

Seats, Secrets, Stories and Searches

Artist: Elizabeth Conner

March 2003

West Valley Branch Library / 1243 San Thomas Aquino Rd., San Jose, CA 95117 / Council District 1

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The three elements of the artwork at West Valley Branch Library are based on ideas found in children's stories throughout the world. The artworks weave together stories about searches through the forest, fantastic larger-than life vegetables, and objects with magical qualities. Each work serves a special purpose and helps to draw visitors through the library.

The first element, *Water Feature*, is a prominent sculpture in the entrance court of the building. A giant-sized artichoke, the sculpture captures rainwater from the roof of the building and

cascades it down through the leaves into a drain. The second artwork, *Seating Transformed*, is a group of three lettuce-leaf sculptures placed inside the library stacks. These provide children with perfect places to curl up and read a book. The third element, *The Tree*, recalls a magical tree in a fairy tale. Composed of a collection of suspended colorful everyday objects, the sculpture is interwoven with sparkling lights and creates a canopy over the children's reading area.

Artist Elizabeth Conner worked with community members and librarians to develop her ideas for the artworks. Drawing inspiration from a local community garden and stories from many cultures, Conner developed this series of whimsical and functional artworks that stimulate imagination, promote conversations between the young and the old, and encourage people to read.



Above: View of *Seating Transformed*



View of *Water Feature*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Elizabeth Conner lives on a Vashon Island close to Seattle, Washington. She has received numerous public art commissions, and uses a broad array of materials and methods to develop artwork that is based in community interaction.

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.

