

Waterscape

Artists: Anna Valentina Murch & Douglas Hollis

August 2005

San José City Hall / 200 E. Santa Clara St., San José, CA 95113 / Council District 3



ABOUT THE PROJECT

As part of the development of the new San José City Hall, the Public Art Program commissioned artists Anna Valentina Murch and Douglas Hollis to create an artwork for the plaza of the new City Hall. The artists' design is a water sculpture inspired by the natural geological and artesian conditions underlying the San Jose region. Equally important is the intent to create a symbol for the future, one that celebrates innovation and change as an ephemeral experience.

The specific design of *Waterscape* is composed of two topographic fields of monumental granite slabs. The fields slope from Santa Clara Street toward the City Hall plaza allowing the water to flow down the surface of the fields onto the plaza in subtle ripples. Water also flows over the vertical stone on the fountain edges, disappearing beneath the plaza, creating walls of water that define the perimeter along Santa Clara Street. The water within the field is programmed to respond to changes in time of day, temperature, season and availability of water to create different visual, sonic and atmospheric qualities.

Within the field are groupings of small boulders surrounded by concealed water jet nozzles that bubble and swirl around as if they are emerging or submerging from the water flow much like boulders in a river. Additional large boulders are set into the plaza providing a variety of seating opportunities next to the water feature.

Telescoping linear vanes of stainless steel extend from the field and plaza 20-28 feet into the air. These vanes intermittently emit fog into the air to cool the plaza on warm days, and catch and refract prismatic light. The vanes form a delicate three-dimensional transparent screen, contributing a layer of texture and a transitional scale between pedestrians in the plaza and the monumentality of the building.

The piece is illuminated at night for a distinctive evening identity.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Anna Valentina Murch and Doug Hollis have been working in the field of public art for more than 20 years. Ms. Murch is well regarded for her aesthetic vision and her community interactions. Her site-responsive work uses transparency, reflection, sound and time as visual phenomena. Mr. Hollis has extensive expertise in creating large-scale artworks that are site-specific to their physical and social environment. Mr. Hollis often works with simple tools, utilizing natural phenomena such as sound, wind, or water. Both Ms. Murch and Mr. Hollis live in San Francisco.

More of Anna Valentina Murch's work may be seen at www.annavalentinamurch.com, and Doug Hollis at www.doughollis.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.