



City of Alhambra

HOME

ABOUT ALHAMBRA

CITY GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY LIFE

EMPLOYMENT

CONNECTING TO...



Community Life

Gateway to San Gabriel Valley

Search

- ▶ Community Classes/ Recreational Sports
- ▶ Family Activities
- ▶ Community Involvement
- ▶ Educational Services
- ▶ Library Services
- ▶ Local News Services
- ▶ Healthcare Services
- ▶ Historical Museum
- ▶ History of Alhambra
- ▶ Photo Scrapbook
- ▶ Public Art in Alhambra
- ▶ Famous Residents
- ▶ Conservation Tips & Solid Waste/Recycling
- ▶ Residential Living
- ▶ Services for Youth
- ▶ Services for Seniors
- ▶ Counseling Services
- ▶ Places of Worship
- ▶ Restaurants
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ Entertainment

Public Art in Alhambra

Public art creates a more vibrant quality of life. It enhances public spaces with objects that recognize and symbolize shared values. In some cases, these visual objects enable the people of Alhambra's past speak to us, adding to the unique and creative environment that is Alhambra. Contemporary public art will extend this tradition conveying ideas about our world to one another and to future generations.



The largest glass tile mural in North America, composed of 996,000 3/4" glass tiles, was installed on the Wing Lung Bank located on Valley Blvd. The original artwork and mural design was created by Neil Seth Levine/Building Design: Tsang Architecture.

For more information, [click here](#).

Why Public Art?

Public Art Increases a Community's Assets...

Public art creates positive, memorable images that enhance and help define the identity of a place.

*Mosaics & Fountains
Alhambra Renaissance Plaza
Garfield & Main*



Public Art Expresses a Community's Identity and Values...

Through public art, a community can honor important parts of its history and culture.

The classic Alhambra Clock on Main Street has been a focal point of the Downtown for decades.



The curvaceous seating elements at the Renaissance Plaza provide a place to relax before a movie or just to chat with friends. The history of Alhambra is informally told in tiles set into the various structures.



Statue of James de Barth Shorb, Historical Mural & Fountain at the Shorb Garden, 68 S. First St.



Nostalgic art forms provide a restored sense of place and contribute to a community's identification with the city and image of the place they call home.

*Left: Nostalgic signs - Twohey's Restaurant (Garfield/Huntington);
Right: The Hat (Garfield/Valley)*





**Public Art Validates
Pride in Corporate
Citizenship...**

Local businesses and corporations show their commitment to their communities through public art.

*Fountains & Grounds of
The Alhambra Office Complex
900 S. Fremont Ave.*



**Public Art Affirms
the Educational
Environment...**

A student's education is enriched by using art to spark thought and emotion.

*Art Gallery at City Hall
111 South First Street*



**Public Art Enhances
Pedestrian Corridors,
Roadsides, and
Community
Gateways...**

A routine experience becomes a moment of discovery.



*Statue of Warner Jenkins
at the Pedestrian Entrance
to City Hall, 111 S. First St.*



Public Art Helps Green Spaces to Thrive...

A new dimension is added
to outdoor beauty, reminding
us not to take it for granted.

*Proposed Gateway Plaza
Monument at Valley/Fremont*



Famous Artists Associated with Alhambra

Norman Rockwell painted "The Barefoot Boy" for the Coca Cola Company while residing in Alhambra. The model was Dan Grant, who at the time of the painting, was an 11-year-old child actor who appeared in 38 films between 1927 and 1933 (including Our Gang silent film comedy, Tom Sawyer with Jackie Coogan, Fireman, Save My Child with Joe E. Brown, Platinum Blonde with Jean Harlow, and The Champ with Jackie Cooper and Wallace Beery). "Norman Rockwell was a nice gentleman," Grant recalled. "He asked what I was doing in school and what sports I liked. I worked with him for five days in a loft studio above a garage in Alhambra, Calif. Every morning I rode a yellow cab for about 12 miles from where I lived. I got the job through central casting. I was a little lucky being in the right place at the right time. I enjoyed it completely."



- **Victor Clyde Forsythe** (1885-1962) – Forsythe, who was known for both his illustrations and comic drawings, began easel painting in earnest around 1920. By 1922 he was living in Alhambra, first on S. Wilson Ave. (now Atlantic Blvd.), then, two years later, on N. Almansor St. The Almansor St. property was close to what became "Artists' Alley." About 1935 he moved some two miles northeast, into adjacent San Marino, living first on St. Alban's Rd., then on Ramiro Rd. During the summertime, he kept a studio at Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains. He gave up commercial art entirely in 1938, but continued at the easel. The dry spaces of the Southwest were his great subject, and when he died in 1962, he came to be regarded as one of the notable "Desert Painters."
- **Sam Hyde Harris** (1889-1977) - At the age of 55, Harris divorced his wife of 27 years, Phoebe Mulholland, the niece of William Mulholland. He married Marion Dodge, a UCLA librarian whom he met in an evening art class, and moved his home and commercial art business to the Artists' Alley in Alhambra. In 1976 Harris had a one-man show at the San Gabriel Fine Arts Association and a one-man show in Alhambra in 1977 that opened just four days before his death. In his lifetime, Harris produced somewhere between 2,500-3,000 oil paintings.

- **Eli Harvey** (1860-1957) - Internationally-known artist and sculptor lived and worked in NYC until he moved to Alhambra in the late 1920s. He he built a home and studio in an area populated by a large artists' colony called "Artists Alley." He was also a good friend of Norman Rockwell.
- **Frank Tenney Johnson** (1874-1939) - Johnson became one of the most famous early 20th-century painters of the Western genre. During the 1920s, Johnson settled in Alhambra, sharing a studio with Clyde Forsythe. From 1931-1938, he built a cabin and studio on the north fork of the Shoshone River in Wyoming, just outside the east gate of Yellowstone Park. During the summer months he would spend much of his time hiking in the park and painting scenes of its unique landscapes.
- **Norman Rockwell** (1894-1978) - In 1930, Rockwell traveled to California to visit his old friend and studio mate, Clyde Forsythe. Forsythe had urged Rockwell to get out of New York for a while as Rockwell had been miserable as a bachelor and man-about-town. While in California, he met Mary Barstow, who he married on April 17, 1930 in Alhambra. The August 23, 1930 cover of The Saturday Evening Post features his new wife on its cover. During his forty-seven year affiliation with the publication Rockwell produced 323 SATURDAY EVENING POST covers. Rockwell is known to have spent his summers painting in Alhambra.
- **Jack Wilkinson Smith** (1873-1949) - Smith studied art at the Chicago Art Institute and Cincinnati Academy of Art, and began painting Western scenes before he actually ever came out West. In 1906, he visited California, which he called "nature's own paradise of scenic splendor and variety." The coastal areas and the sea in its many moods, was a favorite subject for Smith. His paintings of surf crashing among the rocks are unparalleled. In 1926, he and his wife settled in Alhambra, buying the property immediately south of Frank Tenney Johnson's new home. It was there, on "Artists' Alley," that they dwelt until Smith's death in early 1949, at which time he was widely praised as one of California's leading landscape painters.

Art Galleries in Alhambra

- **Alhambra City Hall Art Gallery**, 111 S. First Street, Alhambra (626) 570-5090
Gallery Hours: Monday, 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Tues.-Thurs., 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (The first floor lobby of City Hall provides an ideal location for local artists to exhibit their works. Each month, the lobby features a new exhibition for public viewing with many pieces offered for purchase.)
- **Amor Lyceum and Amor Studio** (Director/Owners: Victor and Ixchel Marina Amor)
242 East Main Street; (626) 570-1516 (Professional instruction in the visual arts, such as drawing, painting, sculpture, pottery and graphic arts.)
- **Nucleus - Art Gallery**, 30 W. Main St., Alhambra (626) 458-7482 (In addition to its retail component, Nucleus also features art exhibitions by various artists.)

What is Public Art?

The term public art refers to works of art in any media that have been planned and executed with the intention of being sited or staged in the public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. The term often has implications of site specificity, community involvement and collaboration, and is sometimes applied to art which is exhibited in a publicly-accessible building.

How can I find out more about Public Art?

The Alhambra Arts and Cultural Events Committee considers all forms of art from the perspective of context, location, use of space, interaction, durability of materials, intended function, local history, and anticipated audience.

If you are interested in viewing early historical photographs and other relics from Alhambra's past, visit the Alhambra Historical Society Museum
1550 W. Alhambra Rd., (626) 300-8845. They are open every Thursday (as well as second and fourth Sunday of the month), from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

If you are interested in finding out more about planning for public art and opportunities for artists who are interested in working in public art projects, call the Committee's staff representative, Ann-Marie Hayashi, at (626) 570-5010.

If you are interested in sponsoring an exhibit in the City Hall Art Gallery, contact Colleen Commentz at (626) 570-5091.



Alhambra City Hall, 111 South First Street, Alhambra, CA 91801; Phone: (626) 570-5007; Fax: (626) 576-8568
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

[Home](#) | [About Alhambra](#) | [City Government](#) | [Community Life](#) | [Employment](#) | [Connecting To...](#)

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