

Holding the Moment: San José Artists Reflect on the Pandemic and our Changed Realities

On March 17th, 2020, the shelter-in-place order altered our lives. In times of uncertainty such as this, artists can help us with perspective by reflecting on, and interpreting, the world around us. Recognizing San José's creative community has been among the sectors most economically impacted by COVID-19, the San José of Cultural Affairs Public Art Program partnered with Mineta San José International Airport to create "Holding the Moment," a new exhibition capturing local artists' interpretation of life during the global pandemic.

"Holding the Moment" features 96 artworks by 77 San José artists. In a highly competitive process, a jury of prominent Bay Area artists and arts professionals reviewed 327 submissions to select the final artworks. The pieces as displayed in the airport are reproduced as 24" X 36" fine art prints facilitating expedited socially distanced installation. Each selected artwork was awarded a \$2,500 prize to provide economic support to the artists.

From November 2020 through May 2021, the 96 artworks, grouped into six parts, will be displayed for five weeks in the Terminal B Arrivals Hall. The artists also submitted a text narrative to provide insight into the meaning of their work. Themes touch on isolation, struggle, loss, connection, recovery, justice, and more.



Artist Julie Bovee's "Lavender and Coffee"

Artist Julie Bovee explains her piece "Lavender and Coffee" offering: "Ways to safely interact are our new normal. I've long enjoyed the beauty of the large clumps of lavender growing in my neighbor's front yard. In May, I noticed the transformation of his driveway into an informal coffee shop. A friend arrives with coffee and they set up their safe zone. Neighbors wander by stopping to chat. It's unsettling that it's necessary and yet beautiful to witness..."

This public art project provides a critical opportunity to local artists at a time when they need it most," Public Art Director Michael Ogilvie states. "There is a preciousness to the moment - even in dire times such as now - that our artists remind us to empathize and hold onto, for in appreciation of this moment there is hope and where there is hope there can be recovery."

For a virtual tour of the entire collection, visit [here](#). Throughout the seven-month exhibit, the artworks will post on Instagram (@sjculture) and Facebook (@sanjoseculture) alongside statements from the artists. Follow and share on Social Media at #HoldingTheMomentSJ.