

## Joyce Kozloff: Plaza las Fuentes, Pasadena

"Pasadena, the City of Roses," Plaza las Fuentes, Pasadena, CA, Maguire Thomas Partners, Developers; Moore, Ruble, Yudell, Santa Monica, Architects; Lawrence Halprin, San Francisco, Landscape Architect; Ceil Friedman, art consultant; Michael Lucero, sculptor; tiles fabricated by Malibu Tile Works, Topanga, CA and painted by the artist; photos Tom Vinetz

Pasadena's flavor affected this artwork (its dense vegetation, heavy wood craftsman houses, old wealth, funky deco downtown buildings and neocolonial Spanish hulks). The Cal Tech campus was a source, along with its sources (the Alhambra and other Hispano-Moresque garden/palace enclaves, Romanesque arcades and capitals). E. H. Gombrich had traced floral patterns through the ancient cultures of the Mediterranean in The Sense of Order, showing their transformations (from Egyptian lotus to Greek palmette). "Pasadena, the City of Roses" meshes disparate styles of floral representation, yet allows them to be read individually. The walls are broken down into wainscots, friezes, and arches. In the cluster of walls across from the arcade, the wainscot patterns are the most ancient, derived from eighteenth and nineteenth dynasty temples at Thebes in upper Egypt. The arches are based on Islamic interlace star patterns, with flowers like those in seventeenth century European engravings woven into their latticing. The friezes above the wainscots are evolved from simpler Islamic geometric patterns, functioning like grating, on which eighteenth century English floral clusters are laid, oversized yet delicate. The largest flower on these walls, a rose, is based on nineteenth century American theorem painting, and functions as an icon for the whole piece.

Leading into this section, the bottom of a long rectangular pool is carpeted with a simplified Islamic star/flower pattern. The central arch of the largest wall is a restored Batchelder\* fountain, surrounded by a mixture of Batchelder tiles. Going around the corner, low walls border a long spouting pool with bands of Greek patterns found in temples at Selinunte and Athens. The interior breezeway wall contains arches based on the same Islamic window tracery, but their capitals are Ptolemaic. The big central flowers are, once again, humongous versions of American theorem paintings. The scale is large enough to read from a distance, yet lures the viewer into a closer examination of its surfaces, moving him/her along gracefully.

\*Ernest A. Batchelder, 1875-1957) was a well-known Arts and Crafts movement tile maker in Pasadena. The fountain was donated to this project by the local historical society.

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