

City Hall's first sculpture unveiled to delight of local arts community

SANTA CRUZ — If you pass City Hall and think there's something different going on, but can't quite put your finger on it, take another

look at the front lawn bordering Center Street. There's something new there on a white pedestal. It's brown and long and bronze —

both curvy and angular — and supposedly reminiscent of the many sides of Santa Cruz politics.

A new abstract sculpture called "Changing of the Guard" — City Hall's first sculpture — was unveiled Wednesday to the pleasure of the artist, Angelo Grova, and the arts community.

The sculpture is dedicated to city mayors and was designed "to represent the time, energy and various perspectives this community's elected officials have contributed over the past many years," said Mayor John Laird.

The sharp rightward angles obviously represent movement from progressive to conservative politics, the abrupt leftward angles a switch to leftist politics, and the smooth curves must be moderate politics in abstract.

At least 20 former mayors, from all political persuasions, were invited to the unveiling, but due to a bureaucratic foul-up, the invitations did not reach them all in time, so a "dedication" was rescheduled for June 20.

Laird sent an invitation to himself from himself, just to see if it would be mailed out along with the others. It was and did reach him in time.

Past works by Grova, 40, of Scotts Valley, include "Primavera" at Interdesign Inc. in Scotts Valley; "The Muse," created for the dedication of Porter College at UC Santa Cruz; and "Ibex" in Mountain View.

Grova said "Changing of the Guard" is "to appreciate the fact that we have had many mayors who have put out a lot of energy at their jobs."

The bronze piece obviously doesn't really look like a mayor, or several mayors for that matter, but the artist said its many sides and undulating lines envelop "a lot of motion," similar to the way the city runs.

Arts enthusiasts heralded the event as the start of a major "art in public places" program in Santa Cruz.

"Changing of the Guard" was one of the first pieces to be commissioned by the city as part of the visual arts program recently enacted by the city Arts Commission and City Council.

Cost was \$3,100.

Grova said it was a labor of love — "I felt it was a gift for me."

The artist said it took him four months to sculpt "Changing of the Guard," which is an enlargement of a smaller piece.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Artist Angelo Grova with 'Changing of the Guard'