

Valley of Heart's Delight

Artist: John Pugh

March 2003

Berryessa Community Center / 3050 Berryessa Rd., San Jose, CA 95132 / Council District 4



View of the left wall of the *Valley of Heart's Delight* mural

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Valley of Heart's Delight is a trompe l'oeil mural (French for “trick of the eye), a style of painting that uses realistic imagery to appear three dimensional on a flat surface, a style that is one of the oldest known in painting, and is the specialty of artist John Pugh. The mural depicts scenes of San Jose's rich agricultural past before the development of the Silicon Valley.

All elements of the mural from the arches and circular window, to the stairs and tile gridding are painted illusions. Two arched doorways depict entrances to “the future” – an ascending staircase into a place unknown and to be explored, and “the past” – the entrance to viewing of the agricultural panorama. The layers of the image play with this sense of time – are we looking through the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired arches to an agricultural vista, or are we looking through to a man contemplating an image of the agricultural past? Upon closer observation, the viewer sees a place where the “front” image is peeling away to reveal Ohlone artifacts – referencing a time even earlier in the history of the “Valley of the Hearts Delight”

The architectural arches are also reminiscent of the architecture of early California missions, an allusion to the relationship between missions and community centers as important gathering places.



View of the right wall of the *Valley of Heart's Delight* mural

ABOUT THE ARTIST

John Pugh is a local artist from Los Gatos. He has painted over 100 murals since 1978 for public, private, and corporate clients. His art reflects his fascination with trompe l'oeil. He believes that illusionistic murals communicate to a broad public, inspiring a sense of exploration, and creating a journey from reality into the imaginary. He often integrates the architectural style and heritage of community into his murals to establish a connection between public art and its surroundings.

More of his work may be seen at www.illusion-art.com.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROJECT

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.



Office of Cultural Affairs **Public Art Program**

408.793.4344 PublicArt@sanjoseca.gov www.sanjoseculture.org