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# Potential

Artists: Samuel Rodriguez & Matthew Rodriguez

2011

Seven Trees Branch Library / 3590 Cas Dr., San Jose, CA 95111 / Council District 7

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The San José Public Art Program commissioned artist Samuel Rodriguez to create artwork the Seven Trees Branch Library, one of two separate projects for the new Seven Trees Branch Library & Community Center.

Samuel Rodriguez, working together with his long-time collaborator Matthew Rodriguez (no relation) as co-artist, designed *Potential* around the idea of traditional model kit, revised in large-scale and updated to feature a modified, customized urban bicycle, also referred to as a lowrider bike.



*Potential* consists of a series of panels, each one containing parts that might be found in a model kit. They are presented almost as if the parts could be snapped out of the frame and assembled. Small portrait images, reflective of faces found in the community, are embedded on some parts of the artwork. In the design of the Library, the artwork is intended to serve as a colorful “bridge” between the Library’s entrance and the Children’s area. *Potential* is made of steel, polycarbonate and bicycle parts.



*Potential* speaks to the universal appeal of the bicycle both as a mode of transportation and as recreation. The imagery of the model kit is intended to convey the idea that discrete elements have the potential to become a unified, functional whole through curiosity, imagination and determination.

*Potential* also suggests a metaphor for the process of transformation. It demonstrates how, in the creation of a low rider bicycle, an old junk bicycle frame is modified, restored and transformed into something new and beautiful.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Although not related, both Samuel Rodriguez and Matthew Rodriguez are natives of San José.

Samuel Rodriguez began painting at the age of twelve as a graffiti artist. He recently graduated with a B.F.A. from the California College of the Arts. He garnered considerable recognition for his work, often with collaborator Matthew Rodriguez; together they gained a reputation for their work in customized urban bicycle design and fabrication.

Matthew Rodriguez began building bicycles and doing general fabrication tasks at the age of 12 with his Grandfather, "Pops". He apprenticed under renowned bicycle-customizer Dale Saso (2008-2009) while also teaching himself skills in bicycle building and fabrication. Matthew's work in bicycle design and building has been heavily influenced by the Bay Area's urban culture: hot rods, lowriders, graffiti, motorcycles, and his close bond with "Pops".

Samuel's and Matthew's collaborative work is featured in the *Recolecciones* public art collection in San José's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Samuel also designed and illustrated a permanent public artwork for the Jefferson Light Rail Station of Los Angeles CA as part of the regional transit system. His body of work also includes various West Coast exhibitions and gallery exhibits, as well as youth workshops on painting/design. With his roots as a graffiti artist, collaboration, public showcase, and engagement has always been an important part of his work. He continues to explore new ways of fusing 2-D, 3-D and diverse cultural elements.

Matthew's art has been exhibited at numerous lowrider bicycle events, the San Jose Museum of Art, the Oakland Museum of California, and featured on the cover of San Jose's Metro, just to name a few. Matthew and the Pops Fabrication shop was recently featured in the 4.4 Education Issue of San Jose's Content Magazine. Looking to make Pops a household name, his drive for modern design with functionality is never-ending.

More about both artists can be found on social media including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumbler and Yelp by searching on Samuel Rodriguez and Pops Fabrication.

## ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROJECT

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 City's Office of 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.