
Metamorphosis: Transformation In the Woods and Trees of Knowledge

Artist: Lucy Liew

June 2008

Joyce Ellington Branch Library / 491 E. Empire St., San Jose, CA 95112 / Council District 3

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Lucy Liew collaborated with the community, design team, and library staff in the development of an artwork for the new Joyce Ellington Branch Library. A group of dedicated community members were instrumental in providing information that helped the artist to create an artwork that addresses the site and the neighborhood. The artist learned that storytelling is an important activity at the library, one that many parents enjoy with their children, and the community expressed a desire for artwork that is colorful and whimsical. Ms. Liew created two elements inside the library: a gateway to the Children's area, and a shaped painting in the storytelling corner.



Storytelling area: *Metamorphosis – Transformation in the Woods*



Gateway to Children's area: *Trees of Knowledge*

gateway to the world of imagination and learning that await the visitors to the Children's section of the library."

Ms. Liew was inspired by the verdant, park-like environment of the Library grounds and the community's enduring connection to the elm trees that had for many years existed on the site. All over the world, trees have figured in ancient myths, folklore and rituals, and many trees of legend are also a source of knowledge. She was further intrigued by the transformation of butterflies, and that as a metaphor for the human life process from childhood to maturity. With these ideas in mind Ms. Liew created *Trees of Knowledge*: two "trees" formed by integrating painted elements, positioned to suggest treetops, onto columns of the building. Their shape also echoes that of butterfly wings and each is painted with rich, colorful mythological imagery. Ms. Liew suggests that these, "serve as a

Ms. Liew's *Metamorphosis - Transformation in the Woods* is a painting in the form of butterfly wings. Located in the Storytelling Corner, these are positioned so as to frame the storyteller. Colorful imagery on

the wings references characters from classic fairytales, nursery rhymes set in the forest, and folklore and is intended to inspire positive themes for young readers.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Lucy Liew was born in Sarawak, Malaysia, of Chinese-Melanau descent. Ms. Liew is a graduate of the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore and a Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship recipient with a post-graduate diploma in printed textiles from the West Surrey College of Art & Design (England). Her work has been featured internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions, in various corporate and private collections around the world, and is also in the permanent collection of the National Art Gallery in Malaysia. Ms. Liew currently resides and works in San Jose, California. More information may be found on her website: www.lucyliewart.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.

