

Five Skaters

Artists: Michael Mandel and Larry Sultan

October 1996

Guadalupe River Park / Arena Green / Santa Clara and Autumn Streets, San Jose, CA 95113 / Council District 3

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Five Skaters commemorates the San Jose region's unique concentration of figure skating champions: Brian Boitano, Peggy Fleming-Jenkins, Rudy Galindo, Debi Thomas and Kristi Yamaguchi. *Five Skaters* honors the art and sport of figure skating, San Jose's local champions and others who have contributed to its vitality, tradition and popularity.

The artwork consists of three parts: five monumental columns, a large terrazzo ice rink, and three winners' podiums. The 20 foot-tall columns are clad with mosaics of black, white and gray ceramic tiles, featuring photographic images of the five San Jose Area champions. These images convey the spirit of championship, including the pressures of competition, the scrutiny of the judges, the presence of the live audience, and the watchful eye of the press.

The oval-shaped terrazzo rink is surrounded by built-in seating. Thin metal strips are embedded in the terrazzo curve throughout the rink creating patterns like those etched in ice by skate blades. Complementing these curves, text conveying the personal recollections of each champion swirl about the ice. The surface of the rink also features five recessed niches; these contain display photographs and personal memorabilia of the San Jose area figure skating champions.

The final element of the work is a set of three winners' circles, cylindrical disks of varying heights; these reference the award podiums for medalists. They are designed so that anyone can stand on them and experience a personal moment of championship.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Photographers Michael Mandel and Larry Sultan were collaborators for over 30 years since meeting in graduate school at the San Francisco Art Institute, and also pursued projects independently. As collaborators, they are best known for their 1977 piece *Evidence*. Larry Sultan, who passed away in December 2009, was a Professor of Art at the California College of the Arts. His work has been widely



Above: Detail including the columns and rink



Above: Detail including the rink text and embedded niche

exhibited nationally and internationally, including shows at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Mike Mandel has taught and exhibited throughout the United States. Their work together reflects a long-standing commitment to public art and extending artists' access to a wider audience.

More about Mike Mandel's work may be found at his website: www.thecorner.net.

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.

