

Alum Rocks

Artists: Jim Hirschfield & Sonya Ishii

June 2005

Dr. Roberto Cruz Alum Rock Branch Library / 3090 Alum Rock Avenue, San Jose, CA 95127 / Council District 5

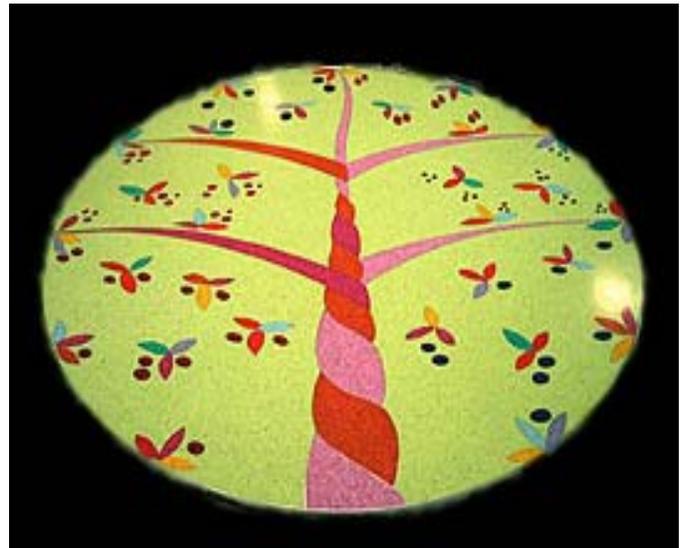
ABOUT THE PROJECT

The artwork consists of four terrazzo *mandalas* (ritualistic geometric designs symbolic of the universe), each 8' in diameter, inset in the floor. The pieces commemorate and metaphorically articulate the community's agricultural history, strong multicultural history, as well as the region's distinctive geological features and their influence on the area's history and development. These themes are also echoed within the skylights installed above the terrazzo elements.

The artwork is placed beneath four 8' diameter skylights within the library:



Above: Marketplace Skylight Well



Above: Marketplace Mandala

- South Entrance Mandala: Commemorates the 22 springs within Alum Rock Park
- Children's Mandala: Inspired by the great palm tree at the building's south entrance, this mandala also includes small handprints of various colors and is located at the entry to the Children's area.
- Marketplace Mandala: Created in the form of a stylized fruit tree, this mandala is placed at the entry to the adult/family area.
- Internet Café Mandala: Located at the entry way to the café, this mandala was inspired by James Lick, after whom the area's high school was named and whose bequest to build an observatory on Mount Hamilton has expanded our knowledge of the universe

Above each mandala is a skylight. In the skylight wells, the artists have applied Venetian plaster and colored it to relate to the mandalas. Additionally, within each well, cut-out shapes that relate to the images within the mandala below are projected from the walls to cast shadows to the mandala below.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The artist team of Jim Hirshfield & Sonya Ishii, from Chapel Hill, NC, has been creating public artwork for over 20 years. They have both worked on a variety of projects ranging from public art plans to design team collaborations. Together they have received over 35 public art commissions, from Anchorage, Alaska to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and from Providence, Rhode Island to Phoenix, Arizona. They also co-authored three public art plans including one for the City of Seattle, Washington. Their designs range from freestanding sculptures to architectonic spaces; from a pedestrian bridge at the North Carolina Zoological Park to a Mediation Room in a Children's Hospital in Portland Oregon.

Jim Hirschfield has a B.F.A. from the Kansas City Art Institute and an M.F.A. from the University of Oregon. Sonya Ishii, who studied architecture at the University of Washington, has a B.F.A. from the University of Oregon. Jim and Sonya live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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, public art strives to reflect the City's diversity, historic richness, and envision its present and future.

The Public Art Program is part of the City's of San Jose 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 public art through funding from City capital improvement projects and eligible private development.

For further information and photos, please contact the San José Public Art Program.