



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Laguna Honda Public Art Program

San Francisco enhances the beauty of its public buildings and spaces through the Art Enrichment Ordinance. One of the first in the country, the ordinance mandates that 2% of the total eligible construction costs of civic public works projects be allocated for public art. The Laguna Honda Replacement Program generated approximately \$3.9 million in Art Enrichment funds for a comprehensive public art program that contributes to the quality of life at the hospital by aesthetically enhancing the environment and supporting the hospital's clinical needs and therapeutic goals.

PROJECT SCOPE AND GOALS

The Replacement Program presented the Arts Commission with the rare and exciting opportunity to explore new possibilities for public art in a hospital setting. In 2001, Arts Commission staff began working closely with hospital staff and the project architects to develop the public art program. The goal of the program was not only to commission and purchase outstanding works of art that would enhance the campus, but also to contribute to the hospital's healing environment. The newly-commissioned artworks would represent the highest aesthetic standards, be a source of pride and enjoyment for the hospital staff and residents and worthy additions to the city's Civic Art Collection. The art should also be appropriate for a population diverse in its ethnicity, cultural backgrounds and levels of physical ability and cognition. Lastly, the projects would have to be easily maintained in conjunction with standard hospital operations.

APPROACH

Studies have shown that a pleasurable physical environment translates directly to a patient's sense of wellbeing. For Laguna Honda, the public art program would play a key role in providing an aesthetically pleasing environment and establishing a sense of place and home. Special consideration was also given to designing an art program that could address the hospital's special constituency. For example, artworks had to be wheelchair accessible or touchable, so that they could be enjoyed by patients with mobility and sight limitations.

In terms of designing work that was appropriate for the various clinical presentations at Laguna Honda, a report titled “Functional Program,” published by former Laguna Honda Chief Nursing Officer Mary Louise Fleming and former Medical Director Terry Hill on March 2, 2001, provided a helpful guide to how the public art program could contribute to some of the clinical goals of the facility design. In the report, the authors cited a number of clinical needs that could be contributed to through effective hospital design. Many of these programmatic functions for the architecture were those that art is also uniquely suited to fulfill, such as wayfinding, sensory stimulation, activity, memory stimulation and orientation to place and time.

Following is a summary of those key elements of design:

- **Wayfinding and Location Identity**

Visual cues are critical in helping residents navigate their environment. The multiple corridors, floors and wings characteristic of large hospitals can be frustrating for patients and visitors who may experience difficulty finding their way around. Visually striking work placed in key locations provides landmarks for patients and establishes an identity for specific areas.

- **Sensory Stimulation**

A functional program study called for drawing upon “visual, audio, tactile, olfactory and kinesthetic resources to assist residents with sensory losses to utilize remaining abilities.” Many of the artworks commissioned encourage touch and physical engagement with the work.

- **Encouragement of Activity**

The campus features a number of gardens and formal courtyards, which allow residents to take advantage of the natural setting. The outdoor spaces incorporate secure wandering paths for patients with dementia and appropriate outlets for resident activity. Sculptures commissioned for these courtyards provide a destination and an object for patients to explore.

- **Nature and Stimulation of Memory**

Research related to the positive effects of artwork in a hospital environment indicated that art and nature were found to alleviate stress and divert attention away from pain (Ulrich, 1991). Studies have also shown that a majority of patients respond positively to art that represents the natural world (Ulrich & Gilpin, 2003). Cues, props and experiences that serve to connect residents with their pasts and familiar practices are also beneficial. Much of the artwork commissioned for Laguna Honda employs imagery from nature or otherwise evokes the natural world. Many of the artworks depict iconic views of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, or other familiar activities and vocations.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Based on the size of the facility and the needs of the residents, the art enrichment program would feature a large number of artworks of different styles and materials that would be dispersed throughout the hospital. The works would include everything from individually framed two-dimensional prints, photographs and paintings, glass or tile mosaics, ceramic or porcelain enamel tile, relief sculpture, free standing sculpture, mini-fountains and environmental artworks. The artworks will be sited to provide identity and focus to specific areas and help make the facility attractive and welcoming.

Following is an inventory of the project's primary locations:

- **Entrance Lobby**
- **Floors, or Neighborhoods, in the South and East Residences and the Pavilion (Façade and Esplanade)**
- **Elevator Lobbies**
- **Outdoor Courtyard - Sculptures**
- **Aqua Therapy Room - Tile Design**

Other key components of the program's design include the following:

- **History Project**

Given Laguna Honda's rich history, great consideration was given to how artworks could relate the new building to the old. Commissioning murals for the new entry lobby that related to the existing murals in the historic lobby is one way in which the public art program achieved this goal. In addition, Laguna Honda has a wealth of old photographs (with negatives), along with written diaries and journals that document its history. Part of the public art program included use of these photographs, documents and artifacts in a project that has the history of the hospital as its theme.

- **Conservation of Historic Artworks**

There are a number of historic artworks in the city's collection sited at Laguna Honda. For this reason, the public art program included the conservation of certain works including a sculpture by David Edstrom and W.P.A-era murals by Glen Wessel.

- **Miscellaneous Artworks**

Two-dimensional artwork such as paintings, photographs and drawings will be purchased from San Francisco-based artists for placement throughout the hospital. In addition, the public art program includes the inventory, cataloguing and placement of the artworks that are already in the hospital's collection.

ARTIST SELECTION

In July 2001, the Arts Commission issued a national request for qualifications (RFQ) for the neighborhood identity projects as well as the history project. The RFQ for the courtyard sculptures and pool tile design was publicized in 2002. Interested artists were required to submit an application including images of previous work and other background materials. Three separate artist selection panels were assembled to oversee the selection process for the neighborhood identity projects, courtyard sculptures and history project. Each panel consisted of three arts professionals, such as a curator or artist, and representatives from Laguna Honda and the architecture team. In addition to artists selected for these particular projects, the panels established a pre-qualified list of artists to be considered for future opportunities.

Artists were selected based on artistic excellence and originality as evidenced by representations of past work in slides and other supporting material; appropriateness of medium, style and previous experience as it related to the project goals and setting; experience with projects of similar scale and scope and/or adequate professional experience to handle the requirements of this project; and availability to participate in the design, approval, and implementation of the project as required. The selection panel looked for local and national artists who would be able to respond to the research and who worked in a variety of media and styles. Selected artists were then asked to work with the staff and project design team to develop proposals for their particular site. All proposals were approved by both the Arts Commission and Laguna Honda prior to being implemented.

Arts Commission staff made several presentations of the proposals to hospital staff, residents and volunteers. Additionally, the artists presented their projects at the hospital during a series of public art talks during which residents contributed their comments and feedback. Once the proposals were completed they were presented to the Visual Arts Commission for final approval and later by the full Arts Commission.

ARTISTS

Beliz Brother

Bernie Lubell

Ann Chamberlain (d. April 2008)

Terry Hoff

Diane Andrews Hall

Arlan Huang

Takenobu Igarashi

Owen Smith

Merle Axelrad Serlin

Cliff Garten

Cheonae Kim

Lewis de Soto

Suzanne Biaggi

Jonathan Bonner

Linnea Glatt

Michael Stutz

Diana Pumpelly Bates

Po Shu Wang

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