



Berryessa Branch Library

Artist: Joe Saxe

Titles: Window Box #1 (Community Room), Window Box #2 (Foyer), and Children's Wing Mural

Completed: March 2005

Council District 4: Councilmember Chuck Reed



ABOUT THE PROJECT

As part of the City's on going commitment to the arts, the San José Public Art Program commissioned artist Joe Saxe to collaborate with the community in the development of artwork for Berryessa Branch Library. The artist painted a mural for the children's area depicting daytime and evening in a very bold graphic style. In addition, he created two large window boxes: one located in the foyer, the other over the fireplace in the community room. The compartments of the window boxes bring together objects and images relative to reading, learning and the local community. While the subject matter is reminiscent of the French post-Impressionist Henri Rousseau in its combination of realist and fantastical imagery, his painting style further reflects the influence of cartoons, film noir, and graphic arts. This is Mr. Saxe's first public art commission.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Since graduating from San José State University in 1994, Mr. Saxe has been showing regularly in California and New York. He is also a well-respected illustrator for magazine, book, and business clients. According to the artist, much of his work is "really about people - - the psychology of our relationships with each other and with society." For more information about the artist, visit www.joesaxe.com.

The people who live in this part of San José wanted their new library to be warm, welcoming, and to reflect the natural beauty of the surrounding environment. I took all this into account, and combined it with my feelings about libraries and San José. The resulting imagery is personal, and I hope, universal. In reflection, I think that Berryessa Window Box #1 is kind of an altar dedicated to the institution of the Public Library - I believe libraries are a crucial foundation of our free society. ... I'm really grateful for these places where any of us can go - independent of our teachers, our boss, our government, or anyone else - and educate ourselves about whatever we choose.

-Joe Saxe, Artist

Project Team

Architect: Group 4, South San Francisco

Client department: San José Public Library, Maria Blankenship, Branch Manager

Public Art Project Managers: Jennifer Easton and Mary Rubin

The artwork was completed with funding provided by a \$212 million branch improvement bond measure approved by voters in November 2000.

About the Public Art Program

The City of San José Public Art Program reflects community identity by initiating artworks and exhibitions that enhance the civic landscape. Through active community engagement with artists, projects reflect the City's ethnic diversity, historic richness, and envision its present and future.

The Public Art Program is a division of San José's Office of Cultural Affairs. The San José Arts Commission oversees the Public Art Program, established by a 1984 municipal ordinance that provides 2% for art in City capital improvement projects, and 1% for art in eligible private development.

**For further information and photos, please contact Jennifer Easton: 408.277.5144 x24, or Jennifer.Easton@sanjoseca.gov

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