



REACH ASHLAND YOUTH CENTER

REACH Public Art Program

The goal of the public art program at REACH Ashland Youth Center is to generate positive, uplifting art experiences that create a sense of place and to engage and honor youth and community. Local youth had the initial vision for a youth center and played a pivotal role in planning and making it a reality. Part of that process included their contribution to the public art program and their voices are present in the finished artworks. Youth contributed to the public art program plan and goals, provided feedback on the artwork locations, and served on committees to choose the artists. They also gave feedback to the artists about their designs and collaborated with the artists by sharing ideas and making artwork together. The public artwork contributes to a vibrant and inspiring space where youth can thrive, be creative, and cultivate positive change.



"When I look at this project, I always see the faces of the youth that helped make it happen. Often, it's quite literal: I can point to a specific idea, a specific element, and I can attach a young person's name to it; they are all hidden authors, right below the surface of this ambitious collaborative work."

– Mallory Scott Cusenbery

Clearing, 2012, porcelain and ceramic tiles. Photos © 2013 Mark Singer Photography / marksinger.com

AMY TRACHTENBERG AND MALLORY SCOTT CUSENBERY

The REACH building surface design was created in collaboration by artist Amy Trachtenberg and architect Mallory Scott Cusenbery. The pattern, color, and material qualities that create the skin of this building are evocative of the organic and the natural world. Greens and metallics offer a sense of the dappled light, luminosity, and shade experienced under a tree canopy. Wood tones carry memories of Ashland's history of orchards. Touches of pink signal refuge and optimism, with the youth center inviting discovery and opportunity.

This project was developed as part of an unprecedented commitment to connecting youth to the creation of their physical environment. Through several months of hands-on participatory sessions, local youth worked with the artist-team to contribute insights, attitudes, and ambitions that informed this artwork.

EDUARDO PINEDA AND JOAQUIN A. NEWMAN

Working in collaboration with local youth and their families, Pineda and Newman created a library of images that emulate ancient pictographs from multiple world cultures in order to transcend the limitations of written language. The images in the amphitheater focus on the themes of: learning and discovery; people and relationships; and nature, community, and place. A selection of the images also appear in the courtyard where the artists hope to provide a space for individuals to 'center' themselves at the heart of the facility while encouraging introspection and self-awareness. Walking the labyrinth will connect future generations of youth with the generation who made REACH a reality.

"I am so inspired that young people organized and advocated for the youth center. Their dedication and constructive approach models what our society needs right now – cooperation and focus on making the world more livable."

– Eduardo Pineda

"I want to inspire young people to nourish their creative selves, to continue to imagine vigorously, and to work hard and make choices to fulfill their visions; and when the time comes, to dream new dreams."

– Joaquin A. Newman



Top image: *Codex to the Future, 2012, cast concrete tiles. Bottom image: Center of the Center, 2012, laser-engraved and colored pavers. Photos © Sibila Savage.*



Meet Me Here, 2012, mixed media on wood panel. Photo © Sibila Savage.

MIRANDA BERGMAN

A hand sculpted in clay is placed on a map over the location of the REACH Ashland Youth Center. The words “meet me here” in the artwork and the symbols reference the concept by which community is built through the meeting of our hearts. The heart-shaped mirror has the word “Leader” over it. As youth look into the mirror, they will see their own potential as leaders in their reflection.

“I was inspired by a young woman in one of my workshops who said, ‘I want a piece of art that is good to be near – almost like a friend. So you visit that favorite artwork, or meet someone there, and it feels like a home away from home.’”

– Miranda Bergman

MARION COLEMAN

Artist Marion Coleman wants you to “get up and dance or sit down and sew!” In preparation for this project, she studied various traditional and contemporary dance forms and took photos at dance performances and parades. The artwork is designed to promote interest in dance, body awareness, and physical activity and to celebrate cultural heritage and diversity.



Roots and Rhythm, 2012, quilted fiber collage
Photo © Sibila Savage.



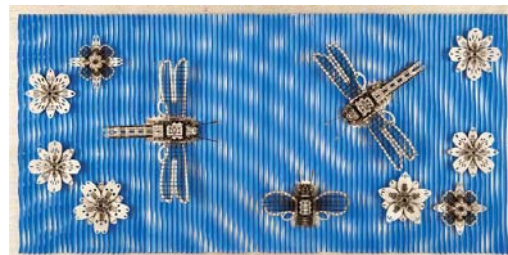
Diversity is Beautiful #1, 2012, mixed media on wood panel. Photo © Sibila Savage.

JAMES E. GAYLES JR.

This series of paintings honors many of the youth who were instrumental in the early planning and creation of the youth center. Their dedication and focus, and that of the countless other youth involved, was essential to making the youth center possible. Traditional cultural symbols and motifs are shown alongside the portraits to connect the youth with their cultural heritage.

JOYCE HSU

Dragonflies are the only insect that can synchronize all four wings and hover in mid-air and a swarm of fireflies can spontaneously synchronize their flashes. These two insects were chosen because they are the embodiment of how REACH was created – by all the parts in the community working together. And the ripple background was chosen as a metaphor for the ever-expanding positive change REACH will have to the larger community.



Ripples, 2012, marine grade plywood and acrylic
Photo © Sibila Savage.

“A young man at a community meeting commented that my wooden flowers represent diversity to him – the flowers might all look very similar at first glance but they differ in sizes and shapes, just like us. His comment helped me to focus on how to best represent the collective effort that resulted in this impressive youth center.”

– Joyce Hsu

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ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC ART PROGRAM & THE ALAMEDA COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION

The Public Art Program is funded through the Alameda County Percent for Art Public Art Ordinance managed by the Alameda County Arts Commission on behalf of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. The Arts Commission serves as the Core Lead for the Arts and Creativity programming at REACH. For more information about the County of Alameda’s Public Art Program or the Arts and Creativity programs, contact the office of the Alameda County Arts Commission at (510) 208-9646 or visit www.acgov.org/arts.

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