
A Small Part of What We Do

Artist: Tad Savinar

September 2000

Fire Station 1 / 255 North Market Street, San Jose, CA 95110 / Council District 3

ABOUT THE PROJECT

A Small Part of What We Do features twenty-nine cast bronze plaques along the Fire Station 1 exterior on Market and Devine Streets.



Above: Detail of one of the 29 plaques.

Each plaque is embossed with text from interviews conducted by artist Tad Savinar with firefighters serving this station as well as their spouses, ex-spouses, children, parents, siblings, and community members.

One plaque reads: "My marriage works. And with the kind of schedule and all of the stress that we have to deal with, I'd say I have to give my wife about ninety percent of the credit for making it work."

Savinar uses text to allow the fire station building to speak for itself. He views this project as a personal experience set in a public space. As a passerby reads each plaque they gain further understanding of what it means to be a firefighter through intimate confessions, community tributes, frightening anecdotes, and many more surprising quotes.

The essence of this piece is captured in a single quote: "Fires are really just a small part of what we do."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Much of Tad Savinar's work concentrates on civic planning and participation on lead design teams for transportation projects, neighborhood revitalization designs and waterfront redevelopment plans. Tad SavinarHis artwork is a formally trained visual artist. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian Institute Archives. Much of his work concentrates on civic planning and participation on lead design teams for transportation projects, neighborhood revitalization designs and waterfront redevelopment plans. He has received numerous fellowships and project grants, including the National Endowment for the Arts, and he has

Below: Picture of Fire Station 1 firefighter standing in front of *A Small Part of What We Do*.



served as a funding consultant to the NEA, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Warhol Foundation. In 1998, he received the Oregon Governor's Arts Award.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

The City of San José Public Art Program seeks to build community identity by initiating artworks and exhibitions that enhance the civic landscape. Through active community engagement, public art strives to reflect the City's diversity, historic richness, and envision its present and future.

The Public Art Program is part of the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, a division of the Office of Economic Development. The Public Art Program was established by a 1984 municipal ordinance that provides public art through funding from City capital improvement projects and eligible private development.

For further information and photos, please contact the San José Public Art Program.

