



## *Groundwork*

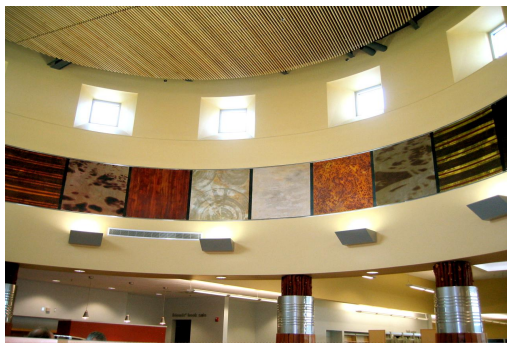
**ARTIST:** Amy Trachtenberg

**COMPLETED:** August 2006

**SITE:** Hillview Branch Library

**ADDRESS:** 1600 Hopkins Drive  
San José, CA 95122

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 5



### **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

With its location directly in the middle of the “Valley of Heart’s Delight”, a reference to the agricultural richness of San Jose’s earlier eras, artist Amy Trachtenberg imagined that the new Hillview Library would resonate with a resourceful sense of sanctuary for the East San Jose community. In her conversations with the community, she was particularly struck by the stories of the many long-term community members who, as young teens, had cleaned and prepared the fields, planted, picked and packed the produce, and worked in the canneries. This living link to such a vital aspect of the history of the area around the Hillview Library moved her, and she was inspired by the tough, arduous work of agricultural labor during the early and mid twentieth century, which she felt was lacking in graphic representation.

From early in the project, Amy Trachtenberg envisioned a bold circular entry rotunda supported by eight freestanding columns. Collaborating with the architectural team, she was able to influence inclusion of this feature in the building’s design and it is this architectural element on which she centered one of the key elements of *Groundwork*. Each of the eight columns is composed of a stack of tractor tires at the base; these support curved staves milled from recycled old-growth redwood which are evocative of a harvest basket; the stainless steel can above pays homage to the canneries; and madrone branches, an indigenous tree revered by the local Ohlone Indians, encircle the top of the column. She was also captivated by the intrinsic beauty of the farmed landscape, inspiration which she captured and reflected in the other component of *Groundwork*: a series of twenty-six paintings called *The Shadow Frieze*. The paintings encircle the rotunda below the window openings, evoking the aerial views of tilled earth, orchards, and crop rows. Echoing the materials, patterns and colors of the labored landscape, memory is cultivated and histories are honored.

The artwork was completed with funding provided as part of a \$212 million dollar bond measure approved by voters in November 2000.

## **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Amy Trachtenberg's practice as a painter expands to explore specific contexts of space, light, materials and history. Projects and collaborations with poets, architects, and composers include public artworks along Market Street in San Francisco, Children's Hospital Oakland, Pixar Studios in Emeryville and numerous designs for theater performed at venues such as ODC, The LAB, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. For over two decades, Trachtenberg's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and group shows in venues such as the Luggage Store Gallery and the Monterey Museum of Art. She is represented locally by Brian Gross Fine Art. She received a BA in French and Liberal Studies from California State University Sonoma and the Diplôme d'Art Plastique from L'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. She lives and works in San Francisco.

**PROJECT ARCHITECT:** Aedis Architecture and Planning (San Jose, Calif.)

**PUBLIC ART PROJECT MANAGER:** JenJoy Roybal

## **ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM**

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

The Public Art Program is part of the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs, a division of the Office of Economic Development. The Public Art Program was 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 the City of San José Public Art Program.

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