

# Art honors dockworkers

## New sculpture commemorates old Hayward

By Robin Worthington  
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A lacy steel silhouette featuring an early Hayward dockworker is the latest addition to Bay Area outdoor sculpture by John Battenberg, professor emeritus of art at San Jose State University.

"Morning at Eden Docks," a 4,000-pound steel-plate sculpture, was installed Tuesday at Koll Eden Plaza Business Park on Eden Landing Road in Hayward. It commemorates activity in the 19th century port of Hayward, from which farmers shipped their produce in the 1840s.

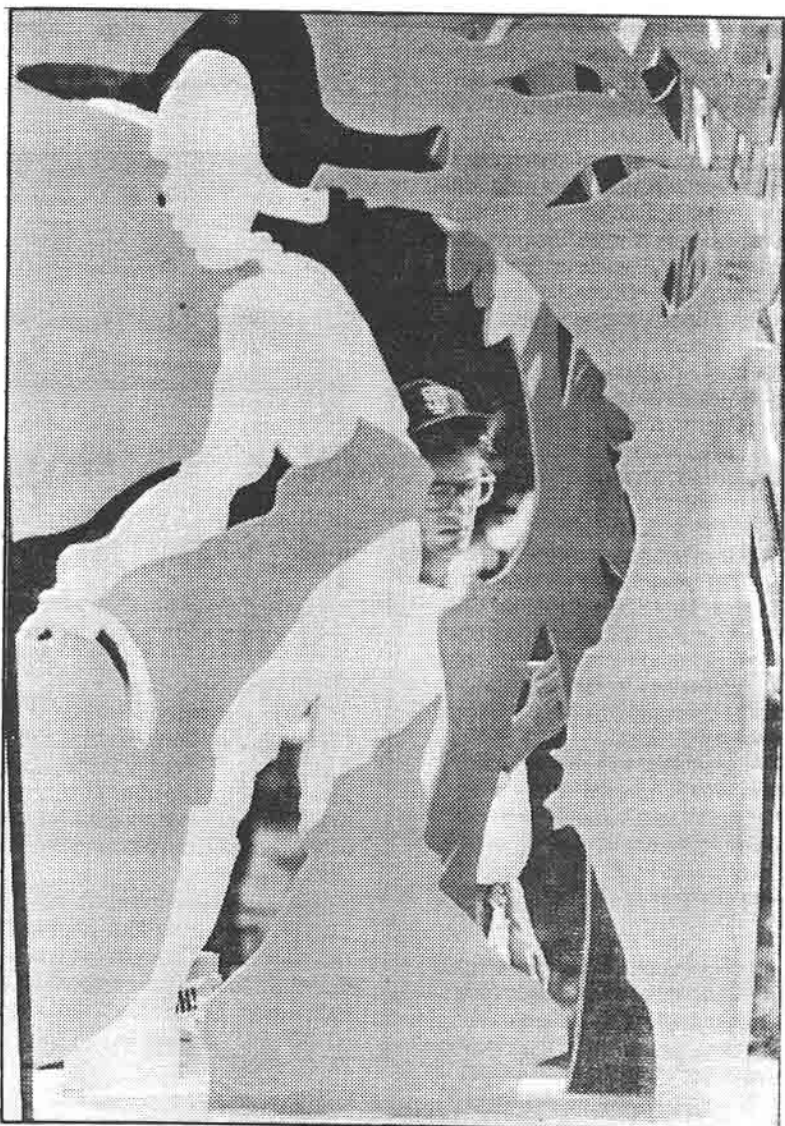
### 'Bent for history'

"Goods would be shipped from Hayward to San Francisco and up to Sacramento for the gold miners," said Battenberg, who says he has "a bent for history." Despite its smack-flat geography, the area originally was called Mount Eden by a group of pioneers who had started their westward trek from Mount Eden, Ky., the sculptor said.

The 17-foot-high sculpture pulls together several historical themes by depicting a dockworker (in both positive shape and the negative space from which it was cut) tying a line around a cleat, with a backdrop of fruit trees and sea gulls. Sunlight filters through the cut spaces to change shadow patterns throughout the day. After creating the original design, Battenberg drew plywood templates for the sculpture, which Joe Farais of Oakland then fabricated from half-inch steel plates.

### Refurbished

The \$30,000 Hayward artwork was commissioned last year when the 26-acre business park was bought and refurbished in a joint venture by the Koll Co. and Almaden Plaza Associates.



Ron Burda — Mercury News

**SLICES OF LIFE** — Augie Phillips applies weather-resistant paint to new sculpture honoring Hayward dockworkers

The historical sculpture is similar in method and spirit to "Murphy Street Scene," steel plate silhouettes created by Battenberg for the city of Sunnyvale and installed last month. "These are Matisse-like. Working with steel plates is a departure for me," said Battenberg, who is known for bronze and marble sculptures.

He also has created works for the Oakland and San Jose art museums, the Royal British War Museum and corporate and private collections.

Elbert Bressie, general partner of Almaden Plaza Associates, is a fan and collector of Battenberg sculptures and paintings. He recalled an earlier purchase of a 1978 Battenberg nude sculpture for Almaden Plaza in San Jose. "It signified the liberation of women," Bressie said, but the statue drew such protest that the work was never installed.

Bressie expects no controversy over this sculpture. "It's a straightforward, wonderfully industrial piece," he said.