

Potential

Artist: Samuel Rodriguez

2011

Seven Trees Branch Library / 3590 Cas Dr., San Jose, CA 95111 / Council District 7

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The San José Public Art Program commissioned artist Samuel Rodriguez to create artwork for the Seven Trees Branch Library, one of two separate projects for the new Seven Trees Branch Library & Community Center.

Samuel Rodriguez, working with his collaborator Matt Rodriguez (no relation), designed his artwork *Potential* around the idea of traditional model kit, but re-visioned in large-scale and updated to feature a modified, customized urban bicycle, referred to as a lowrider bike. *Potential* consists of a series of panels that each contain the parts that might be found in a model kit, presented almost as if they could be snapped out of the frame and assembled. On closer examination, viewers will discover portrait images, reflective of faces found in the community, embedded on some parts of the artwork. Working in collaboration with the architect and the Library design team the artwork was conceived of as a colorful “bridge” between the Library’s entry area and the Children’s area. The artwork is made of metal, polycarbonate and bicycle parts.



Potential speaks to the universal appeal of the bicycle both as a mode of transportation and recreation. The imagery of the model kit is intended to convey the idea that discrete elements have the potential to become a unified, functional whole through curiosity, and determination.

Potential also references the process of transformation, and how, in the creation of a low rider bicycle, an old junk bicycle frame is restored, modified and essentially transformed into something new and beautiful.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Samuel Rodriguez began painting at the age of twelve as a graffiti artist. He recently graduated with a B.F.A. from the California College of the Arts. He garnered considerable recognition for his work, often with collaborator Matt Rodriguez, in their creative design enterprise Shorty Fatz. Although not related, both Samuel Rodriguez and Matt Rodriguez are natives of San José.

Samuel's work is featured in the *Recolecciones* public art collection in San José's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. He also designed and illustrated twenty-one panels that will be permanently installed in the Jefferson Light Rail Station of Los Angeles CA as part of the regional transit system. His body of work also includes various West Coast exhibitions and gallery exhibits, as well as youth workshops on painting/design. With his roots as a graffiti artist, collaboration, public showcase, and engagement has always been an important part of his work. He continues to explore new ways of fusing 2-D, 3-D and diverse cultural elements.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROJECT

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.

