

Jovi Schnell: Art Proposal for the Tutubi Plaza

The proposed artwork will be translated into stamped and colored asphalt creating a new pedestrian plaza on Russ street at Minna. The artwork is titled “Evolves the Luminous Flora” and its imagery plays with the idea of a flowering hybrid organism where mechanical orders coexist with natural orders in scales that range from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

The concept for Tutubi Plaza was highly inspired by the vision of transforming this alleyway into a pedestrian space. Throughout my visits to the site I began to envision this new urban park, one that will provide the planting of new trees, seating and offer its visitors repose from the bustle of everyday traffic. My core objective was to create an uplifting design that provided open content accessible to a broad public audience while also defining the sites distinct location and position to the stars and symbols associated with San Francisco & the state of California. Through the combination of distinct and open symbolism the design invites the viewer to experience his or her own associations and interpretations as they traverse the imagery.

Though not overtly, some of the symbols within the piece may remind us to the delicate role that certain species play in sustaining balanced ecosystems. In this way my concept embraces the idea that urban communities are akin to biological systems, that they are interconnected and affect one another. It would be my hope that the work would also offer up contemplations of a natural world coexisting alongside an urban one. The proposed pedestrian plaza seeks to plant new seeds for positive growth, improving the quality of life and revitalizing the community and my artwork seeks to promote this vision.

Brief Keys to the Artworks Symbolism

1. Gear-Flower-Sun: Located at the center of the plaza this shape essentially represents Industry, Growth & Energy, but one could also construe the likeness to a Sunflower whose symbolism has long been associated with adoration, longevity peace and optimism as they always turn to face the sun.

2. Cycling Arrow: Within the circumference of this Gear/Flower/Sun there is a recycling arrow that speaks to life’s cycles and forces.

3. Moon, Compass & Pointer Stars from The Great Bear Constellation: Nested within this center motif there is an image of a moon in a crescent phase and a compass arrow that correlates to the plaza’s northern direction with the letter N at it’s tip. The two stars that are mapped onto the arrow symbolize the “Pointer Stars”. These two stars are present in the constellation called “The Great Bear” a.k.a The Big Dipper and are often used as guides to locating the North Star.

4. Branches; The Primary Graphic Device Navigating the viewer within the Symbolic Elements included within the Plaza: Branching out from either side of the Gear-Flower-Sun motif a stalk springs forth a center axis creating the main armature in which offshoots branch out to form a symmetrical pattern. This pattern is then mirrored and flipped on either side of the plaza creating an asymmetrical balance within the whole design.

5. The Arrows & Weathervane: Predictors of weather & direction the weathervane is both metaphorically and literally associated with which way the wind is blowing. I employed the symbolism of this simple instrument for its historical reference and poetic signification.

6. Quail: In mythology and legend the Quail is widespread and appears in many different cultures. It was a fighting bird and so depicted courage and victory in battle for the Romans. **The California Quail** became the official state bird in 1931 and it is known for its hardiness and adaptability.

7. The California Least Tern: The smallest of the gull species it breeds in the bays of the Pacific Ocean and around San Francisco and has become federally listed on the endangered subspecies list.

Bee & Turtle

These animals symbolize a wide variety of associations across different cultures. I incorporated them for their forms and ability to transmit these richly layered meanings.

8. Bee: Aside from being critical pollinators of flowering life, there is a wealth of symbolism surrounding the bee including that of systemized industry, social organization, intelligence, clear communication and of a community working together.

9. Turtle: Turtles are ancient symbols of longevity. Turtles represent Mother Earth and remind us that we carry our homes on our backs. Both planning and adaptability are also attributes of the Turtle.

9. Flowers: The Dahlia was coined the official flower of San Francisco in 1926 for their color, variety and beauty. Symbolism of the Dahlia throughout many cultures is associated with splendor, dignity, eternal bonds, elegance and change.

10. The Bridge: The Golden Gate Bridge is a hallmark of locally engineered civic pride. Within the design it equally serves as an emblem of passage symbolism by connecting the forms of the sky above it with the forms of the earth below it. Bridges are powerful symbols in human culture and identify cooperation, communication, transcendence and growth.

