Public art will be a welcome addition along Chollas Creek in the heart of Southeastern San Diego's Diamond Neighborhoods. Gateway art is also planned for a section of the creek near Market Street as part of the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation's restoration of the creek. The Jacobs Center received a $30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, which it matched, to fund the selection of artists/artist teams as well as the planning, conceptual design, and final selection of the art work(s).

The conceptual designs followed the community input and recommendations included in the Jacobs Center’s Art+Design Plan and Activating Chollas Creek Plan. The restoration of Chollas Creek and the addition of public art works will help enliven the creek and create places where residents and visitors can enjoy the outdoors.

The creek restoration also includes removing invasive plant species, re-planting native plants, redirecting creek flows to prevent erosion, and the construction of an observation deck and a pedestrian bridge to encourage activity and create a safer passageway for students from Horton Elementary School.

**Artist Selection Process**

The Jacobs Center received 40 applications from artists across the country and one from Spain. A selection committee made up of experts in arts and culture, education, land planning, and community stakeholders shortlisted three artists/artists teams to propose conceptual designs.

The artists were evaluated on the following criteria:

- Professionalism, artistic excellence, and experience working in the field of public art
- Proven track record of success
- Project management experience and technical expertise
- Demonstrated ability to work with community members and other artists in design development
- Understanding of the historic value or cultural heritage of place
- Ability to meet timelines and budget requirements
- Ability to work with an interdisciplinary team

The designs were on display for community feedback, which informed the committee’s final selection, local artist Roman de Salvo.
About the Artist

Local artist, Roman de Salvo, is a sculptor and public artist whose work infuses the everyday with intrigue and surprise. His art is characterized by an inventive use of ordinary materials and objects, often involving energetic phenomena such as wind, water, fire, and electricity.

Since 2005, de Salvo has been making large-scale public sculptures that utilize the organic forms of trees. These projects include Seven for Seven Trees, a public playground in San José, and The Riparium, an expansive gateway structure for Ruocco Park in downtown San Diego.

Born in San Francisco, de Salvo received his B.F.A. in Sculpture from the California College of Arts & Crafts and his M.F.A. in Visual Arts from the University of California, San Diego.

DeSalvo’s work featured internationally:
- 1994 inSITe’94 (San Diego)
- 1996 96 Containers – Art Across Oceans (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- 2000 Giverny Garden Projects – Musée d’Art Américain (Giverny, France)
- inSITe2000/2001 (Tijuana, Mexico)
- 2001 Chain Reaction: Rube Goldberg and Contemporary Art – Williams College Museum of Art (Massachusetts)
- 2002 California Biennial – Orange County Museum of Art (Newport Beach, California)
- 2003 American Idyll for the Public Art Fund (New York)
- 2003 Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast in Contemporary Art – Seattle Art Museum
- 2005 Main Street Sculpture Project – Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum (Connecticut)

Gateway Arches

Canyons and riparian zones of the Chollas watershed have a distinct branching shape that is legible in satellite pictures. The arch design is derived from this shape. Names of major drainage corridors written in relief on the branches help people read the design as a map and to better know their city.

gateway Arches

Chollas Creek Reparian System

An array of riparian corridors fanning out across the county, Chollas Creek is an ecological network of enchantment.

Seeing the Chollas riparian system as a whole is fascinating. Its shape is complex, lacy, surprising and lovely. This shape is used as a crest to herald the importance and beauty of the Chollas watershed.

As it welcomes people to this place, it also engenders better stewardship of the watershed and greater community pride in the Chollas realm.

Gateway Columns

The columns are like cairns, a traditional way of marking trails by stacking piles of rocks. Built from Chollas cobbles to be irregular and organic, the cairns lend a monumentality that underscores the esteem of the Chollas watershed.