
Alviso & Alviso Mandalas

Artist: Donna Billick

July 2003

Alviso Branch Library / 5050 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95002 / Council District 4

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In creating artwork for the plaza in front of the Alviso Branch Library, artist Donna Billick was inspired by the lands around Alviso. She felt they featured some of the best natural resources in San Jose and, with the wetlands of the National Wildlife Refuge, some of the last open space in the region. Alviso has a strong sense of place, both cultural and physical. She was intrigued and inspired by her sense of the community's unique qualities and the mosaic of historical and natural events, which shape a jewel in the California landscape.



Working in close interaction with the community, Billick created *Alviso* and *Alviso Mandalas*. The artwork consists of three elements, all created in ceramic tile mosaic: *Alviso* is a bench in the form of a book that is standing on its side with images depicting indigenous plant life and the wetlands on its “covers”; *Alviso Mandalas* is a pair of Mandalas (circular forms), each 6' in diameter. The mandalas are on the plaza-facing wall of the community room, and the “book bench” is positioned between them a short distance away on the plaza. Together these elements create a visual welcome to the site and offer the community a place to pause and enjoy the setting.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Donna Billick received her B.A. in 1973 and her M.F.A. in 1976 from the University of California, Davis. Her fantastical and whimsical forms utilize a range of materials including ceramic, marble, and glass. Billick's aesthetic sensibility is unique in its capacity to translate a fluid language. Billick's works are in numerous public and private collections, and some of her exhibitions include: Oakland Museum, Oakland, California; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California;

Carborundum Museum, New York, New York; Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California; Richard Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis; William Sawyer Gallery, San Francisco, California and Mills College, Oakland, California.

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 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.

