

# PUBLIC ART UPDATES

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## Public Art Partnership dedicates artwork by Niki de Saint Phalle at Convention Center

**Landmark sculpture named "Coming Together" colorfully celebrates completion and mission of expanded San Diego Convention Center**

With a gala ceremony on October 25, the Port of San Diego, the City of San Diego and the San Diego Convention Center Corporation, in a tri-agency public art partnership, dedicated a spectacular new artwork by internationally recognized artist [Niki de Saint Phalle](#). The monumental and brightly colored sculpture presides majestically over the new Convention Center Plaza at Harbor Drive and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Located at the south end of the newly expanded Convention Center, across the street from the downtown ball park site, and adjacent to a major planned hotel development, the sculpture, appropriately named "Coming Together," is poised to reign over an important nexus of commerce, recreation and urban life in San Diego's downtown embarcadero district.

The dedication was attended by San Diego Mayor [Dick Murphy](#), Convention Center Board President [Patrick Shea](#), and Port Commission Chairman [Frank Urtasun](#), San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture Chairwoman [Dr. Vivian Resznik](#), Port of San Diego Public Art Committee Chairwoman [Margaret Brezel](#) and other tri-agency officials, dignitaries and guests. [Martha Longnecker](#) spoke on behalf of the artist, [Niki de Saint Phalle](#), who was unable to attend the dedication due to illness. Commissioner [Urtasun](#) encapsulated the sentiments of all in stating, "San Diego has a world-class Convention Center, and now we have a world-class sculpture to commemorate its expansion.... I would like to extend to all of you our gratitude to [Niki de Saint Phalle](#) for this pivotal representation of what can happen when people come together."

Standing 38 feet above the surrounding plaza and weighing nearly 8 tons, "Coming Together" is one of the largest public art-



*Niki de Saint Phalle's "Coming Together" presides serenely over the new plaza at 8th Avenue and Harbor Drive, adjacent to the newly opened Convention Center Expansion.*

works ever installed on Port tidelands. Yet its open, lattice-like structure and bright mosaic and mirrored surfaces convey an impression of airiness and vibrancy. The sculpture has a substructure of steel clad in brilliant ceramic and glass mosaic that forms a dual face-like figure. The structure is 10-11 inches thick and is slightly curved, with the concave side facing Harbor Drive. It is mounted on a three-part polished stone pedestal that contains elements of petrified wood and fossils. The Port of San Diego paid \$670,000 for the artwork.

"Coming Together" creates a stunning visual linkage between

*Continued on page 3*

## Public Art Gazette

A report of official decisions by the Public Art Committee and the Board of Port Commissioners

### Public Art Committee Action:

July 19 – Recommended spending \$7,000 to provide additional and redesigned mosaic tile benches for the Cancer Survivors Park project.

July 19 – Directed staff to investigate all issues including height restrictions, traffic, location and safety needs associated with a proposed long-range goal of installing a monumental artwork at the Laurel Street triangle.

July 19 – Directed staff to investigate incorporating a Dale Chihuly sculpture and fountain into the site at the Laurel Street triangle and directed staff to investigate an alternate location for the anchor, which would be a more appropriate setting that is meaningful to the community.

July 19 – Recommended not accepting a proposed artwork donation due to concerns that its durability and ongoing maintenance was not appropriate for district acceptance.

July 19 – Recommended that a proposed artwork entitled “Millennium Bridge” was not appropriate for the Port’s art collection.

August 16 – Directed staff to advise the best place in the development process of the America’s Cup Harbor Redevelopment Plan to insert the proposed provisions of a revised BPC policy 609 that relate to public art funding.

August 16 – Instructed staff to investigate the involvement of the community and General Services employees to incorporate art projects for the new General Services building.

August 16 – Directed staff to investigate and develop an idea for the urban tree project and that a subcommittee be formed to assist.

August 16 – Recommended approval of draft revisions to BPC Policy 609 that would specify a 2% for art provision.

September 20 – Revised recommendation for spending not to exceed \$22,000 for lighting of the fountain and dome and installing a ceramic tile mandala inside the dome at Cancer Survivors Park.

September 20 – Directed staff to communicate with the local cancer community about the Committee’s concerns for funding at Cancer Survivors Park and its determination to fund maintenance without using public art fund money, and that staff investigate the possibility that they could provide contributions.

October 18 – Approved proposed design modifications to mosaic tile benches for Cancer Survivors Park.

October 18 – Approved 60% drawings for the Canyon Path project with the provision that the artists consider the concerns of the Committee regarding the mermaid’s megaphone and hair.

November 15 – Recommended approval of primary site proposal at Shelter Island for “Water Spirit” sculpture donation. □

### Board Action:

September 4 – Approved appointment of Anthony Block and reappointment of John Vissat and Margaret Brezel to the Public Art Committee

November 13 – Approved appointment of Donald Reeves and reappointment of Teresa Barker to the Public Art Committee. □

## More banners to enhance airport ambiance

The Port’s Public Art Program, in collaboration with the San Diego International Airport, has harvested a second crop of colorful, individually painted, streetlight-pole banners to further enhance the airport parking lots and approach roads. This is a result of the second iteration of the successful Airport Banner Competition, which was inaugurated in the fall of 2000.

The twenty-seven banners of this first batch, which remain on display at the airport, recently earned an “Orchid” in the annual Orchid and Onions awards. (See sidebar on page 4.)

The 2001 call for banner artists went out



in August. Over 80 design proposals were submitted, 53 of which were chosen for full-size fabrication. All completed banners in this second iteration of the program have been received at the Port and will be hung at the airport in early 2002 when seasonal weather patterns become more settled. In the meantime, many of these colorful banners, which beautifully showcase the artistry of local painters, can be viewed in the lobby of the Port Admin Building at 3165 Pacific Highway. □

Banner designs by:  
Jesus Estrada (above)  
and Johny Karwan  
(left).



The Public Art Committee normally meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Port of San Diego Administration Building  
3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, CA 92101

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## Niki de Saint Phalle...

the downtown area and the waterfront. The sculpture depicts a human face divided in half with one side mirrored and the other side multicolored. It was chosen by the Public Art Partnership specifically to further define the Convention Center as a public landmark, to enhance pedestrian access to the bayfront, and to distinguish the design and function of the new Convention Center Plaza. The duality of this piece creates a powerful connection with San Diego's diversity, border relations and the duality of life.

The public art partnership formed for this project has been instrumental in facilitating other tri-agency goals. Two other Convention Center artworks dedicated the same evening, along with "Coming Together," were Jamie Carpenter's "Luminous Arc" and Leonardo Nierman's "Flame of Friendship."

**Niki de Saint Phalle** is well known for her giant whimsical figures in bright mosaics. She has previously sculpted a garden of Tarot card figures in Italy and a Noah's Ark of animals in Jerusalem with Mario Botta. She is currently installing a sculpture garden in Escondido's Kit Carson Park. Her work is displayed throughout Europe and in Japan, as part of the Stuart Collection at the Univer-



Niki de Saint Phalle

sity of California San Diego (UCSD), at the Mingei Museum and Hall of Champions in Balboa Park, and at the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art. Her flamboyant "Nana and Dolphin" made an eye-catching splash while on loan to the San Diego International Airport last year. Saint Phalle was recently honored with a Praemium Imperiale Award – the Nobel Prize of the arts – for outstanding achievement in sculpture. □

## Artist's Comments

*The sculpture selected for the Convention Center is the image of one person in all his or her magnificence and joy, which is represented by its brightly, colored glass flickering in the sunlight. I also show the darker image of the self in the gray and black tones. There is the feminine side with the longer hair and the masculine side. It is the coming together, the integration of the self. It is a Western interpretation of Ying Yang. The windows in the head allow us to see nature and the sea, representing an awareness of our surroundings. The mirrors will give, like the wheel of life, a sense of perpetual movement. Each time of day will be reflected in the mirrors—the sunset, the sunrise.*

*This sculpture also represents my personal struggle to integrate the different sides of my personality. This is a challenge we all face.*

*A city also needs a "coming together," an integration of all its elements. What better site than the Convention Center as the soul of the city unified? – Niki de Saint Phalle □*

## U.S.S. San Diego Memorial campaign picks up momentum



Photo above and right by Mike Poche.

The campaign to erect a distinctive public artwork on the bayfront as a memorial to the World War II service of the cruiser *U.S.S. San Diego* and its crew has gained significant momentum since our last report. This project, sponsored and promoted by the U.S.S. San Diego (CL-53) Memorial Association, a non-profit veterans group, was proposed as a donation and subsequently approved by the Board of Port Commissioners in December 2000. Its future is dependent on the success of an ongoing fundraising campaign that seeks support from corporate and institutional backers as well as private contributors to provide \$684,000 for construction plus additional funds for a maintenance trust. In the past six months the sponsors have raised over \$340,000

in donations and commitments, or nearly half the construction-funding goal. Engineering and design development is also well advanced. At the current rate of progress, ground breaking should be feasible in 2002. A site for the memorial has been approved near the Tuna Harbor area on Harbor Drive at the G Street Mole. Individuals or organizations interesting in becoming involved with this campaign are encouraged to contact the secretary of the U.S.S. San Diego (CL-53) Memorial Association, Len Shea, P.O. Box 182142, Coronado, CA 92178. □



Photos: Maquette of life-size bronze sculpture of USS San Diego sailor by Eugene Daub and Lew Quaintance (left) and model of proposed monument (above).

## Cancer Survivors Park nears completion

**A**long North Harbor Drive, in a waterfront park near Spanish Landing, Cancer Survivors Park rapidly nears completion. Cancer Survivors Park was conceived by Richard and Annette Bloch as a way to disassociate cancer from death and was inspired by Richard's successful treatment and recovery from what was thought to be terminal cancer. A tribute for the living, the park is a daily reminder that many people survive cancer. San Diego is one of twelve cities selected by the Richard and Annette Bloch Foundation for donation and installation of a Cancer Survivors Park.

The idea for the Cancer Survivors Parks is to encourage current patients to have the will to fight and subconsciously give healthy people the will to fight should they be subsequently diagnosed with the disease. The park will be there daily—per-

petually—to give the same message, "Don't equate death and cancer." Each person who strolls through the park would gain strength from its various components.

The first of these, and focal point for the park, is a major bronze sculpture called "Cancer...There's Hope" by the renowned Mexican sculptor Victor Salmenes. The sculpture is comprised of eight life-size figures passing through a maze representing cancer treatments and success. People can walk among the figures, touch them, walk through the maze and generally visualize themselves being helped.

The park features a "Positive Mental Attitude Walk" along which visitors can stroll and meditate. Fourteen motivational plaques along the path offer inspirational messages and specific suggestions for fighting cancer.

In the "Road to Recovery" element, a series of seven bronze plaques discuss cancer, commitment, knowledge, treatments, and physical and mental welfare.

Unique to the San Diego Cancer Survivors Park, the motivational walkway is shaded by a massive tension structure, evocative of the sailboats in the nearby harbor and the sail-like tension structure atop the San Diego Convention Center.

The park includes a dome-shaped, ga-

zebo-like structure that will incorporate a mandala inlaid into the floor. Noted tile artist Marlo Bartels has been commissioned to apply a decorative ceramic tile design to the dome. Landscaping, flowers, and a waterfall complete the park.

The Port hopes to add, as an additional element to the park, a number of benches enhanced with tile designs by Marlo Bartels. These would be situated in the archways of the dome structure and would offer a place for park visitors to rest and reflect. These benches will be made available for commission by donors for approximately \$2,500 each, including a plaque. Prospective donors can obtain further information by contacting Dani Grady, Cancer Survivorship San Diego, (619) 435-7196.

The overall desired effect is to make a magnificent showing to people passing by. Though the vast majority do not have cancer, and may not have an immediate interest in the park, nearly thirty-three percent during their lifetimes will be diagnosed with the disease. By passing daily and seeing the beautiful structures and the sign "Cancer Survivors Park," individuals will realize, when or if diagnosed, that there is a possibility of surviving and will be inspired to fight rather than give up. Even healthy people will appreciate the restful and meditative opportunities of the park and enjoy its beautiful structures and artworks.

The formal dedication ceremony for Cancer Survivors Park is scheduled for March 2, 2002, at 2:00 P.M. Cancer Survivorship of San Diego will be sponsoring a walk along Harbor Drive from Broadway Pier to the Cancer Survivors Park site immediately preceding the dedication ceremony. A large turnout is expected.

Cancer Survivors Park is donated by the Richard and Annette Bloch Foundation and is designed by Michael Kiner. □

*Images this page: Dome of Cancer Survivors Park under construction (above) and airport banner design by John R. Weimann, Jr. (above right).*



## Banner Art garners coveted Orchid Award

Yet another Port of San Diego public art project received an "Orchid" at the annual Orchids and Onion Awards for Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Interior Design held on October 18 in San Diego.

Banner Art at San Diego International Airport, a collaboration between the Port's Aviation Division and Public Art Department, won the Orchid for Public Art. The project, installed in 2001, involved twenty-seven local artists who painted lively interpretations of



of the San Diego lifestyle on large streetlight pole banners. The colorful 16-foot-high banners line the roadway approaches and parking lots of the Airport terminals.

"This is a wonderful way for the Port to liven up the area leading to the airport while showcasing the talents of our local artists," said Catherine Sass, Director of Public Art for the Port of San Diego. "We are glad the participating artists are recognized for their effort." (See the sidebar on page 5 for the names of participating artists.)

Since its inception in 1996, the Port's current public art program has won recognition with Orchids and other awards on an annual basis. Earlier Orchids were granted for the Lindbergh Mural (1997), art at San Diego International Airport (1998) and the Surfhenge sculpture at Imperial Beach Pier Plaza (1999). In addition, the American Public Works Association (AWPA) has bestowed its "Project of the Year" award on Imperial Beach Pier Plaza (2000) and the architectural design of National City Historic Railcar Plaza (2001). □

## Orchid Award winners for Airport Banner Art

*The Banner Art program has proven to be an excellent way to showcase, in a highly visible venue, the wonderful artistry and talent of many local artists, both amateur and professional. We are pleased to recognize those listed below who participated in the 2000 Banner Art Program and who earned for the Port another "Orchid" in Public Art.*

Joan Bonetti  
Jessie Buddell  
Jean Cornwell  
Chris Cott  
Anita Edman  
Jesus Estrada  
Jason Gillard  
Briana Gonzales  
Misty Hawkins  
Blue Hodges  
Kathleen Israel  
Johnny Karwan  
Leland Kennedy  
Michiyo Kirkpatrick  
Deborah Ogburn  
Helen Redman  
Betty Simmons  
Douglas R. Snider  
Anita Stoefen  
Mike Tauber  
Melinda Tomes  
Ingrid Vigeant  
Kay Wagner  
*with Children's Museum staff and students:*  
Sven Robinson  
Kamara Landrum  
Janel Pena  
Valerie Hall  
Kayie Cernin  
Christine Oriol  
Matthew Carter  
Julian Rogue  
Pia Tuchscher  
Hannah Glascoe  
Mary Ann Weber  
John R. Weimann, Jr.  
Edwin H. Wordell  
Kim Wyatt

**Subscriptions:** The *Public Art Updates* newsletter is available free of charge to anyone interested in the Port of San Diego's Public Art Program. Contact the Port's Public Art Department at (619) 686-7247 to be added to the mailing list.

## Architect Donald Reeves and El Cortez developer Anthony Block join the Public Art Committee; Teresa Barker, Margaret Brezel and John Vissat reappointed

The Board of Port Commissioners has appointed two new members and reappointed three existing members to new terms on the Port's Public Art Committee. The purpose of the committee is to review and recommend public art projects that will fit within the mission of the Port's Public Art Program, and at the same time achieve the individual project's objective. The Public Art Committee consists of ten members from the community and arts professions.

**Anthony Block** and **Donald Reeves** are the newest appointments to the committee. **Anthony Block** joined the Public Art Committee as an at-large member in September. **Donald Reeves**, representing San Diego, joined the committee in November.

**Anthony Block** is a partner with the J. Peter Block Companies, a real-estate development firm that specializes in historic structures. One of the firm's projects is the historic El Cortez Hotel building. This former landmark was recently restored to its 1920s design and converted into eighty-five apartments. It is the recipient of many local, state and national awards. Mr. Block was born in Kenya and has studied the development of African art and the perpetuation of tribal traditions.

**Donald Reeves** has been the owner and principal architect of his own architectural practice since 1973 and has completed more than 600 projects ranging from residential properties to federal courthouses. Currently he is a member of Forum of the Arts, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Civic Center Complex Campus Committee, San Diego Historical Society, and the Committee for Charter Protection for Parks. In addition to these groups, he has participated in more than 40 civic organizations.

In concurrent actions, the Board of Commissioners approved additional terms on the Public Art Committee for three incumbent members. **John Vissat**, representing the San Diego Port Tenants Association, and **Margaret Brezel**, representing Imperial Beach, were reappointed to three-year terms in September. **Teresa Barker**, an at-large member, was reappointed for an additional year in November.

"We are very fortunate to have the talents of these highly qualified individuals on the Port's Public Art Committee," said Catherine Sass, Director of the Port of San Diego's Public Art Program. "The knowledge and expertise they share will assist us in achieving the mission of the Public Art Program."

The Public Art Program was established in 1996 to promote a healthy, vibrant atmosphere that contributes to the quality and identity of the region. Currently there are 70 works of public art on Port tidelands. The mission of the Public Art Program is to enhance the port of San Diego's tidelands through community development programs that anticipate and meet aesthetic integration through art projects with the Trust Cities, Port departments and District staff.

The ten members of the Public Art Committee serve staggered three-year terms, with a maximum of two full terms per member. Seats, therefore, turnover every year, providing ample opportunities for interested and qualified community members to join the committee. For information about joining the Public Art Committee contact the Port's Public Art Director at (619) 686-7246, or visit the Public Art section of the Port's web site: [www.portofsandiego.org](http://www.portofsandiego.org). □

### Public Art Calendar for 2002

Jan– Dec.	Public Art Committee Meeting – 2nd Wednesday of each month
March 2	Dedication ceremony for Cancer Survivors Park
March	Childrens Aviation Art Contest winners announced
August 15	Deadline for community-initiated public art applications
TBD	Banner Artists (Phase II) Reception – hanging of banners
TBD	Dedication of Canyon Path pedestrian accessway project
TBD	Ground breaking for U.S.S. San Diego Memorial

Key elements of Cancer Survivors Park near completion near Spanish Landing in San Diego. Dedication is scheduled for March 2, 2002. (See story on page 4.)



### Port of San Diego Public Art Committee Members

- Margaret Brezel (Chair)  
*Imperial Beach*
- Melody Cernitz  
*Chula Vista*
- Martha Ann Youngberg  
*Coronado*
- Kathleen Smith  
*National City*
- Donald Reeves  
*San Diego*
- John Vissat  
*Port Tenants Association*
- Members at-large:
- Teresa Barker  
Anthony Block  
Jesus Dominguez  
Debra Owen

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### How to Get Involved

**Community involvement:** The success of public art depends on the involvement of its patrons. While many artists actively engage the public in their work, community representatives also provide a vital balance to the decision making process by participating on art committees and at project development meetings. Those interested in participating in the development of upcoming projects should contact the Port's Public Art Director.

**Artist involvement:** Artists who wish to be considered for public art commissions should submit the following materials to the Port's Public Art Department, Attn: Artist Registry:

- A current resume or curriculum vitea
- Up to twenty labeled 35mm slides of recent work
- Support materials such as catalogs, reviews, articles, etc.

**Mail to:**  
Public Art Director  
Port of San Diego  
P.O. Box 120488  
San Diego, CA 92112-0488

*Editor: Allan Tait*

FOR ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ART INFORMATION, CALL (619) 686-7246, E-mail [publicart@portofsandiego.org](mailto:publicart@portofsandiego.org), OR VISIT THE PUBLIC ART SECTION OF THE PORT OF SAN DIEGO'S WEB SITE: [www.portofsandiego.org](http://www.portofsandiego.org).

## Port of San Diego

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P.O. Box 120488  
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