

# Frontier Village

Artist: Jon Rubin

June 2007

Edenvale Park / 200 Edenvale Ave., San Jose, CA 95136 / Council District 2

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Edenvale Park is the former location of Frontier Village, a western-themed amusement park that thrived from the 1961, closing in 1980. To demarcate the site of Frontier Village, artist Jon Rubin created bird houses in five locations in the current park that geographically correspond to buildings and amusements that once existed during the heyday of Frontier Village. The locations are: the Railroad Station; the Main Entrance Log Tower Structures; the Mine Ride; the Old School House; and Main Street.



Above: Old Railroad Station Birdhouse



Above: Main Entrance Birdhouse

Rubin's concept was to mark each site with a birdhouse replica of a historic Frontier Village building/amusement that was located at that site. Attached to each pole is a plaque that uses historical photos and text to place the building within the amusement park. The interpretive plaque also describes the species of birds most likely to occupy this new house. A professional ornithologist assisted Rubin in identifying local bird species and the proper bird house types to house each species. The birdhouses sit atop poles at heights of between 10 to 12 feet and their interiors and entrances were modified to accommodate the local bird species.

Rubin's interest was to activate a layer of history that is invisible to most of the people who use the current park, but still resides in all of those who frequented Frontier Village. The project also brings attention to an often-invisible avian ecosystem that is dependent on the parks current design. By turning Frontier Village landmark structures into functioning birdhouses Rubin has commemorated the past while pointing to the site's current use as a complex natural ecosystem. The birds' presence in these buildings give a life-force to the memory of their use, and metaphorically show how, conscious or not, we all live our lives admits the structures of the past.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Jon Rubin is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work explores the extraordinary possibilities of daily life. He has exhibited internationally including The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The de Young Museum, San Jose Museum of Art, The Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle. He has received numerous national public art commissions, fellowships, residencies and awards. He is an Assistant Professor in the School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA.

More about the artist's work may be found at his website: [www.jonrubin.net](http://www.jonrubin.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.