows above the Transfer Warehouse at night. It is deteriorating art, so as time goes on, it will disappear. Telluride Arts received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts facilitated by Telluride fabric artist Kathy Green to pay for the installation. (Photo by HOTTEA)

This page: Russ Chapman, Craig Childs, and the author converge onstage in the grand finale of Bright Night at the Transfer Warehouse on June 16, 2021 as a sun dagger stabs an ancient rock art spiral on the screen behind them. The Telluride Transfer Warehouse, once a shell of its former self, now serves as a major cultural venue. (Photo by Daiva Chesonis)



an elevator to raise buggies or carriages from the first to the second floor, and spacious stalls for the horses.

Construction began in July under the foremanship of H.T. Wilcox, of Salida. By mid-November, the work was complete. Estimated total cost of construction: \$10,000.

You must have taken great pleasure reading the *Telluride Journal* that week, which included a detailed description of the finished structure. The article took painstaking note of its coal bins and hot air heating plant with hot water tank attached, its rooms in the basement for sleds in the summer time when not in use, the harness room and places for saddles, and on and on.

A month or so later, the *Journal* declared your warehouse to be "the place in town that's always busy....The telephone bell keeps up a constant jangle, every two minutes some ranch or coal wagon drives upon the scales, customers stand in line to pay their bills.... There are horses and buggies coming in and going out and everything to deliver from a drummer's sample case to a carload of dynamite. It's a mystery how Charley Loebnitz gets time to smile."

But you did.

There you are, circa 1907 or so, I'm guessing? Second man from the right. Felt fedora. Round wire-rimmed glasses. Easy to pick out among a lineup of mustachioed men and harnessed horses: feet apart, grinning in a bemused way, holding steady amidst this busy empire you managed.

There you are again, circa 1910, seated in your gasoline 1-cylinder engine-operated Curved-Dash Oldsmobile on the corner of Pacific Avenue and Fir Street, gazing straight at the camera, seemingly on the brink of grinning, humor and anticipation dancing at the edges of your slightly downturned eyes.

Behind you is the gaping maw of the Transfer Warehouse, where everything got swallowed up, weighed and packaged, and regurgitated back out into the far-flung fringes of the district: The last vital link in a tenuous supply chain that sustained life in this remote mountain town.

You were shrewd and visionary: You bought out your competitors, or took them on as partners. The business grew and morphed across the decades, surviving smallpox, the Spanish Flu, the advent of the automobile, the Great Depression, two World Wars, and mining's fickle booms and busts.

You adapted with the times, replacing one form of horsepower with another: exchanging draft horses for trucks, swapping out stables for a filling station, car dealership, and garage, before eventually retiring to San Diego.

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Bill Nardin and Babe Schuler took over the Transfer in the mid-1940s. Eventually the business passed on to Babe's son, Bucky. It was a going enterprise through the 1960s: the Schulers had gotten a big contract with the Idarado Mine, hauling mill concentrates to the smelter in Leadville. They also hauled gas and coal and mail into town, and contracted with the school district to run the school buses.

As a teen, my friend Johnnie Stevens pumped gas at the Transfer and shoveled coal. He reckons he fixed every flat tire in town.

"I remember the smell and the noise," Johnnie says. "Trucks coming in, and scales and weights. It was a work

place. Dank. It always smelled: oil and gas, sandstone, the masonry. It was just like any other building. You kind of took it for granted."

The mine was still going strong, but other than that, Telluride was on the brink of extinction. So when a fellow named Joe Zoline came to town in 1968 with big plans to start a ski area, he must have really stood out. Zoline started buying up key pieces of real estate around town.

Bucky Schuler came home one day and announced to his wife, Pat, "I just sold the Transfer."

"I about fell out of my seat," Pat recalled in an interview a few years back. "And I said, 'You what?'"

The Transfer played a brief starring role then as the headquarters of the fledgling ski area, but after that it sat empty and uncared for.

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Johnnie Stevens was walking down the alley near the Transfer on a winter day in 1979, on his way to work at the ski area, when the roof caved in under a heavy snowload. It scared the living hell out of him — blew all the windows out, took out the second floor. Can you imagine a roof that big collapsing?

Well, Johnnie walked all around it. Called the cops and said, "There's been a collapse or an explosion."

There were meetings about the Transfer then. People talked about how it was dangerous. Maybe it should be condemned. But the warehouse was protected by its status as a contributing structure in Telluride's National Historic Landmark district. So it was allowed to remain, with heavy black plastic tarps draped around the tops of the walls.

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For a long time after that, the warehouse held sunlight and snow, and a lonesome, large cottonwood tree. The faint voices of passersby must have sifted through boarded-over windows, painted with Tibetan Buddha eyes. More often than not, there was only silence. Shadows of passing birds, flickering on stone walls. Wheeling starlight. Tattered, wind-borne fliers for events happening somewhere else, as the town encroached all around it.

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The Zoline family had owned a large hunk of downtown Telluride at the intersection of Fir Street and Pacific Avenue — including the Transfer Warehouse — for about 45 years before they finally sold it to developers, who proceeded to fill in the vacant land between the Transfer and the Stronghouse with multimillion-dollar condos.

The Town of Telluride required the developers to provide many things to offset the impact of the enormous project. Things like underground parking, off-site affordable housing, and a community benefit of some kind.

The Transfer Warehouse checked that "community benefit" box. In 2015, the developers agreed to sell the stone ruin for \$1.5 million (well below market value, believe it or not) to the Telluride Arts District.

The Telluride Town Council, in turn, approved a land dedication and restrictive covenant for the Transfer property, clearing the way for the Arts District — and its nonprofit mothership, Telluride Arts — to turn the structure into a community arts facility.

The author performs a poem on the Quonset hut stage. When lit up at night, the temporary stage exudes a cool "Hollywood Bowl" vibe. It is the brainchild of Telluride Arts' Warehouse manager and 4th generation Telluridian Jereb Carter, whose great-great grandfather Henry Stanley also worked at the Transfer Warehouse in the early 1900s. (Telluride Arts photo)



Telluride Arts had been around since 1971, and had a reputation for getting things done. In the beginning, it had provided a nonprofit umbrella for fledgling Telluride events like Bluegrass and the Film Festival. Over the past few years, it had emerged again as a major player in Telluride's vibrant nonprofit culture, playing a key role in the formation of the Arts District and updating a cultural master plan for the town.

Telluride Arts launched a design competition in 2017 for the adaptive reuse and transformation of the Warehouse into a center for the arts. LTL Architects, a New York-based, design-intensive firm, won the community competition with its sleek, sophisticated concept: a four-story "cultural arc" to be built inside the warehouse walls, replete with spaces to serve everything from film screenings and plays to fine arts exhibits.

That same year, Telluride Arts launched an extensive restoration and stabilization project to preserve the historical integrity of the ruin.

The building was finally ready to be activated. Telluride Arts began hosting occasional events inside the structure. With some serious fundraising finesse, they closed on the Transfer Warehouse in 2018, with an eye toward moving full steam ahead on the construction project that would manifest LTL's design.

Or so they thought.

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Then along came the pandemic, which upended pretty much every human thing on the planet — including Telluride Arts' grand plans.

In the late spring of 2020, as Telluridians were cautiously emerging from the government-mandated lockdown, Covid-19's tiny spiked wrecking balls zoomed around the globe sowing chaos, suffering and fear. And Telluride Arts pivoted to a new plan.

Its board members invested \$50,000 from their own pockets to make additional improvements at the Transfer: eight inches of gravel to cover the dirt floor, patio heaters, a beer booth, new outdoor furniture. The vision was to safely host community events in this lovely, magical outdoor venue during pandemic times.

They flung the doors of the Transfer Warehouse open just in time for summer.

The warehouse held new things, now — novel as the invisible airborne virus. Covid waivers, and disposable blue facemasks; DIY haircuts, achieved with office scissors. An improvised stage, hastily constructed from a Quonset hut kit. Pods of chairs and tables, carefully set apart from each other, and the stage. "Tiny" concerts, library programs, classes of all kinds. Even a monthlong dance residency. Laughter, laced with loneliness. Social distance, laced with fear.

"We had films. We had concerts. We had meetings. We had gatherings. We had memorial services," said Telluride Arts Executive Director Kate Jones. "It all happened in here."

One of the first events was a poetry reading with beloved Telluride poet Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer. As listeners sat amidst the broken walls of the Transfer Warehouse, Trommer's words coaxed them to examine the coexistence of the "beauty and brokenness" of the human experience.

And at the opposite end of the spectrum, "We just had a raging Halloween party out here with KOTO," Kate says on a chilly November afternoon, fussing with the lock on the finicky folding metal gate as we prepare to go "inside" the open-aired building.

KOTO, Telluride's beloved public radio station, has a special following. Kate estimates there were 450 costumed revelers there the other night. The warehouse retains the party's aftermath: legions of patio heaters, fake spiderwebs draping from the old stone lintels of the windows, chandeliers dangling from the rafters of the Quonset hut stage.

Standing inside the warehouse — yet still outside — Kate looks around the roofless ruin with a satisfied, proprietary air and perches on the back of one of those pieces of indoor/outdoor furniture strewn about the place. "Our vision for this winter is to create a little cavelike indoor space in the Quonset," she explains. "Make it this fun, weird, speakeasy bar."

That's what the chandeliers are for, but Kate doesn't think they are big enough. This will have to be remedied. Like the trained visual artist that she is, she quickly sketches out the rest of the concept. "We'll do heavy velvet curtains, a bar, a musician or an acrobat, a projection, a poet. Bring people in through the back alley. Maybe we won't even tell people what's happening on any particular night. Let it be a surprise."

And if it doesn't work, so what? The last few years inside the Transfer Warehouse have been one great big experiment, with over 365 events. The only guiding principals: Keep making art. Keep providing space for the community to gather.

"We were joking around that our tagline should be, 'It's art. You don't have to like it,'" Kate laughs. "Just to get people out of this headspace of always being in their comfort zone, and in their critical mind, instead of just being open. Open to new ideas. New people. New genres. We're always in that shopping mentality: 'I like that. I don't like that.' Maybe liking it is not the point. You have to keep an open mind."

It's easy to keep an open mind, and stay out of your comfort zone, inside this drafty old ruin. The last dregs of late-afternoon sunshine drip honey-buttered light across the old stone walls. Shadows creep into corners. Kate shivers as she recounts an epiphany she had at the end of that first Covid summer.

It was the fall of 2020, and she was sitting inside the Transfer Warehouse at the Original Thinkers festival — a four-day festival that invites audiences to think deeply, see possibility, and embrace big ideas — when she, too, had an original thought.

All through that summer and fall, she had witnessed how the Transfer Warehouse was able to embrace so many wonderful events and still remain the Warehouse in such a humble, honest way. She went to her board and her donors and told them what was on her mind.

At that point, Telluride Arts was about five years deep into its commitment to build a full-fledged center for the arts within the old Warehouse walls.

"What if we didn't build this whole other building inside of here? What if we did something... lighter?" Kate asked. To a person, she recalled, everyone was like, "Oh my god, you are right."



It's a place that asks us to hold all things. A place that insists we keep an open mind, crown chakra open to the sky.



During the pandemic, the Warehouse has morphed into a safe outdoor space for community members to gather for hundred of cultural events. On one memorable occasion, nature made its own technicolor art as the reggae band Niceness grooved on.
(Above: Photo courtesy of Telluride Arts.
Below: Photo by Telluride Transfer Warehouse manager Jereb Carter)

With the blessing of the Town of Telluride, the decision was made to radically simplify their design.

Once the former architect declined to take part in this new design challenge, one name kept coming up as an alternative option: Tom Kundig, owner and design principal at the world-renowned Seattle-based architectural firm Olson Kundig.

The firm is known for creating architecture that is meant to sort of disappear. "It's not so much about the structure itself, as the space that it's creating," Kate explains.

In considering the redesign challenges of the Transfer Warehouse — how to preserve the pure raw soul of the structure that had shone through that summer, while turning it into a more functional, versatile, year-round venue — someone on the Telluride Arts team said, "We need an Olson Kundig door here."

Someone else said, "I think they are kind of a big deal."

And Kate said, "I think *we* are a big deal."

She happened to know quite a bit about Kundig: weirdly, he has a second home in the tiny town of 700 people that she comes from in Washington. So she called him, and introduced herself. They had this great chat.

"I'm working on this Transfer Warehouse project," she began.

And he was like "Oh, I was just there last week!"

Kundig had come to Telluride on a business trip, and the Transfer Warehouse had caught his eye as he was driving by. He parked his car illegally in Fir Street, and got out, and walked all around the structure, wondering what in the world it was.

Now, he knew.

And he said to Kate, "I think I get it. You need a building, but you don't want a building."

And Kate was like, "Yes!"

Long story short, not only did Telluride Arts get its first-choice architectural firm for the Warehouse redesign, "but they are giving us an incredibly good deal," Kate said.

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The new design is still very much in the conceptual phase, and the ground-breaking is likely at least a few years off: Telluride Arts has a lot of money to raise, and they don't want to build in this current Covid-inflated climate.

Kate envisions a partial roof over a third or half of the building, and either a sliding roof that covers the rest of it, and/or a giant door that closes off the section under the roof.

"But we will still have that sort of raw feeling that people seem to really love," she promised.

All of the utilities, offices, and bathrooms will be housed in the basement. There will be bars on wheels, a stage on wheels. Even the lighting system will be flexible.

Because art.

"Who knows what artists are going to come up with next?" Kate points out. "I just want to be open to that. Open to possibilities."

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Speaking of art, back in that Bright Night at the Transfer Warehouse, now, I'll don glittering makeup, the green gown of a rain goddess, a crown of starlit flowers, and emerge once more on stage with a prayer for rain. I'll dip an aspen

branch in a bowl of water, flicking droplets up into the air that splat down on the startled audience.

"Summon the fog dragons," I'll say. Craig will be wearing a dragon mask and he'll blow a plastic horn called a vuvuzela, and turn a rain stick upside down. The liquid acoustic magic of dried beans spilling through a dead spine-filled cactus tube will drench the night. "May you find your self in stormy times."

A week or so later, I swear to god, the monsoons will arrive. The wildfires near Norwood will fizzle. It will be the rainiest summer that the San Juans have seen in years. A sinkhole will appear inside the warehouse walls, quite startling and large. Eight feet wide, and several feet deep.

Here, they will find an underground stone wall, wagon parts, glass bottles, and bones.

"I don't think they are human," Kate will say.

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She sits now inside the Telluride Arts office just down the street from the Transfer Warehouse, ash-blond hair hanging loose around her face, wearing a softly knitted camo sweat-suit like high art, surrounded by books and painted canvases.

There are pieces of the warehouse wall, little sandstone chunks, lying on the table, next to a coffee table book featuring Tom Kundig's work. She assembles them into two cairn-like piles, side by side. These are the inner and outer layers of the Transfer Warehouse walls, she explains. And in between the two layers, there is rubble fill that will soon be fortified with metal rods, to pin the walls firmly in place when they dig down further to excavate the foundation. It's a process called geo-stabilization.

In 1906, when the Transfer boys dug down into the smoldered ashes of the Red Men's Opera House to build the stout stone foundation of the Warehouse, they found a silver hammer that they gifted back to the Red Men's Lodge.

Who knows what the Telluride Arts folks will find — besides bottles and bones — when they dig down this time.

"Money, we hope," laughs Kate. "And gold."

And perhaps, more silver linings.

"For all of the struggling and suffering of Covid, it did give us a gift," Kate reflects. "To take a breath. To hit pause, reconnect with our purpose, focus on what mattered most: serving our community. That's why we bought the warehouse. Not to build this fancy thing; to serve the people. The pandemic allowed us to take that shift and actually do the work. And take a minute to think about what the building needed."

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Maybe the building needed art. Isn't there something in our human DNA that thrills to ancient structures made of rock?

Think about it: Petra. Giza. Angkor Watt. The Great Wall. Machu Picchu. Hovenweep. Stonehenge. The Transfer Warehouse.

"Our own slice of Roman ruins," as my friend has put it.

It's a place that asks us to hold all things. A place that insists we keep an open mind, crown chakra open to the sky.

Yours sincerely,

An admirer

Q&A with Tom Kundig

Tom Kundig. (Photo by James O'Mara)

Q: *Kate Jones at Telluride Arts talked about how you parked illegally in Fir Street, got out, and walked all around the Transfer Warehouse wondering what it was, the first time you saw it. What were some of the things you noticed? What sort of thoughts were going through your head?*

A: It's true, I had no idea about the Telluride Arts group or this building. I've been going to Telluride often over the years for project work or to visit friends, and just happened to drive by and see this incredible monument — a big opening with fantastic rock walls, in the downtown urban core of Telluride. I immediately parked the car — illegally — to get a closer look. I got in there and I just thought, what a jewel. No other town that I know of has something like this in its core.

Q: *Were you surprised when you got the call from Kate a few weeks later? It almost seems like kismet, like the building was calling to you.*

A: It was a total surprise! But I immediately knew exactly what Kate was describing. The stars just aligned.

Q: *Kate said that you told her, "Okay, I think I get it. You need a building but you don't want a building." You are known for creating spaces that are meant to disappear.*

A: Art is about art, it's not about architecture — and I think that is something that architects sometimes forget, and even organizations can forget. The building is there to support the art, which means it has to be quiet; it has to be a background for the art. With the transfer warehouse, the fantastic space is already there, but it has some functional needs to address. That's the agenda that I understood from Kate and the Board.

Q: *You are a busy, in-demand, world-renowned architect. What inspired you to accept this project — at a price point that, as Kate said, seemed to be "missing a zero"?*

A: I'm excited about the space, but I'm just as excited about the chance to work with a client like Telluride Arts. These kinds of non-profit arts organizations have to survive under



really tough circumstances, but the work they do can change lives — it changed my life.

Q: *What are some of the architectural details or specific qualities that you love or find interesting about the Transfer Warehouse?*

A: The walls! The walls are amazing, and then the opening to that big, beautiful Colorado sky with the mountains beyond. That's magic! Telluride has a real gem with this space, and we want to keep that intact and be respectful of the existing historic building.

Q: *What do you anticipate will be some of the greatest challenges of the renovation?*

A: The biggest challenge — the crux of this project — is keeping as much of the spirit of the place intact as possible. As the project develops, we want to keep what's there. We don't want to impact the space in a negative way, so our challenge is to embrace that and for our work to be quiet to what's already there.

Q: *How does this project resonate with other projects you have done?*

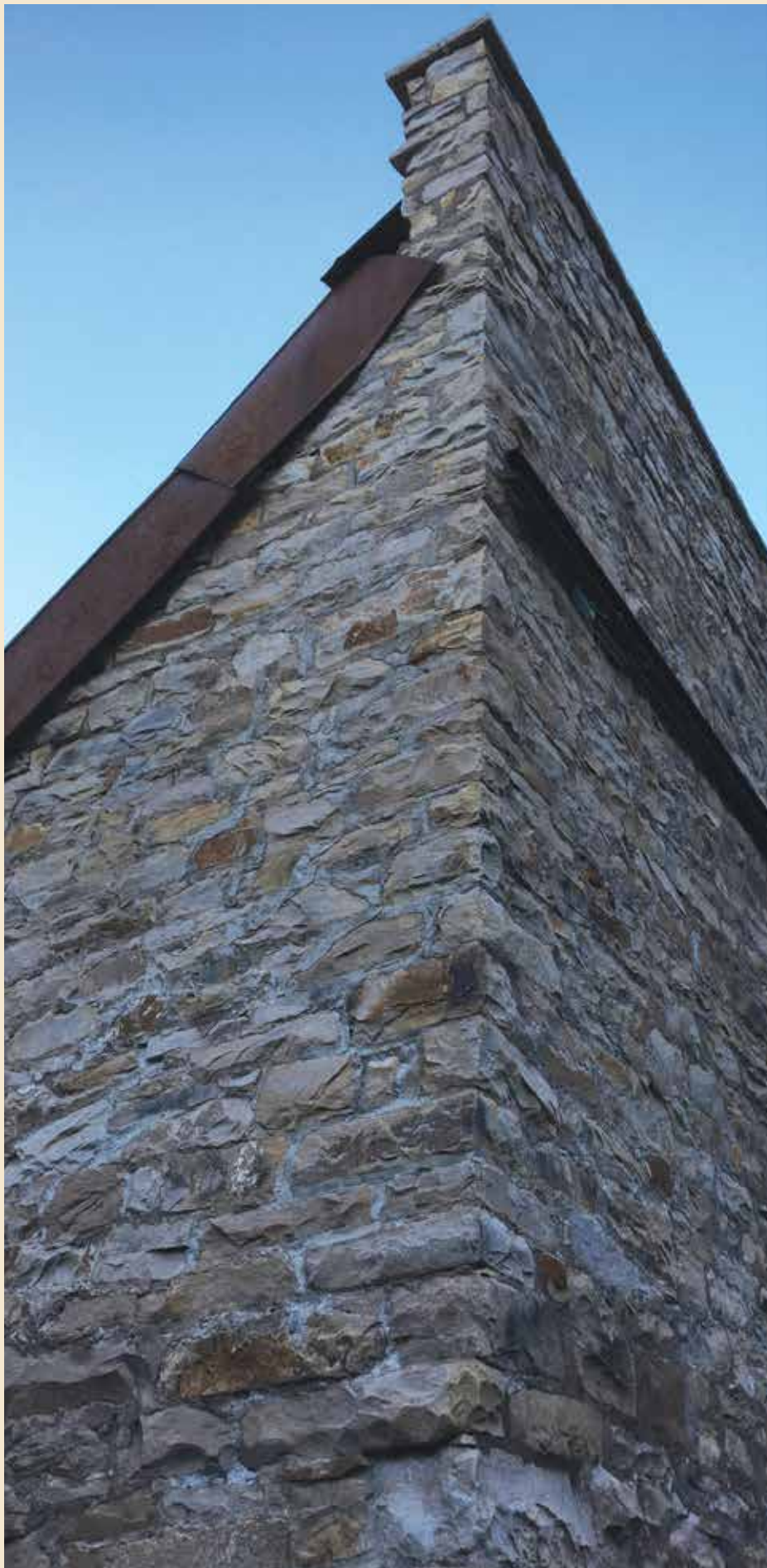
A: A lot of my projects are on the scrappy side. It's the same with this project: we have to be smart, agile, disciplined, edited.

Q: *What is your vision for the renovation? Are you at a point yet where you can describe the design? Do you have any sketches that you can share?*

A: The best way to describe the vision is that we want to be smart about the existing situation, as well as smart to the emerging situation, to anticipate the future needs of Telluride Arts and the function of the space. So we're working to find that balance and develop architecture that feels aligned with the work of Telluride Arts and sensitive to the history of the warehouse. It's still developing, nothing is set or stable yet, but we're beginning to have a sense of what it will be.

Q: *What are the main challenges? Do you think that you will draw inspiration from the mining history and technology of the region in your design?*

A: Two of the main design challenges we need to solve are how to maintain connections between indoor and outdoor spaces, and how to be super flexible about the many different kinds of events Telluride Arts will host in the space. It feels natural to draw inspiration from Telluride's mining history and technology, and the functional, purpose-driven devices that would have been used in that industry. At the same time, I worked with artists in my youth and their inventiveness made a big impression. They could move big pieces without using motors or engines, just by being smart about gravity and pulleys. Figuring out a way to have something move something lets us honor both of those influences at once. We haven't decided exactly how yet, but we have a couple ideas and concepts floating around. 



“The biggest challenge — the crux of this project — is keeping as much of the spirit of the place intact as possible.”

– Tom Kundig

Built in 1906, the Telluride Transfer Company Warehouse served as a livery barn, a warehouse, a garage and filling station, a commercial storage space, and ski area headquarters before its roof collapsed under a heavy snow load in 1979. Its sturdy sandstone walls endure, a testament to the craftsmanship of the men that built the warehouse 115 years ago.

(Photos by Samantha Tisdell Wright)