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New sculptures grace San Marco branch library
Sandy Strickland, Times-Union staff writer

After an earlier postponement because of rain, St. Augustine artist Joe Segal was anxious for his two cast concrete **sculptures** to be installed. And he wasn't going to let an unseasonably chilly morning put a damper on the project.

"I've been anxious for a while and I'm looking forward to seeing these things in place," said Segal, as he watched a giant crane gingerly lower the pieces into their base. "This is the culmination of a lot of design and redesign work."

The **sculptures**, made of colored concrete with a stone aggregate, were placed in front of the San Marco branch **library** on Hendricks Avenue at right angles to each other Friday. Rain had delayed the installation two days.

A committee selected Segal to do the \$75,000 project as part of the city's Art in Public Places program. In 1997, the council passed an ordinance allowing 0.75 percent of construction and design costs of **new** or renovated public facilities to be used for art.

Segal, who majored in sculpting at Flagler College and has been working in the field for more than 15 years, said the **library** commission is his biggest project. The pieces consist of a vertical standing **sculpture** with chiseled groove detail that's titled Revelation and another in the same style that doubles as a sign.

Sarah Gay, director of the Art in Public Places program, said it made sense to have the same artist do both pieces, especially after an earlier design for the **library** sign proved to be too "bulky and cumbersome."

Segal said the pieces reflect his minimalistic approach.

"Working the idea of a sign into a sculptural environment was challenging so I decided to keep things as sparse and minimal as possible, which I think relates well to the architecture," he said.

This is the project's first phase. The second phase will consist of landscaping and sidewalks and will be completed later this year. Segal designed the site plan with assistance from Janet Whitmill, a landscape architect. Plant and flower beds will surround the base of the **sculptures**.

"Eventually, it won't look like the pieces are sitting on bases," Segal said. "One of the things I was told to consider is not to make them look like they are set down arbitrarily in the middle of the yard. The sidewalk will go between the beds and serve as a pedestrian shortcut as well."

sandy.strickland@jacksonville.com,

(904) 359-4128

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