

# Another World

## Artist: Tom Otterness

March 2010

Happy Hollow Park and Zoo / Kelley Park, 1300 Senter Road, San Jose, CA, 95112 / Council District 7

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

Happy Hollow Park & Zoo has been a part of Bay Area families since it opened in 1961 with its unique combination of children's rides, amusements, the Puppet Theater, play areas and an accredited zoo featuring endangered species and a close contact area. The Park closed July 9, 2008 after 46 years for a \$72 million renovation. On March 20, 2010 it reopened for new memories.

The Public Art Program collaborated with Happy Hollow to select internationally recognized artist Tom Otterness to create an artwork for the new entry plaza. The artwork consists of 17 bronze pieces each reflecting an element of the Park or the Zoo. Since



*Another World* (details above & below left) by Tom Otterness



some of these elements are now relegated to history with the refurbishment of the park, the sculpture takes on an additional role as memory-keeper for those who visited Happy Hollow in its first 46 years.

One of the goals for the project established by the HHPZ staff participating in the artist selection was to have an artwork that engages visitors and draws them in at the beginning of the HHPZ experience. As the artist has said: "For me the sculptures at HHPZ serve to launch an experience, not to mimic anything inside HHPZ; it's a fairy tale—animals drive cars and money is food." Some characteristic motifs seen in other Otterness works are found in *Another World*—including manipulation of human and animal scale, depictions of coins and bills, use of clothing—to add humorous and thought-provoking aspects to the artwork. These unifying motifs allow the artist and the viewer to explore a central theme of this artwork: what is the relationship between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom? Happy Hollow Park & Zoo

presents a unique opportunity for these considerations as stewards of zoo programs that help sustain living species, while simultaneously housing a park that embraces the more fantastical aspects of animals in children's stories. Through these motifs, visitors can find both the humor of a Keystone Cop-like escape from Guinea Pig Island, or consider the very real relationship of how humans have, by necessity, become the thin line between some animals and their extinction – and what that responsibility entails.

An excerpt from Tom Otterness' concept proposal conveys his deep regard for Happy Hollow Park & Zoo, and its ability to spark his creativity for this project:

*One of the great aspects of Happy Hollow is that it reminds me of a fairy tale. At the Park, there is the 'Big Shoe' and the 'Three Pigs' House'; the zoo is home to animals including the Dwarf Zebu and the Potbellied Pig. The obvious community involvement in Happy Hollow after all these years gives a hand-built sensibility and an incredibly unique aura. I love the idea of a place that has a zoo of small animals that are scaled to children, and a park that has oversized elements from fairy tales. This quirky world is something I have been exploring in my artwork throughout my career. It all pooled together for me into one surreal world that includes places like the new "Road from Here to There" and the charismatic Capuchin Monkeys. It was this that I was inspired by, I let these fairy tales influence my work.*

*In making "Another World", I have created just that in the form of a series of bronze sculptures that create a series of stories. At the center is Guinea Pig Island, my favorite place. From there, the installation spreads out in many directions in a spiral of play. I hope visitors will be able to take a break from their world and escape to "Another World."*

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Tom Otterness, a native of Wichita, Kansas, has lived in New York City for nearly 40 years. He has public art projects throughout the U.S. and Europe, with many of the projects focusing on locations that engage children as well as adults. His public commissions can be found in parks, playgrounds, courthouses, and he has even designed a balloon for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. He has exhibited extensively including the Whitney Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. More of his work may be seen at [www.tomotterness.net](http://www.tomotterness.net).

#### **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. 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 Office of Cultural Affairs, a division of the Office of Economic Development. The Public Art Program was established in 1984 by a municipal ordinance that provides funding from City capital improvement projects, eligible private development, private sponsorships and grants.

For further information, please contact the San José Public Art Program.

