

Transcendence

Artist: Diana Pumpelly-Bates

October 2003

Northside Community Center / 488 N. 6th Street, San Jose, CA 95112 / Council District 3

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The artwork for the Northside Community Center celebrates life and struggle. The ascending and descending bird-like forms of the sculpture suggest transition and represent flight from one location to another. For the artist, in view of the immigrant experience in America – a significant user group of the center, the theme of the artwork can be interpreted as referencing the movement of leaving one’s ancestral homeland and setting down roots in another.

The artwork is intended to designate space for building community; a safe haven to sustain and fortify all that is essential to develop and thrive in a contemporary urban environment. The intent of the Northside Community Center, as a place to elaborate and share collective identity, and forge common futures, is honored by the image of anchored flight in the artwork.



Above: View of *Transcendence*

The sculpture is an abstraction of three characteristic elements employed in two dances from the Philippines. The larger forms affixed to the poles references both a tikling bird – a reference to the Tinikling dance; as well as a fan which appears in the Singkil dance. The two poles reference the bamboo poles used in both dances. In both the Singkil and Tinikling, dancers move between moving bamboo poles. In the Tinikling the movements are an imitation of the movement of the tikling birds as they walk between grass stems, run over tree branches, or dodges bamboo traps set by farmers.

Situating the sculpture in close proximity to the entry transforms the exterior into the vestibule, a place of remembrance, a place of reflection, inviting the first step towards the compassionate interaction.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Diana Pumpelly Bates is a sculptor and public artist working in bronze, iron, and steel. Her work has been included in many regional and national exhibitions, and she has completed private and public art commissions throughout Northern California.

Bates believes that every aesthetic concept provides a unique challenge to awaken active inquiry created by the art experience. She creates public artwork that embodies the identity and vision of the community served by the project. Her intention to enhance the human experience through works that evoke organic formations in the built environment brings balance to the projects she has worked with.

Bates received her Master in Fine Arts in Sculpture at San Jose State University and was a Public Art Advisory Committee member from 2005 to 2008. She is a native of New York City, and by way of Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, and Vermont she finds herself a long time resident of San Jose, California.

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.

