

Sculpture in Los Altos: Condition of the City's 29 Pieces on Display

Prepared for the Public Arts Commission

Presented at the General Meeting, July 26, 2018

Intro

This presentation will detail the current conditions as of July 2018 of the twenty-nine sculpture pieces on display in Los Altos, whether owned by the City or on loan from the artist.

Existence of plaques, visibility and conformity of plaques, and required maintenance of pieces are the focus.

1. Alegria / Magic Garden

Plaque:

- Dark font with no raised text, so very hard to differentiate from background.
- Good, open location but unsheltered, so sun and droppings obscured it.
- Plaque reads "Magic Garden" while website reads "Alegria".

Maintenance:

- Plaque is obscured by bird droppings; despite recent grass cutting, plaque is encrusted and cannot be read.
- Some pieces of the work need cleaning.

Photos of Alegria / Magic Garden



2. Arches

Plaque:

- There is no plaque. Artist's last name is etched at the base, though not very easy to see.

Maintenance:

- Very dirty at the bottom of sculpture.
- Sides of the base look squashed, as if people have been climbing it.

Photos of Arches



3. Archimedes Goose

Plaque:

- There is no plaque for this piece.
- Unclear where would be best location; piece is displayed where there is a sitting area, but no crosswalks?

Maintenance:

- Generally dirty.
- Some rusting.
- Cleared base patch is full of weeds.

Photos of Archimedes Goose



4. Australian Cattle Dog

Plaque:

- There is no plaque for this piece.
- Looks as if it might have been there and removed?

Maintenance:

- Very clean.
- Some small rusting under the dog on the base.
- Some small discolourations.

Photos of Australian Cattle Dog



5. Bird

Plaque:

- Raised font.
- Very consistent with other plaques.
- Post holding plaque is rusty.
- Some markings on the plaque.

Maintenance:

- Bird droppings.
- Base looks rusty.
- Sculpture is discoloured.

Photos of Bird



6. Conversation Peace

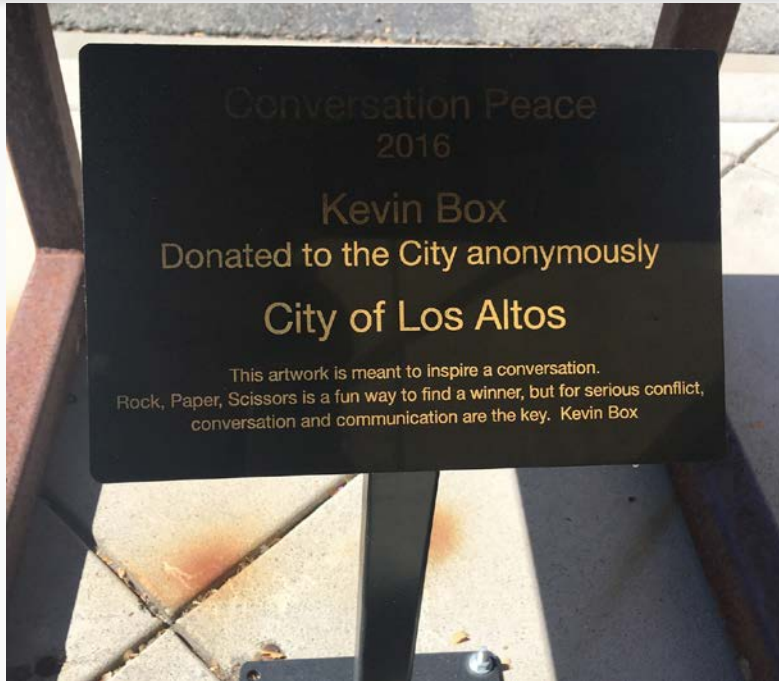
Plaque:

- Font is not raised.
- Heavily shaded at times, and then very difficult to read.
- Quote on plaque adds value to the piece.

Maintenance:

- Some cobwebs.
- Discolouration on pavement underneath.
- Table for display is heavily rusted.

Photos of Conversation Peace



7. Convolute of the Square

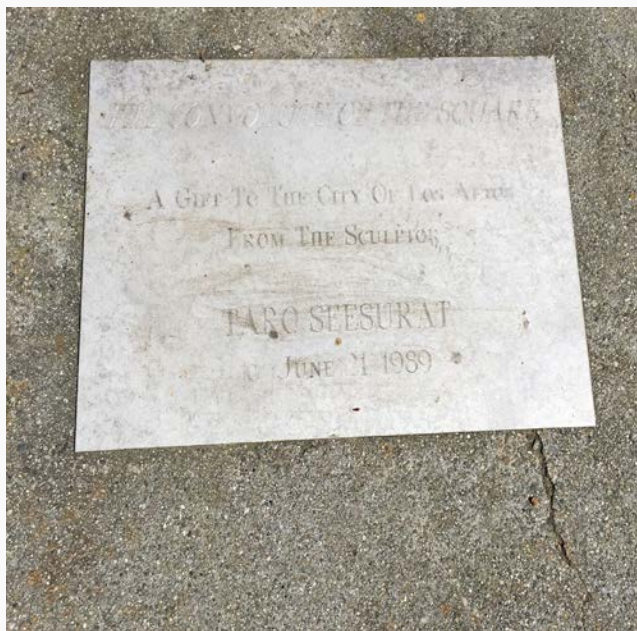
Plaque:

- Flat, no raised text.
- Difficult to read.
- Dirty and scratched.

Maintenance:

- Absolutely filthy.
- Spiderwebs, bugs, and cocoons all over.
- Rusting.
- Mold or lichen.

Photos of Convolute of the Square



8. Cradle of Liberty

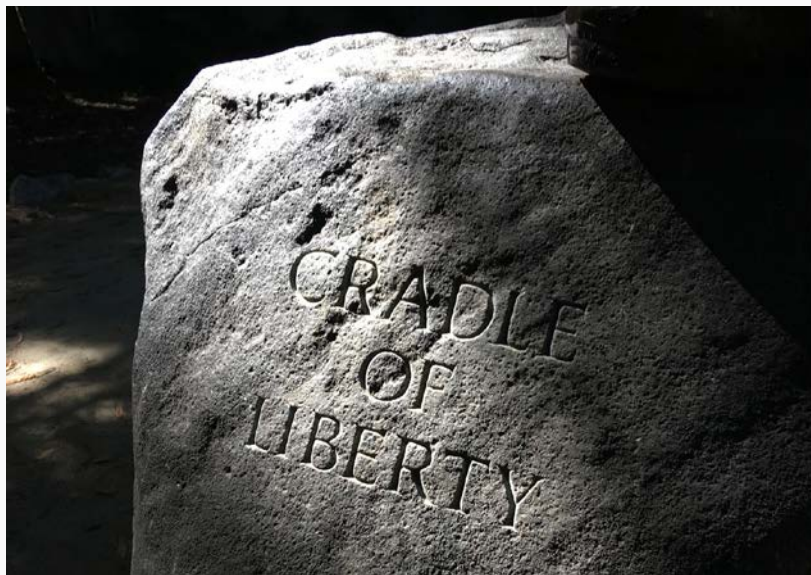
Plaque:

- No longer present.
- Title inscribed on front rock.

Maintenance:

- None needed.
- Watch for future damage as kids were climbing all over it.

Photo of Cradle of Liberty



9. Dancers

Plaque:

- Easy to read, but far off to the side.
- Entire piece is in a non-accessible location.
- **NOTE:** piece is not in location stated on website. Stonehaven & St. Matthew is more accurate, quite a ways from Grant & St. Joseph.

Maintenance:

- Very rusty.
- Dusty.
- Bird droppings.
- Wood chips scattered all over.

Photos of Dancers



10. Dancing Man

Plaque:

- No plaque.

Maintenance:

- Generally clean.
- Base becoming covered with plants/vines.
- Tarnished.
- Unsure if intentional: front "face" is different colour and scratched.

Photos of Dancing Man



11. Diamond Jubilee

Plaque:

- No plaque.
- Inscribed with artist's name inside the piece, but it is barely visible.

Maintenance:

- Dirty: bird droppings, dusty, spiderwebs.
- Rusting.
- Base is discoloured.

Photos of Diamond Jubilee



12. Dragonfly

Plaque:

- Visible and easy to read.
- However, placed very far from road/path so have to walk on/around plants to get close enough to read it.

Maintenance:

- Rusty.
- Some bird droppings.
- Tape (?) on just one leg.
- Fading into the greenery rather than blending in.

Photos of Dragonfly



13. Egrets

Plaque:

- Font is not raised.
- Very worn down.
- Was completely covered in leaves; had to dig around to find it.

Maintenance:

- Graffiti.
- Bird droppings.
- Quite worn down generally, though has aged evenly.

Photos of Egrets



14. Guardian

Plaque:

- Raised font.
- Same colours as eg. Alegria, but with raised font much easier to read.
- Obscured partly by a bush.
- Need to walk off the sidewalk to best read it.

Maintenance:

- Some bird droppings on edge of plaque.
- Otherwise excellent condition.

Photos of Guardian



15. Imagine That

Plaque:

- No plaque.

Maintenance:

- Graffiti, one piece is obscene.
- Cobwebs.
- Paint worn off in places.
- Dirty.
- Grass has been mowed but clippings are left all pushed against the base.

Photos of Imagine That



16. Jasper Priestess

Plaque:

- Raised bronze font against black background that is clear, easy to read
- Sculpture Name & Year
- Artist Name
- Artist Website
- On Loan From Artist
- Public Sculpture Committee
- City of Los Altos

Maintenance:

- Several holes (from weathering) present in orb at center of sculpture.

16. Photos of Jasper Priestess



17. Magic Fish

Plaque:

- Raised large metallic font in same color as the background makes it hard to read.
- Sculpture Name
- Artist Name
- Month and Year

Maintenance:

- Currently in good condition.

17. Photos of Magic Fish



18. Midnight Stomp Series

Plaque:

- There is no plaque for these pieces.

Maintenance:

- All three sculptures are in good condition.

18. Photos of Midnight Stomp Series



19. Musical Gambol

Plaque:

- There is no plaque for this piece.

Maintenance:

- Holes present in structure due to rust.
- Dark rust present in middle of structure & at sculpture's base.
- Red paint is also worn off.

19. Photos of Musical Gambol



20. Mutha Hen

Plaque:

- There is no plaque for this piece.

Maintenance:

- Currently in good condition

20. Photos of Mutha Hen



21. Olympic Wannabes

Plaque:

- Raised large bronze font against dark metallic background.
- Bronze framed border
- Clear, easy to read
- Sculpture Name
- Artist Name
- “A Gift To The Community”
- Los Altos Cultural Association
- Summer 2000

Maintenance:

- Sculpture in good condition
- 3 lights on the ground aimed at the sculpture are covered with sand and have condensed moisture.
- Lighting of sculpture at night obscured.

21. Photos of Olympic Wannabes



22. Pax Nova

Plaque:

- Raised large bronze font against black background.
- Clear, easy to read
- Sculpture Name
- Artist Name
- On Loan From Artist
- Public Arts Commission
- City of Los Altos

Maintenance:

- Some reddish-yellow rust present at top of the sculpture.
- Sculpture base has green lichen growth.

22. Photos of Pax Nova



23. Seal Head

Plaque:

- The placard is missing.

Maintenance:

- Currently in good condition

23. Photo of Seal Head



24. Shlama

Plaque:

- Very small hard to read, raised font (originally bronze but has faded)
- Font is now dark, hard to read against the black background.
- Long inscription
- Sculpture Title
- Presented to City of Los Altos from the Assyrian Arts Institution
- Recognition of Anna Eshoo
- Quote from Code of Hammurabi

Maintenance:

- Orange rust and green patina present on large amount of sculpture's surface.

24. Photos of Shlama



25. Sit

Sculpture returned to artist earlier this year.

Recommend updating website to remove sculpture's name and location. Also changing number of sculptures to 29.

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26. Smoke

Plaque:

- White font carved into dark gray (hard to read) background placed onto a piece of wood painted green.
- Green paint on wood has since faded.
- Wood looks weathered.
- Title on plaque reads “Sonya”
- Artist Name
- San Francisco, CA

Maintenance:

- Top of sculpture has an area that is darkened and looks dirty.
- Scratches near bottom of sculpture
- Some dark areas of oxidation.

26. Photos of Smoke



27. Space Dance for Peace

Plaque:

- Etched bronze font is hard to read against bronze background.
- Corrosion on the bronze surface of placard
- Sculpture Name & Homage
- Artist Name
- City of Los Altos
- 1986

Maintenance:

- Orange & green corrosion dots present at bottom of the sculpture.
- Green corrosion and lichen growth present on top of structure.
- Sculpture's base has green lichen growth.

27. Photos of Space Dance for Peace



28. The Thinker

Plaque:

- Large raised, easy to read, bronze font against black background
- Sculpture Name
- Installation Year
- Artist Name
- Name of Donator
- Public Arts Commission
- City of Los Altos

Maintenance:

- Sculpture in good condition.

28. Photos of The Thinker



29. Will You Dance With Me

Plaque:

- Raised large, easy to read, bronze font against black background.
- Sculpture Name
- Sculpture Year
- Artist Name
- Artist Website
- On Loan from Artist
- Public Arts Commission
- City of Los Altos

Maintenance:

- Sculpture is in good condition.

29. Photos of Will You Dance With Me



30. Zoo Scapes

Plaque:

- The placard is absent.

Maintenance:

- Paint has faded in several places and small part of paint is chipped.
- Underlying wood is now exposed.

30. Photos of Zoo Scapes



Statistical Conclusions :

- 10 out of 29 pieces are missing plaques (34%)
- 8 out of 29 pieces have inadequate plaques (27%)
- 19 out of 29 pieces need cleaning/repair (65%)



Other conclusions:

- Raised fonts in contrast to the background are the most visible and easy to read on plaques.
 - "Will You Dance With Me" is a good example of the best plaque type.
- Concern that some pieces are in non-accessible locations (see eg. Dancers).
- Plaques for public art should have a consistent look.
- Regular maintenance of public art must be established, as well as cleaning and fixing current issues.