

Proposed Work of Art
San Leandro Public Library
Mildred Howard

Arts Commission Meeting
February 19, 2020

Artist Statement:

While we are often taught that asking a question indicates ignorance, intelligence is in fact driven by curiosity. Like many young people, I was curious about the world around me as a child but was often afraid to ask questions. The local library was the one place where I felt free to bring all of my inquiries about the complex world around me. Education is not just about going to school and getting a degree; it's about finding a safe environment where one can investigate, explore, and learn at one's own pace. A library provides that space.

The bronze sculpture I've designed for the San Leandro library continues my ongoing series of works that transform punctuation — an intangible and sometimes invisible aspect of language — into solid sculptural forms. Cast in bronze at 12-15 ft tall and mounted on the face of the building below the exterior clock on the lower portion of the building, the question mark thus assumes a paradoxical dimensionality and permanence. It serves as a beacon to the intellectually curious of all ages, inviting them to fearlessly investigate every mystery they have ever wondered about — from the profound to the quotidian, from the past to the future. The question mark suggests openness and potential, the promise of limitless opportunities to change the narrative of that which is expected to that which is possible.

“The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.” – James Baldwin



It is recommended that the signage be moved to above the archway or to another location.



Curiosity, 2020
Bronze with Steel
reinforcement



Free

Exploration

Old

Curiosity

Wonder

New

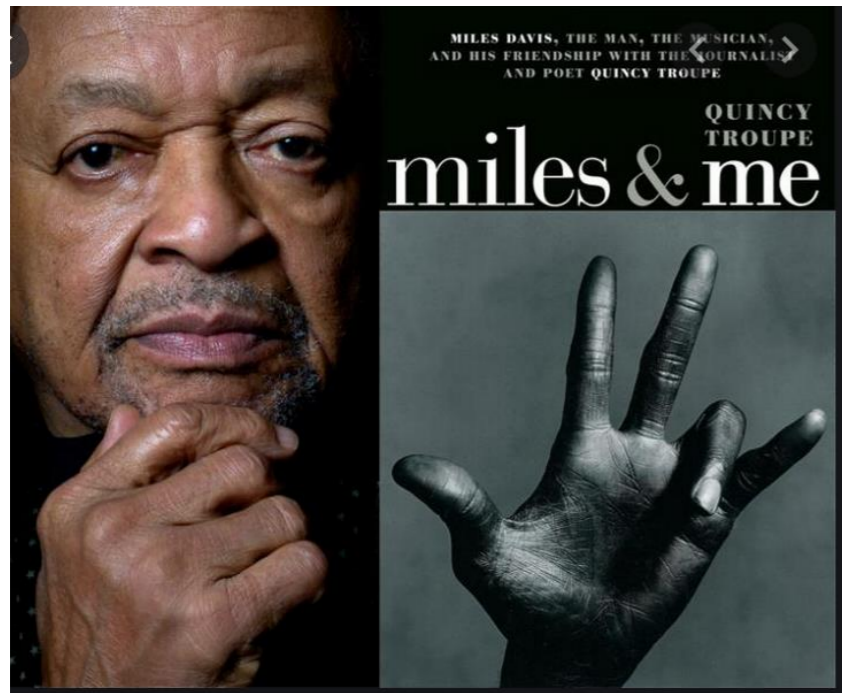
Public



Poetry along the retaining wall can be a lead in to the library and sculpture



Poetry is also a backdrop to the activities held on the lawn



About the Poet:

Quincy Troupe is the author of 20 books, including 10 volumes of poetry and three children's books. His awards include the Paterson Award for Sustained Literary Achievement, the Milt Kessler Poetry Award, three American Book Awards, the 2014 Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award, a 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award from Furious Flower, and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History Award, January 25, 2018, in Detroit, Michigan. His writings have been translated into over 30 languages.

Troupe's latest books of poems are *Seduction* and a book length poem, *Ghost Voices*, published by Tri-Quarterly Northwestern University Press in 2018. He is co-author with Miles Davis of *Miles: the Autobiography*, and author of *miles and me*, a chronicle of his friendship with Miles Davis, re-issued by Seven Stories Press (Fall 2018) and scheduled for release in 2020 as a major motion picture for which Mr. Troupe wrote the screenplay. Also forthcoming from Seven Stories Press are *Duende: Poems from 1966 Until Now* (Fall 2020) and a memoir, *The Accordion Years*, in 2021.

Quincy Troupe is Professor Emeritus from the University of California, San Diego. He edits *Black Renaissance Noire* a literary and culture journal published by the Institute of African American Affairs at New York University. He lives in Harlem (New York) with his wife, Margaret Porter Troupe.