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New Art in Orinda's Public Spaces

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo Ohlen Alexander

Move over John Deere, Orinda has its very own tractor—a playful, yellow mini-version that now resides in the Library Plaza. The tractor serves as the base element of a sculpture by artist Gale Wagner. Most Orindans, whether they realize it or not, are familiar with Wagner's work, which includes the sculpture *Outtahere*—the frog that continually leaps across the fountain just outside the Library. Orinda's Art in Public Places Committee (the APPC) recently installed new work by Wagner and six other artists in the plaza and surrounding area.

A little over a year and a half ago, the APPC placed the first works of sculpture in the Orinda Village downtown area with plans to replace the works annually. "We originally thought a one year timeframe was appropriate for the works to be viewed, but we are moving to an 18 month to two-year timeframe to give sufficient time for the general public and visitors to view and enjoy the art," states Regina Almaguer, a member of the APPC and a public art consultant for the cities of Oakland and San Francisco.

"The art has become an attraction for people, and the

community has responded very well to it," adds Almaguer.

The new sculptures include a gateway piece that one walks through by artist Joyce Clemens and a kinetic peacock by Martinez-based Patricia Vader. "We deliberately try to identify a wide variety of styles and media that will appeal to a broad spectrum of individuals, both adults and children," notes Almaguer.

City Hall will be the recipient of two table-top sculptures from the estate of James Prestini, a well-known artist who taught at the University of California at Berkeley.

One of this installation's most unique works is a piece entitled *Surveillance* by artist Kent Roberts that will be suspended in the atrium of the Library by the end of the month.

All of the sculptures are currently "on loan" to the city, and the APPC is currently soliciting the input of residents regarding the potential acquisition of public artwork. A brief survey is posted at the city website for residents to weigh in (<http://www.cityoforinda.org>). "The ultimate goal is to purchase one or more works as permanent acquisitions, states Almaguer.

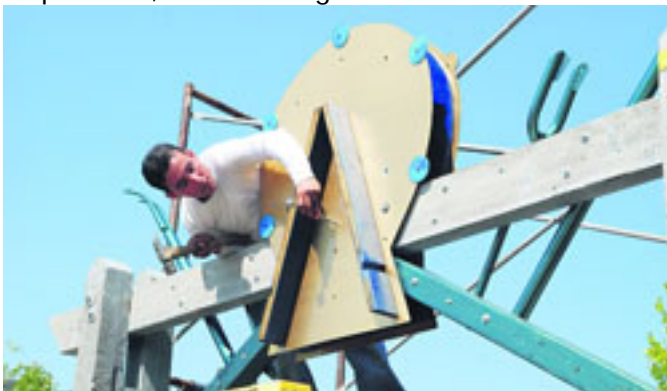


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