
Hands

Artist: Christian Moeller

June 2010

San José Mineta International Airport, 1700 Airport Blvd., San José, CA 95110 / Council District 3

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Hands is the result of a collaboration between artist Christian Moeller and Fentress Architects who were tasked with exploring innovative design solutions for the massive facade of the San Jose Airport's Consolidated Rental Car Garage (ConRAC). The only constraint was to design within the established budget for the facade. With general

contractor Hensel Phelps, the team developed an artwork that is integral to the building facade function and design. The facade of the garage was constructed from two layers of architectural metal fabric. The outer layer of metal mesh serves as a canvas for the image, which is made of permanently affixed white plastic disks (pixels). The inner layer of mesh provides a backdrop and a pedestrian barrier for the garage facility. The image itself is a poetic gateway to an airport, a place where moments of emotional connection occur as people arrive and depart, where people say hello and goodbye. Additionally, hands are one of the most expressive parts of the human body and have facilitated communication, technology, and innovation throughout time. Fifty-four Silicon Valley residents posed as models for Moeller's image composed of hands. Participating community members represent a spectrum of the South Bay's population, including a tamale maker and a surgeon, teachers and students, technologists and construction workers, musicians and poets, parents and children, police officers and fire fighters.



Building a large infrastructure project is a significant responsibility. Taking this responsibility seriously, the partnership between the Airport and San Jose Public Art Program agreed to support multidisciplinary design team collaboration, resulted in an inspired solution to urban infrastructure. By re-framing roles, responsibility and boundaries that traditionally define the engineering and construction we created possibilities for exemplary contributions to the urban landscape. Through leveraging budgets, the process elevated the standard

approach to public works garage infrastructure design; excellent urban design does not need to come at a premium. Employing public art resources on the San Jose Airport's Consolidated Rental Car Garage (ConRAC), to support an artist on the architectural design team, resulted in a landmark artwork. Good design does not require a premium price; the project employed common materials in an innovative manner to a powerful end. Much attention has been given to Hands; it is not simply a large iconic artwork, but it offers an alternative and economic facade treatment option.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, in 1959, Moeller lived and worked there until moving to the United States in 2001. He is a sculpture and installation artist, professor and Chair of the Department of Design Media Arts at University of California, Los Angeles UCLA. His interactive work has been shown at museums, and galleries. His many urban scale objects and installations are located in public spaces nationally and internationally. More about Christian Moeller: <https://christianmoeller.com/>

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.