

## UI Archaeologists to Begin Excavation of Boise Artist's Former Home

**BOISE, Idaho — Oct. 4, 2016** — For nearly 70 years, Boise artist James Castle (1899-1977) created drawings, books and illustrations as a way to understand and communicate with the world. Castle was deaf and mute, but his art spoke volumes. Beginning Thursday, Oct. 6, a group of University of Idaho archaeologists will begin uncover what else the famous artist's life might have to say.

Mark Warner, chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and a group of students and alumni from UI's College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences this week will begin conducting archaeological testing at Castle's family home. The group was hired by the Boise Department of Arts and History to recover any materials associated with Castle's life and work prior to the start of planned restoration at the site. The James Castle House is set to open in October 2017 as a public space featuring exhibits, artist-in-residency programs, an art studio and bookshop.

"Place and space were major influences in the way James Castle perceived and documented his world," said Terri Schorzman, director of the Department of Arts & History. "His home — from the family house to the outbuildings where he spent much of his time creating art to communicate with those around him — influenced how he understood the world. The preservation and interpretation of this place will share James' environment with visitors, and tell the story of his life, work, family, community and ultimately, his legacy. Working with Warner's team allows us to literally go much deeper in the exploration of James Castle's time on site."

The James Castle House excavation presents an opportunity for the public to see how Boise's archaeological history intersects with the art community.

"This is a chance to learn more about the life of one of Idaho's most famous citizens," Warner said. "While he is now known and collected globally, Castle used everyday things to make art. It is those everyday things that historical archaeologists study all the time, but in this case, Castle was using them in absolutely unique ways."

The archaeological project is a collaborative effort between the Department of Arts and History, Warner's team and several archaeological organizations, including the Idaho Archaeology Society. It is the fifth archaeological project that the University of Idaho has conducted in the Boise area since 2012. Previous locations include the historic Fort Boise site, the River Street neighborhood and the Cyrus Jacobs-Uberuaga house in Boise's Basque block.

The excavation is scheduled to run from Oct. 6-12 and will be open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. during those days.

---

### About UI

The University of Idaho, home of the Vandals, is one of only 72 land-grant research universities in the United States. From its residential campus in Moscow, UI serves the state of Idaho through educational centers in Coeur d'Alene, Boise, Idaho Falls and Twin Falls, and Extension offices in 42 counties. Home to more than 11,000 students statewide, UI is a leader in student-centered learning and excels at

interdisciplinary research, service to businesses and communities, and in advancing diversity, citizenship and global outreach. UI competes in the Big Sky Conference and Sun Belt Conference. Learn more: [www.uidaho.edu](http://www.uidaho.edu).

**About Boise City Department of Arts & History**

The Department of Arts & History's mission is to provide leadership, advocacy, education, services, and support for Arts and History to enhance the quality of life in Boise, Idaho. Learn more about the Department of Arts & History and the James Castle House: [www.boiseartsandhistory.org](http://www.boiseartsandhistory.org)

**Media Contact:**

Mark Warner  
Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
University of Idaho  
208-885-5954  
[mwarner@uidaho.edu](mailto:mwarner@uidaho.edu)

Rachel Reichert  
James Castle House Manager/Community Relations Manager  
City of Boise  
208-608-7046  
[rreichert@cityofboise.org](mailto:rreichert@cityofboise.org)