

Capitol Park Neighborhood Center Mural

Artist: Jet Martinez

September 2020

Capitol Park / 800 Peter Pan Avenue, San José, CA / Council District 5

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In his design for this colorful, vibrant mural, Jet Martinez interpreted traditional "pintura de amate" paintings from parts of central Mexico. These types of motifs were everywhere in his hometown, Cuernavaca. These "pintura de amate" are done on tree bark paper and typically feature motifs of birds in branches and sometimes mammals like deer or rabbits on the ground below. They are generally bright and evocative.

In addition to the bright, positive feel of this imagery, what interested Jet Martinez about these "pintura de amate" paintings as a springboard for his mural is the notion that this type of motif, so rooted in Mexican culture, has analogous motifs in cultures throughout the world. Working with this imagery can become the basis for a shared human experience, for the understanding of commonalities in the human experience among people from different cultures.



The image of the hummingbird features prominently in this design. Hummingbirds were a focus in the community input on this project. An important part of Ohlone and Mexican mythologies and storytelling, the hummingbird has roots here. The community reflected on how in Ohlone culture, Hummingbird, Coyote and Eagle formed the trinity of deities that created humankind. The hummingbird is a symbol of death and rebirth; the community was expressive about this theme of rebirth, and a feeling of loss. For Martinez, the hummingbird, and bright natural motifs felt like the right direction for the design of this mural.

While the design imagery has Mexican sources, it is the artist's hope is that people from many cultures will find something familiar within the work.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jet Martinez has been painting for most of his life. He is a highly regarded, prolific muralist and painter. In his work he reinterprets Mexican folk art into a distinctive urban contemporary style that is manifested in both large-scale murals and fine art. Flat and graphic in manner, his use and application of color create vibrant, static imagery that celebrates life at its most ecstatic.

His paintings have been exhibited in many galleries throughout the region, as well as in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Washington DC, and Phoenix. He has exhibited internationally in Oaxaca, Mexico, Tokyo, Japan, and Zurich Switzerland. Well-known within the public art community and featured in a variety of publications and web articles, his unique and vibrant style is easily recognized; his public murals dot landscapes across the Bay Area. In addition to San Jose, he has completed projects in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Arizona, Colorado, Mexico, Switzerland, and Brazil.

Raised in Cuernavaca in Veracruz, Mexico, he is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and currently lives and works in Oakland CA

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 and experience. 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 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.

