

OCTOBER 2013

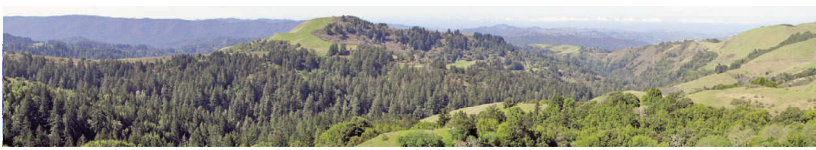
Artists beautify San Jose neighborhoods

By Tina Morrill

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"Art box" at Lincoln and Pine, San Jose
Artist: Flo de Bretagne
Photo courtesy San Jose Bike Clinic



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Artists and community collaborate to beautify San Jose neighborhoods

By Tina Morrill

They have been called “San Jose’s secret Easter eggs.” In reality, they are original works of art painted on utility boxes throughout San Jose. The “Easter eggs” are a primary focus of Art Box Project SJ.

As it nears its second anniversary, Art Box Project SJ has been quite successful in achieving its goals:

- Beautifying San Jose neighborhoods.
- Bringing artists and community together.
- Piloting the project as an “anti-graffiti” effort.
- Encouraging community pride and participation.

Background

Self-proclaimed “anti-man-about-town” and world traveler Gary Singh, a San Jose Metro News writer, posted photos of similar boxes-with-art on his Facebook page. They inspired Tina Morrill, his friend and an idealist who wants to believe anything is possible, to grab the idea and run with it in San Jose. Tina engaged the help of a local business, Phantom Galleries, which now acts as the Project’s artistic director. Tina is the founder and managing director of Art Box Project SJ.

Nuts and bolts

Although conceived and run by the community, Art Box Project SJ has the City’s approval. To keep the process and activity professional and enjoyable for all, Art Box Project SJ has —

- Criteria for the art;
- An artist selection process;
- Artist guidelines and a Sponsorship Agreement; and
- A maintenance plan.



Lincoln Ave. at Willow St. Artist, Micah (Groovepainter).
Photo, Tina Morrill.

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A sponsor selects the utility box location and the artist, gives some general thematic direction, and most often cheers the artist on during the painting process. One sponsor held an award ceremony to recognize its artist.

The combined commitment of community and artists is the linchpin of the program's success. Art Box Project SJ strives to use as many artists as possible so that a diversity of art can be appreciated by San Jose dwellers and visitors. The pool of potential artists continues to grow. Many artists have expressed interest in participating and are directed to contact Phantom Galleries. Many community sponsors have found themselves enjoying the results so much, they ask to sponsor more boxes!

What people are saying

The "...work brings art to the neighborhoods in the most cost-effective manner I know of, and it has the added benefit of dissuading graffiti." —San Jose Council member Pierluigi Oliverio (an avid sponsor of many art boxes).

"My mom just loves the art box; she is now inspired to beautify the area a little more by planting a tree and painting that fence." —An individual community sponsor.

"Before we started painting on the box, I received a phone call from my Mom, letting me know that my grandfather had just passed on. So I put my sorrow and love, as well as the honoring of his memory into my painting today." —Lisa, an artist.

In addition, Art Box Project SJ has an avid fan in Juan Borrelli, AICP, who plays "eye spy" and posts on Facebook all the new art boxes he sees — and not just boxes within San Jose, but wherever he travels!

Where we are now?

As of August 2013, there are over 60 completed art boxes, with at least one completed or in process within every San Jose Council District. The art seems to deter tagging/graffiti. Anecdotal information is a 30 percent reduction in tagging in Council Districts 3 and 6 where most of the boxes are located.

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San Pedro and Taylor Streets.
Artist, Albert Almondia. Photo, Juan Borrelli, AICP.

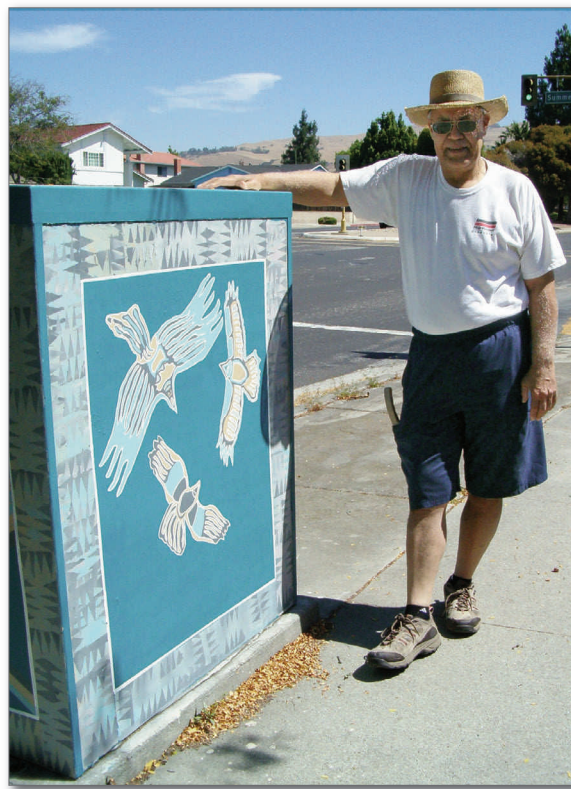


San Pedro and Taylor Streets.
Artist, Albert Almondia. Photo, Juan Borrelli, AICP.

A visual urban feast. "For thousands of years, humans have been defending their cities by building huge walls around them. Over time, the cities often spill over the walls — but sometimes they remain hemmed in. Here are some incredible images that show what happens to walled cities over time." —Vincze Miklós, *io9*, <http://bit.ly/113o8Ww>



Third and Reed Streets.
Artist, April Gee. Photo, Juan Borrelli, AICP.



Berryessa Road at Summerdale Drive.
Artist, Valerie Runningwolf. Photo, Tina Morrill.



Third and Reed Streets.
Artist, April Gee. Photo, Juan Borrelli, AICP.



Empire and 10th Streets.
Artist, Lisa Mejia. Photo, Tina Morrill.

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The Art Box Project SJ would like to thank its City of San Jose collaborative partners, the local artist community, and our wonderful community sponsors for stepping up to make our city a bit brighter and a bit more beautiful.

Art Box Project SJ box locations are on Google Maps: <http://goo.gl/maps/4Xtv>

Tina Morrill is the founder and managing director of Art Box Project SJ. You can find more Art Box Project SJ photos at <http://on.fb.me/19nLZAK>

For more information or to participate, please send a message to artboxprojectsj@gmail.com ■



Alum Rock Ave. at White Rd.

Artist, Christine Benjamin. Photo, Tina Morrill.

Archaeologists race against neglect, urban sprawl.

"Gaza is one of the most crowded places on earth, and the rapid spread of its urban sprawl is endangering ancient ruins spanning 4,500 years, from Bronze Age ramparts to colorful Byzantine mosaics. Archaeologists, short of funds and unable to find sufficient trained local staff, say they are scrambling to find and protect the monuments."

—AP, Yahoo! News, <http://yhoo.it/164B1e1>



Lincoln Ave. and Malone Rd.

Artist, Sara Mordecai. Photo, Juan Borrelli, AICP.



Santa Clara St. at Almaden Blvd.

Artist, Jane Ferguson. Photo, Tina Morrill.