

An abstract painting depicting a fire scene. The left side is dominated by vibrant, textured brushstrokes in shades of orange, yellow, and red, representing flames. The right side features cooler tones of blue and green, suggesting smoke or a fire hydrant. The background is dark, with some faint circular patterns in the upper left. The overall style is expressive and dynamic.

The Art of Firefighting



The Art of Firefighting

by
Anne-Elizabeth Sobieski

This activity book for families is dedicated to the firefighters of Fire Station 104.

Hi! I'm Anne-Elizabeth and I am the artist who was selected by the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture to create ten fused glass artworks for the windows for Fire Station 104 in Santa Clarita. While creating this Civic Art project I learned a lot about firefighters and their work.



The first glass artwork window you see as you enter the fire station shows a firefighter battling a wildland brushfire. I designed this so that we look up to the firefighter and can see them in a position of action.

Firefighters on the job split up their team to surround a fire and keep it from spreading. They look at the topography of the area and the level of brush fuel to know how fast the fire will burn.

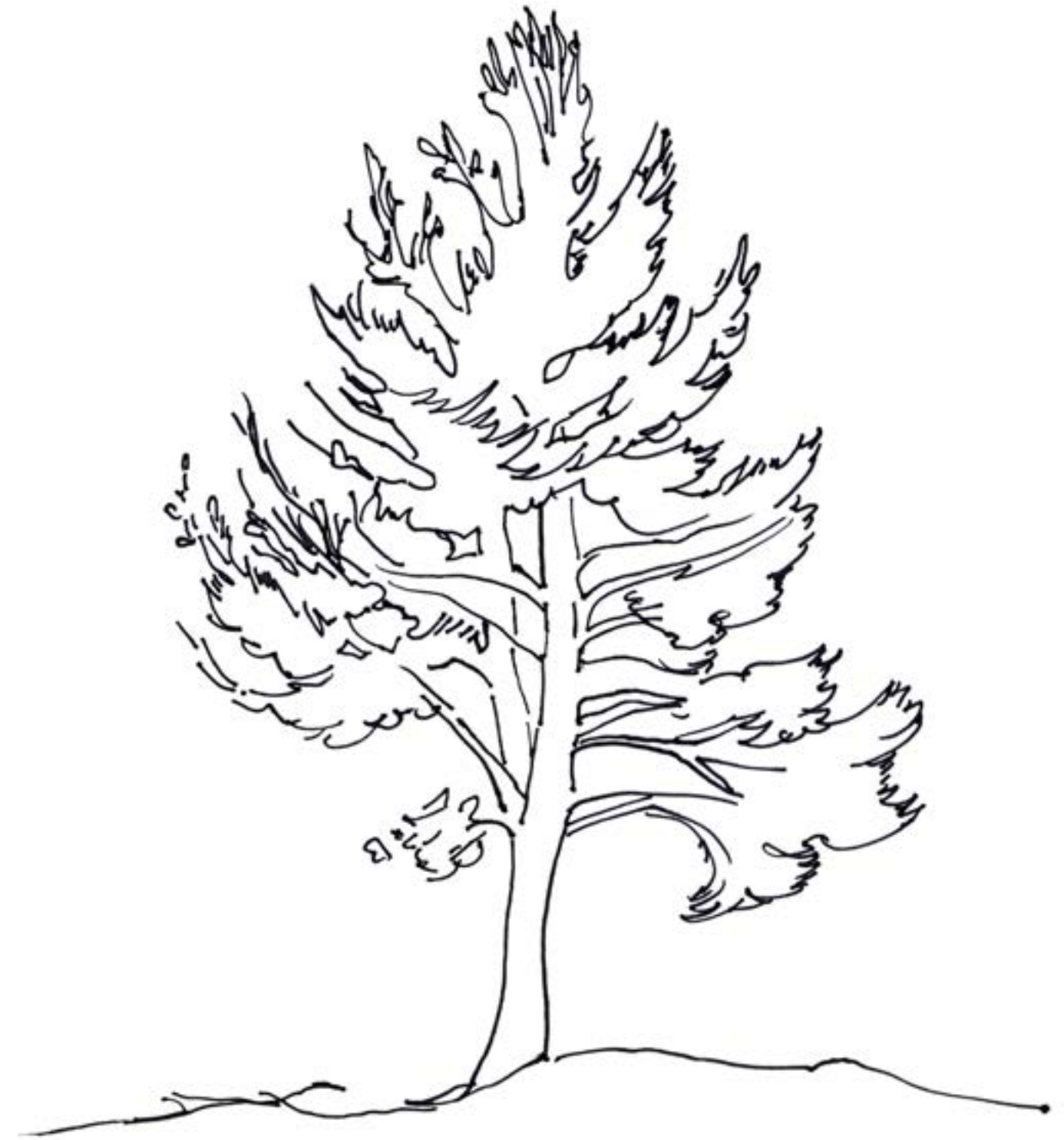




The centerpiece of the artwork in the three main station windows is a Pine Tree catching fire. Many pieces of red, orange and yellow glass helped make the fiery glow you see. The tree and branches were painted with a special liquid that turned into glass when fired.

Firefighters help protect the landscape. They work with the public to ensure a safe environment for everyone. Firefighters go out on routine inspections to make sure safety regulations are being met.

When they clear brush, they create a defensible space that protects the community from a fire spreading.



The artwork in the window with the helicopter serves as a reminder to firefighters that they have teammates and do not have to work alone. Judson Studios, the glass fabricator, made practice samples of important components of each window to help translate my drawings and paintings into glass. For this window, we worked on getting the fused glass to look like a powerful water cascade.

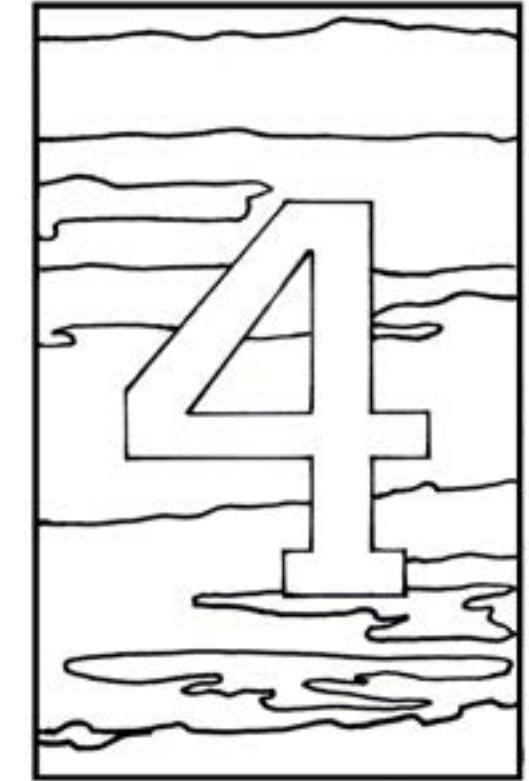
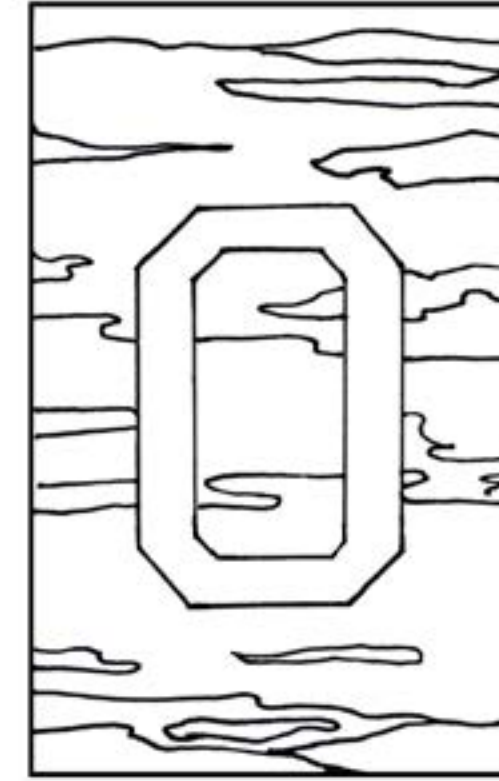
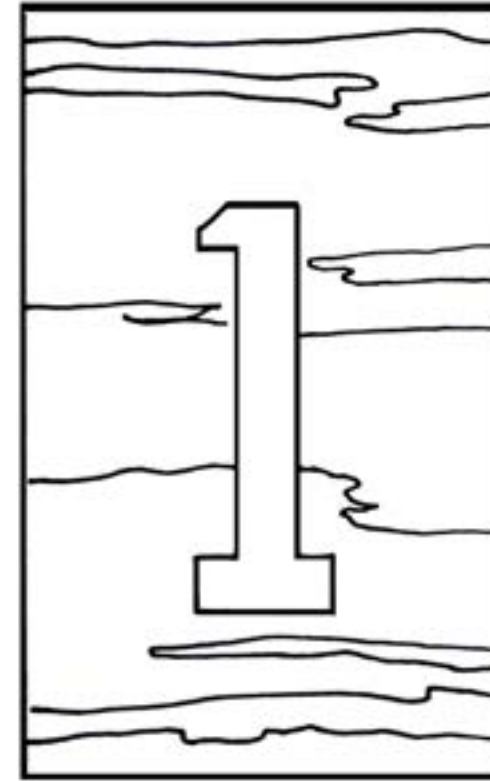
The job of the helicopter is to help and support firefighters on the ground. The helicopter can access parts of a fire and terrain that the crew on the ground cannot reach.

There is a tremendous amount of weight and pressure from the water dropping out of the helicopter. The helicopter uses a siren to let the ground crew know when the water is coming. If firefighters get caught underneath the water drop zone, they can protect themselves by turning their backs and planting their feet, or even kneeling, so that they don't get knocked down and injured by the powerful water.



When I drive by a fire station, I feel safe. When I was 17 I had a fire at my house. Firefighters came and saved my neighborhood.

These tower windows show the beautiful sunsets of Santa Clarita. The artwork was designed to stand as a beacon of hope and comfort to all who pass by Fire Station 104. The tower of this station is like a lighthouse that shows that the firefighters are on watch protecting the City of Santa Clarita at all times.



While working on this art project, I was able to visit a number of fire stations and meet different firefighters. I watched training sessions and even got to go on some emergency calls.

A fire station is both a workplace and a home. Firefighters are a close-knit group like a family. They take turns doing all the chores for the station. They maintain equipment, clean, and answer the phones. They train and study together, work out together, and cook and eat dinner together. Living together helps firefighters develop the close relationships and trust that are necessary to do this challenging job.



There are many terms used to describe and discuss firefighting. Try to solve this crossword puzzle using firefighting vocabulary. It's a challenge!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

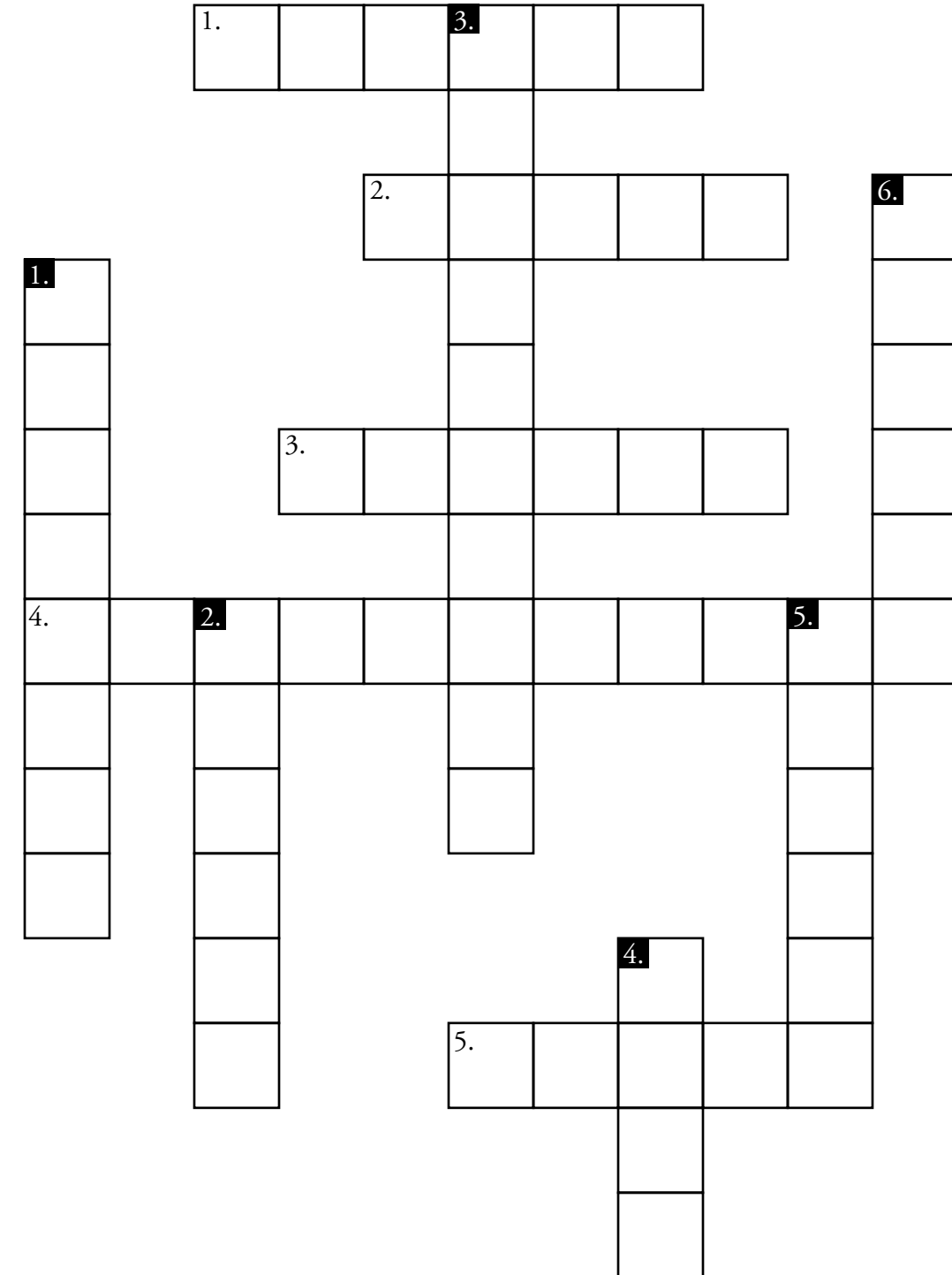
ACROSS

1. The condition of being protected from danger, risk or injury.
2. H₂O. Liquid. Wet.
3. A hot glowing body of ignited gas that is generated by something on fire.
4. A rescuer extensively trained to extinguish fires that threaten life, property and the environment as well as to rescue people and animals from dangerous situations.
5. The gas given off by burning materials made visible by particles of carbon floating in it.

DOWN

1. A large destructive fire that spreads quickly over woodland or brush.
2. An act of saving or being saved from danger or distress.
3. When people are removed from a dangerous place to somewhere safe.
4. A flexible tube for conveying a liquid, as water, to a desired point.
5. A vehicle carrying firefighters and equipment for fighting large fires.
6. A structure consisting of a series of bars or steps between upright lengths of support. Used for climbing up or down something.

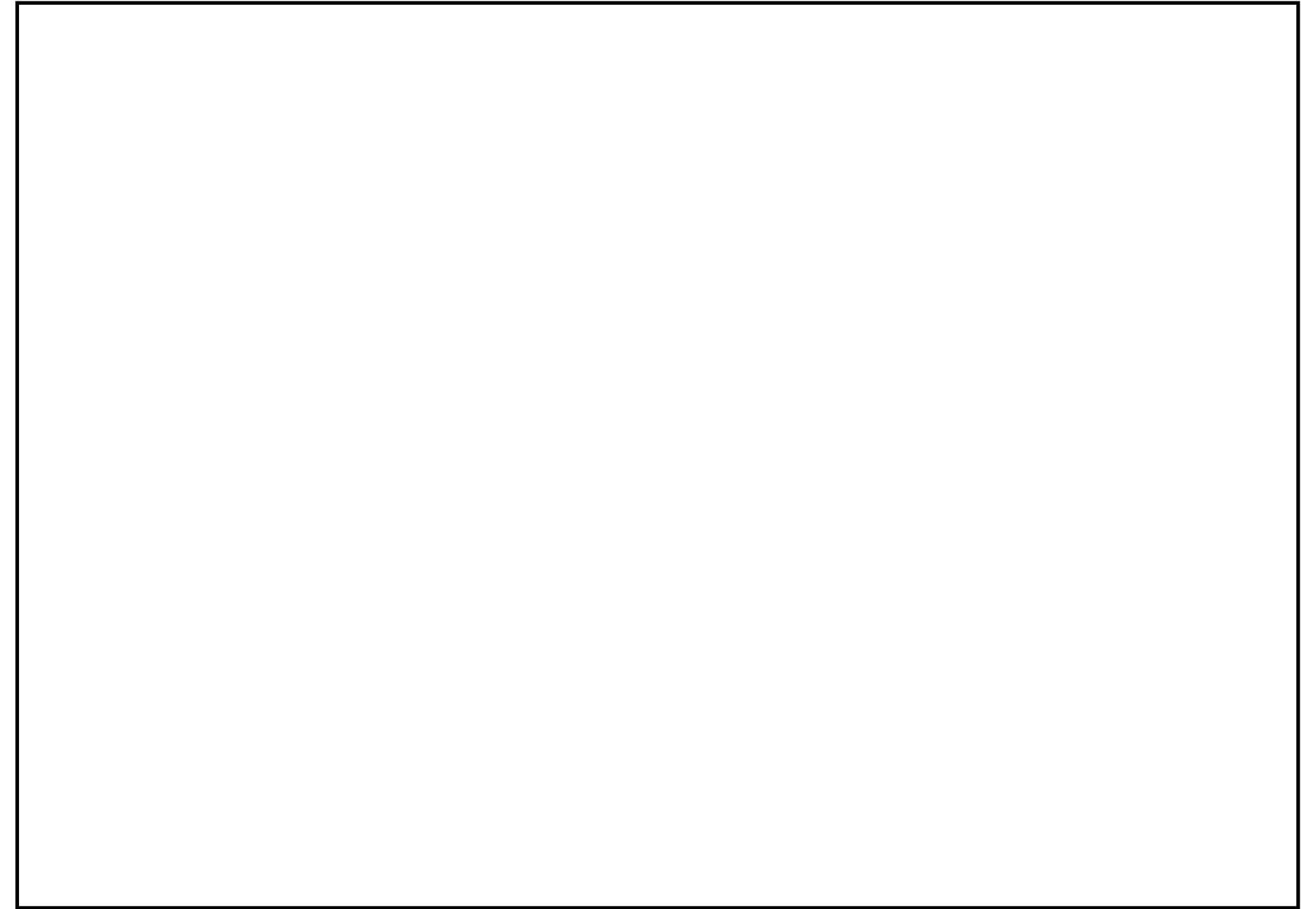
Answers found on page 20



I really enjoyed learning about firefighting in order to make the artwork for Fire Station 104.

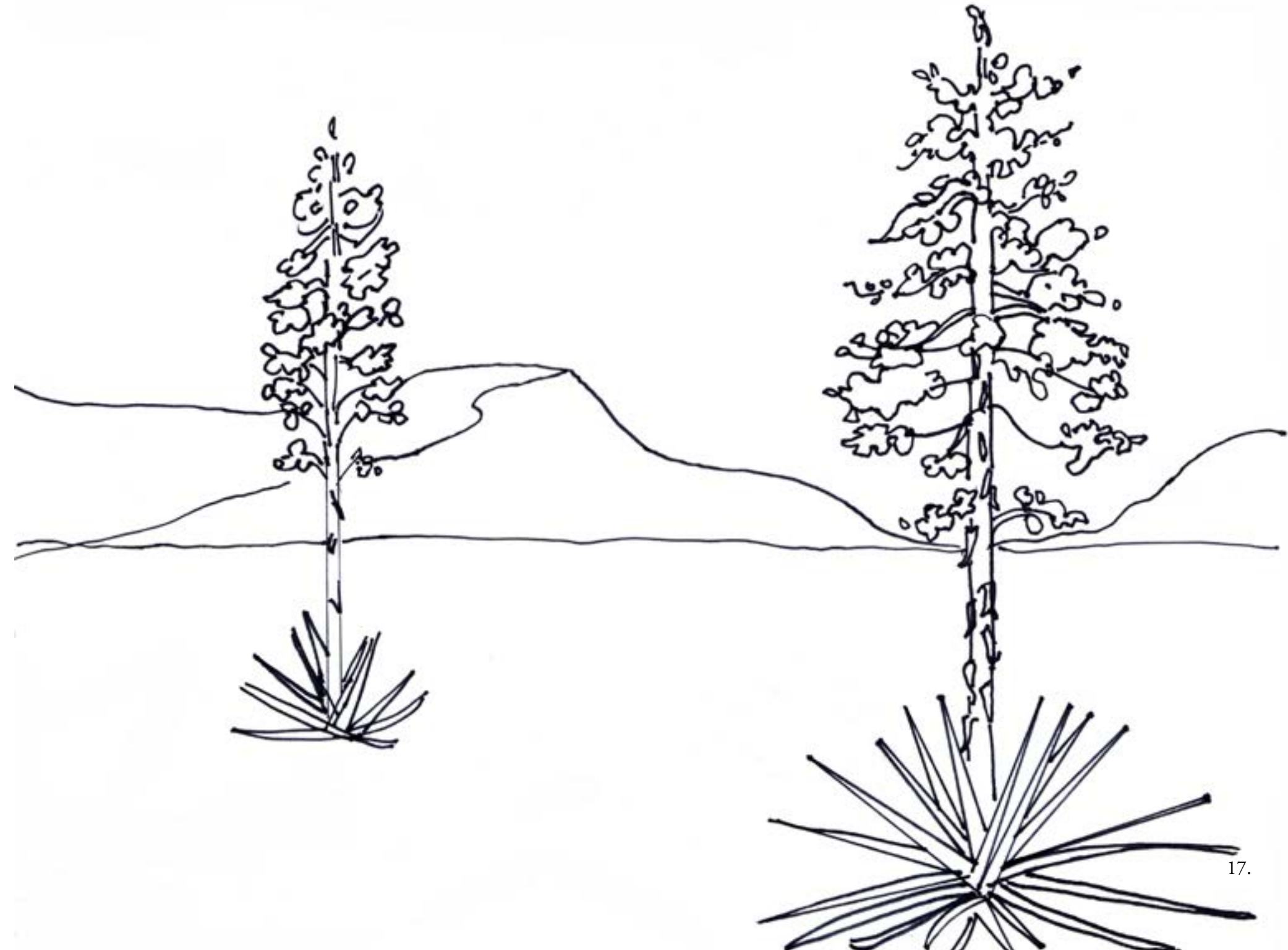
Pretend it's your job to create an artwork window for the station.
What would you like to see there?

Draw your design here!



I think Yucca plants look like stalks of fluffy popcorn, but firefighters see them another way.

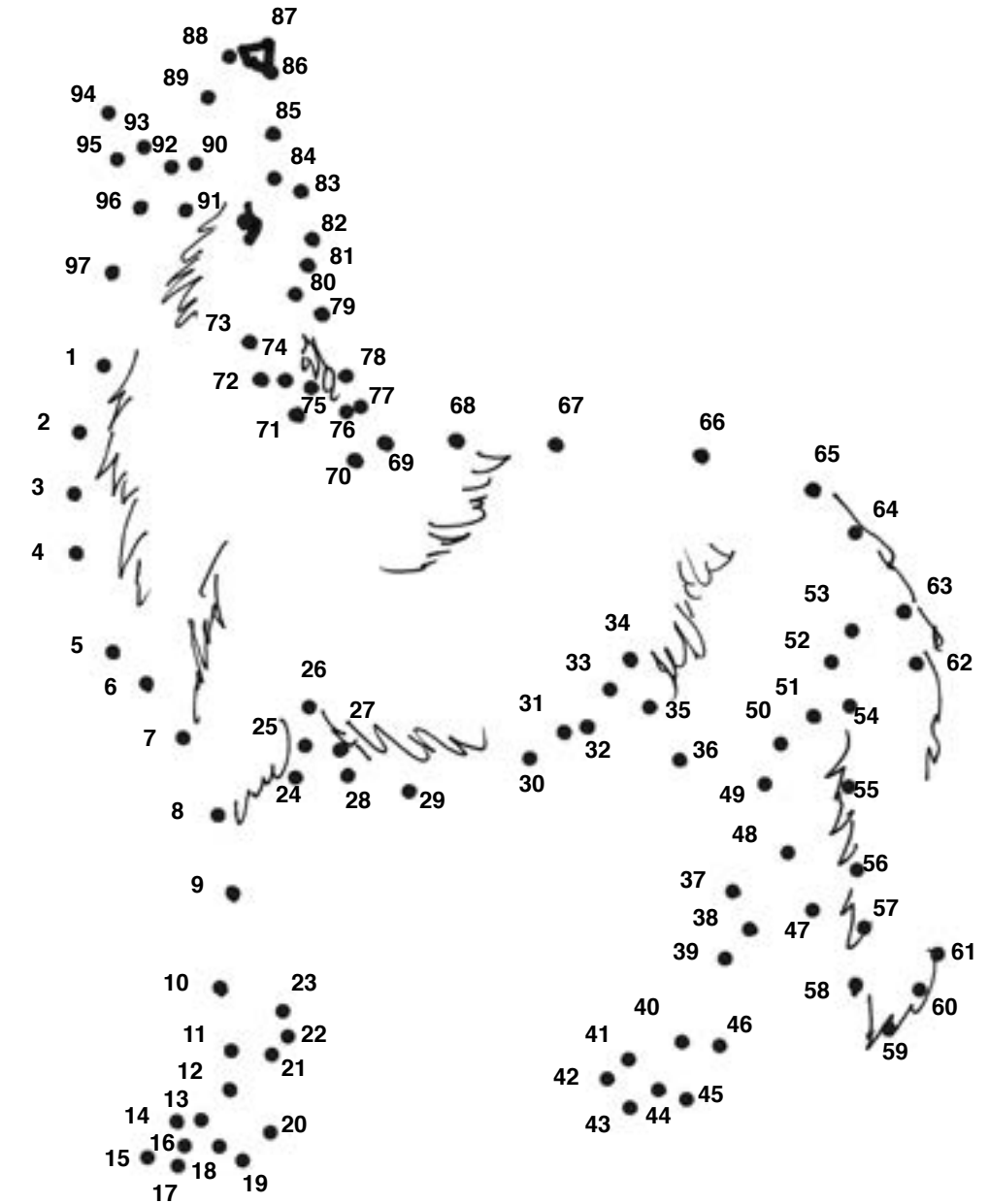
Yucca plants are native to the Santa Clarita landscape. The bottom of a Yucca plant is a dense root ball that stays burning for a long time after a brushfire. Firefighters dig these complex embers out of the ground to make sure the landscape is clear of anything hot. The firefighters call them “hot pineapples” because that is what they look like after a fire rolls through.



I learned that firefighters interact with lots of local animals while protecting the community and landscape. They protect rattlesnakes, deer, raccoons and more.

Complete the dot-to-dot to see what animal they see here!

(answer found page 20)



I had a blast creating these windows for Fire Station 104. I like working on civic art because it feels like teamwork and so many people get to enjoy the end product.

Anne-Elizabeth Sobieski lives and works in the Los Angeles area. Her work uses lush oils on linen canvas to explore the formal elements of painting while depicting figures and elements of nature. Her imagery speaks to the notions of beauty, abundance and loss.

Anne-Elizabeth received an MFA from Claremont Graduate University and a BFA from Art Center College of Design. Her work has been exhibited in galleries in Los Angeles, Denver, St. Louis and Shanghai, China. She has been an art instructor at high schools, and universities including Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, Pomona College and Art Center College of Design.

www.aesobieski.com

Crossword answers from page 9 ACROSS: 1.) safety 2.) water 3.) flames 4.) firefighter 5.) smoke
DOWN: 1.) wildfire 2.) rescue 3.) evacuation 4.) hose 5.) engine 6.) ladder

Connect the dots answer from page 19 COYOTE

This project was commissioned by the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture for the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The artwork for the station was created to visually tell the story of firefighting using color and glass to create a timeless and relevant civic artwork that respects the core values of the firefighters:

Integrity
Teamwork
Caring
Courage
Commitment
Community

The mission of the Los Angeles Department of Arts and Culture is to advance arts, culture, and creativity throughout Los Angeles County, envisioning a region in which arts, culture, and creativity are integral to every aspect of civic life for all people and communities.

The Department of Arts and Culture's Civic Art Division provides leadership in the development of high quality civic spaces by integrating artists into the planning and design process at the earliest possible opportunity, encouraging innovative approaches to civic art, and providing access to artistic experiences of the highest caliber for the residents of LA County. Working with leading artists, emerging public artists, County departments, and communities, Civic Art creates artwork, design, public engagement activities, exhibitions, temporary art, and event-based programming for new and renovated facilities throughout LA County.

Kristin Sakoda, Director, Department of Arts and Culture
Grace Ramirez Gaston, Director, Civic Art Division
Iris Anna Regn, Civic Art Project Manager, Special Projects



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Kathryn
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