

CENTER FOR VISUAL ART, MSU DENVER

965 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, Colorado 80204



Architect: Unknown
Year Built: 1937

Founded in 1990, the Center for Visual Art (CVA) is a nonprofit, off-campus art gallery run by the art department of Metropolitan State University of Denver. CVA moved into the building off West 10th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive in 2010. Previously, this building was the home of Harry's Motors Inc. which was, at the time of its closing in 2005, Denver's oldest continuously operating motorcycle shop.

965 Santa Fe is a long rectangular building that spans the full length of the lot east to west between Santa Fe Drive and the mid-block alley. It is adjoined to the neighboring buildings to the north and has surface parking and storage space that serves the gallery to the south. Although the front façade faces east towards Santa Fe Drive, the main entrance is around the corner, off the parking lot, facing south.

It's a brick building of lighter color than its neighbors, with a typical running bond pattern. The front façade has three large storefront windows with decorative brickwork above. The roof is flat and is punctured by a series of four skylights.

The decorative masonry of the building front is in the shape of a rectangle. Here, above the large windows, bricks are turned on end as stretchers and soldiers and accent pieces are placed at the four corners. In the center, a spiral scrollwork tile is flanked by two small blue glazed tiles. Above this is a stepped parapet. Brickwork at the top of the parapet has been used to accent where the building meets the sky and can still be seen although it's now covered by protective modern metal flashing.

In 2018, a publicly accessible parklet was added near the main entrance. It was designed by Mara Maxwell of Maxco Builders, a graduate of the MSU industrial design program. CVA's exterior also boasts murals by locally and internationally significant artists including Shepard Fairey, Swoon, Evan Hecox, Dan Ericson aka the Signtologist, Jaime Molina, Sanda Fettingis and We Were Wild. (C. Cullen, personal communication, July 24, 2019)