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## The Original Twitter

Design that's truly for the birds

The American robin, with its brick-red breast and melodious croon, is one of the most recognizable and beloved birds in North America. It also has one of the loudest birdcalls, which it uses to resolve territorial conflict rather than engage in violence with potential predators. This benevolent behavior jibes well with a new year-long site-based exhibit created for the Presidio, the 1,491-acre national park overlooking the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The For-Site Foundation conceived the show, Presidio Habitats, and commissioned an international group of artists, designers, and architects to fabricate and install innovative habitats for the animal residents of the historic landmark.



The results range from a grand set of blue-and-white glazed porcelain homes created for the western screech owl by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, to a three-dimensional circular planter for hummingbirds developed by industrial designer Don Chadwick. The most graphic installation comes from San Francisco designers Philippe Becker and Brody Hartman, who created life-size, three dimensional wireframe letterforms that spell out phrases describing robin behavior (“resolve conflict with song”). The letters are filled with sterile hay, and simultaneously combine an ideal nesting material for the birds with a provocative typographic monument. “American robins are highly adaptive and have flourished as a species by living peacefully among their many predators,” says Becker. “We wanted to create a metaphorical statement, relay how these wonderful birds behave, and encourage viewers to reconsider their own relationship with conflict resolution.” **DEBBIE MILLMAN**