



CIVIC ART AT EAST RANCHO DOMINGUEZ COMMUNITY CENTER 15116 S. ATLANTIC AVENUE, COMPTON, CA 90221

A project of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art Program
Extraordinary Experiences in Everyday Places

ABOUT THE ART

Fausto Fernandez's new artwork for the East Rancho Dominguez Community Center, *Dominguez Field and the Famous Titans of Aviation*, is a mixed media assemblage that uses paint, powder coated aluminum, wood and corrugated metal. It was created through Fernandez's research and conversations with the local community and project architects.

Fernandez was drawn to the history of the Dominguez family, the initial land owners of the area dating back to 1784. To learn more about this history and to connect with local residents, Fernandez and community engagement consultant, Sara Daleiden arranged a field trip and free tour of the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum. Only four miles from project site, the Dominguez Rancho is a California Historical Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For some, the field trip to the Rancho was their first.

During the tour they learned about important moments in the history of the community, including the 1910 Air Meet that happened at Dominguez Field and was the first major air show in the United States. Fernandez continued his conversations with the Community Center's architects to understand their inspiration, which came from 1960s architecture. He learned that architecture from this time often incorporated wood and bold, colorful graphics.

In the artwork you will find that the mission style architecture of the Rancho is referenced in the shape of the wood and vibrant metal panels throughout. Modern interpretations of the façade and hot air balloons from the 1910 Air Meet are incorporated. A wing-like symbol, painted in the background, is a recurring image in Fernandez's work.

Local youth from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps were mentored by artist Louise Griffin and helped to complete



Detail of Dominguez Field and the Famous Titans of Aviation
Photo: LACAC

portions of the installation. The artwork is a part of a series of projects funded by a grant from the Los Angeles County Parks and Regional Open Space District that use arts-based solutions to promote the value of civic spaces and deter vandalism at County properties. The artist hopes that the artwork will achieve this goal by creating a new cultural landmark that dramatizes community history, progress and place.

To learn more about the artist: <http://www.faustofernandez.com>

Fausto Fernandez is a mixed media collage artist whose works include a variety of paintings, public art, and community engagement projects, through which he explores the relationship of nature and technology as they intersect with human behavior.



Local residents with Fausto Fernandez and Sara Daleiden at the tour of the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
Photo: LACAC

In December 2004, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the County's first Civic Art policy, which allocates one percent of County capital projects to civic art. The policy allows for integrated permanent public art enhancements, temporary art commissions, restoration of historic artworks, and the creation of cultural spaces or activities. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission is responsible for the administration of the Civic Art policy.

The County's Art Collection belongs to everyone. If you notice an artwork is damaged, lost or in need of care, please notify the Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art division at 213-202-5858 or civicaart@arts.lacounty.gov.

For more information, please visit www.lacountyarts.org. Facebook.com/lacountyarts. Twitter/@lacountyarts

ART AS INFRASTRUCTURE

An Evaluation of Civic Art and Public Engagement in Four Communities in South Los Angeles

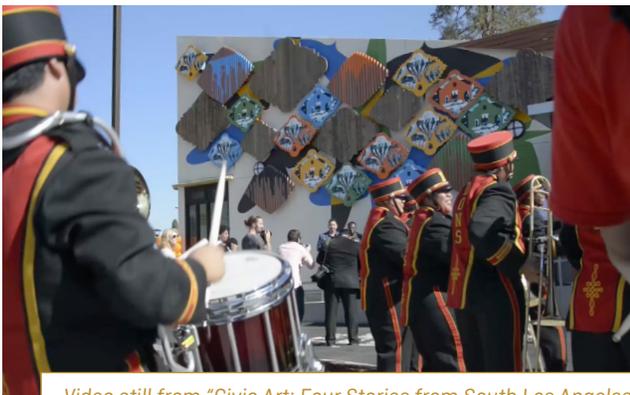
Fausto Fernandez' artwork was part of a series of projects designed around the idea that better engagement in the development of artworks would promote community value for civic spaces and deter vandalism at county properties, led by the LA County Arts Commission and funded by a grant from the Los Angeles County Parks and Regional Open Space District. and Artist Sara Daleiden of s(o)ul supported the artists in developing engagement programs at each site and produced a documentary titled *Civic Art: Four Stories from South Los Angeles* that follows the development of the artworks and engagement programs at all four sites.

Along with the three other project sites, the LA County Arts Commission evaluated the success of these artworks in

- ▶ shifting perceptions about the sites
- ▶ increasing positive activity
- ▶ reducing graffiti vandalism
- ▶ building a sense of community ownership
- ▶ building capacity for future arts and culture activities

The projects were successful at shifting perceptions of place through beautification and encouraging new use.

- ▶ Community members interpreted the installation of artwork at these public facilities as positive investment in their neighborhoods and as signs that the government cares about their community.
- ▶ Community members shared that a well-maintained appearance, through artworks and a lack of graffiti vandalism, and the presence of family-oriented activity can foster the perception that a place is safe and welcoming.



Video still from "Civic Art: Four Stories from South Los Angeles"
Photo © Mark Escribano and Sara Daleiden, s(o)ul, 2017

- ▶ Pairing art projects and new infrastructure increased the impact of both kinds of investment. The "energy" that artwork brings to a place spurred maintenance, stewardship, and increased activity.

East Rancho Dominguez Park and Community Center experienced a reduction in requests for graffiti removals, which suggests highly visible placement of artworks may be especially effective for graffiti abatement.

- ▶ Engagement strategies enhanced attachment and the sense of ownership of public facilities when the artists Involved community members in design or fabrication
- ▶ Provided opportunities for interaction with artists during the artwork development
- ▶ Created space for social interaction among participants to foster bonds important for social cohesion and civic engagement
- ▶ Investigated and worked with the attachments to place that already existed in the community

The projects built capacity for future arts and culture programming by generating new ideas and strategies for public engagement among parks and libraries staff.

In the end, the project demonstrated that government investment in artworks at neighborhood parks and libraries that include artist-led engagement programs can lead to better outcomes for communities. Agencies planning similar projects should consider

- ▶ Increasing investment in artistic engagement throughout physical artwork development and through multi-year artist-in-residence programs.
- ▶ Creating a "maintenance" plan that continues the communication and relationships built for temporary participatory artworks to enhance the impact of artistic engagement
- ▶ Partnering directly with community-based organizations such as a neighborhood association or Friends of the Library group to increase civic engagement

For the full evaluation report and information about the other projects in this series, visit www.lacountyarts.org