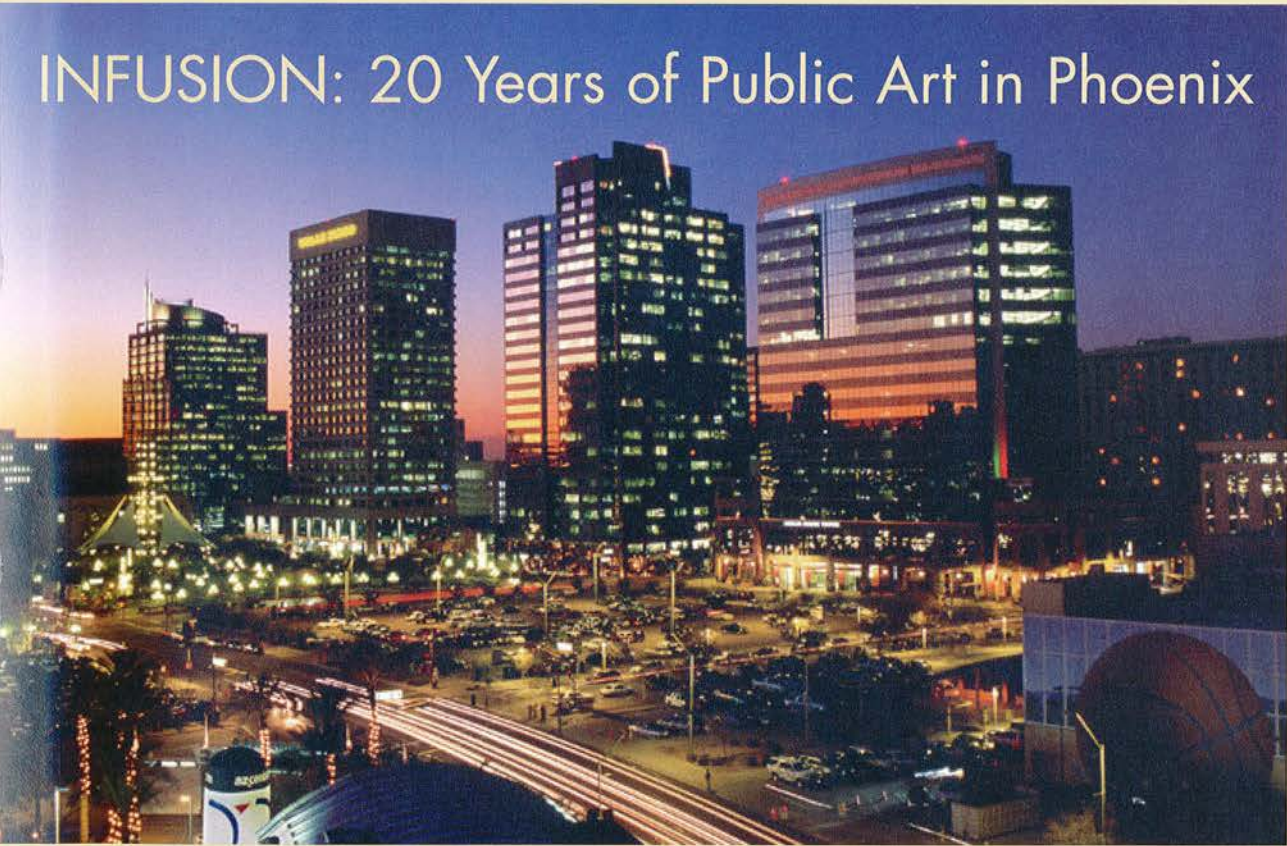
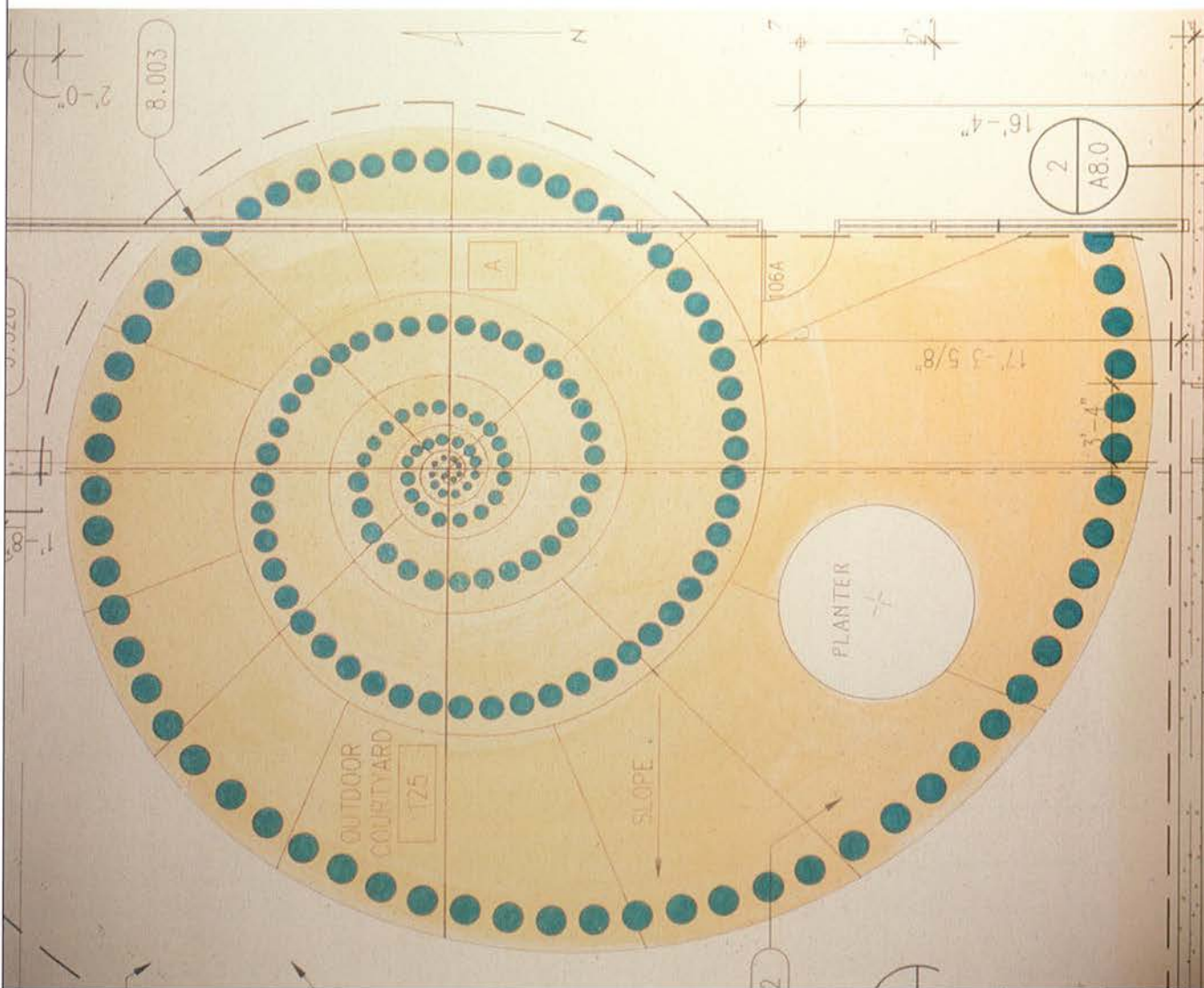




INFUSION: 20 Years of Public Art in Phoenix



PHOENIX OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE
PHOENIX ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION
PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



Construction drawings and views of the artwork by Lewis Alquist for the Mesquite Branch Library, completed in 1999.
 (opposite page) Roberto Delgado's mural at McDowell Road beneath SR51 was the first public art project completed by the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture in 1988.



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Introduction

DELINEATING THE CITY AS A SOCIAL FORM RATHER THAN A COLLECTION AND ORGANIZATION OF NEUTRAL PHYSICAL OBJECTS IMPLICITLY AFFIRMS THE RIGHT OF PRESENTLY EXCLUDED GROUPS TO HAVE ACCESS TO THE CITY – TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THE SPACES THEY USE, TO BE ATTACHED TO THE PLACES THEY LIVE, TO REFUSE MARGINALIZATION.

Rosalyn Deutsche

*Satellite image of a portion of the city of Phoenix.
(opposite page) Egyptian Evening, 1910-14 by Carl Oscar Borg was the first artwork acquired for the Phoenix Municipal Art Collection in 1914.*

BY GREG ESSER

In 2006, the City of Phoenix celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its Public Art Program. Tied since its inception to the developing infrastructure of a rapidly growing urban area, the program has been able to incorporate public art in all corners of the city. Through the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, artists have worked with city agencies to enhance the city's freeways, canals, parks, water, waste management and other public facilities. The Public Art Program has created compelling places in the city that have drawn both local and international attention, have invited accolades and controversy, and have made Phoenix a much richer environment in which to live.



This publication marks the anniversary with essays that examine the program's strengths, limitations and history. Most importantly, it looks to the program's future. The original 1988 public art master plan, *Public Art Plan for Phoenix: Ideas and Visions* by William Morrish, Catherine Brown, and Grover Mouton, has been updated. *Next Steps*, by Jessica Cusick and William Morrish, on page 78, proposes revisions to the first organizing principles that emphasize creative partnerships, sustainability, the clustering of projects, and the maintenance of projects for future generations. These recommendations focus on programmatic enhancements to better serve artists, communities, and the city as a whole.

PIONEERING LEADERSHIP

Arts and culture have been vital to Phoenix throughout its history. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1889 indicate that bookstores and photography studios were among the first businesses to locate in the heart of what would become downtown Phoenix. Well before Arizona became a state in 1912, Native American artists displayed their work on blankets in the center of the emerging agricultural settlement just north of the Salt River.

In 1914, under the direction of local arts leaders such as Maie Heard, elementary school students and others donated pennies to acquire the first painting in the Phoenix Municipal Art Collection. Through trade, this painting, *Egyptian Evening* by Carl Oscar Borg, is now in the permanent collection of the Phoenix Art Museum, which in turn came about through the efforts of artist Philip Curtis and a group of his friends and supporters.

Corporate support has also played a vital role in the local cultural community. Starting before World War II, prominent civic leaders such as banker Walter Bimson supported local artists by acquiring and donating their artwork for permanent display in public places in the city. When the Phoenix Civic Plaza convention center was constructed in 1972, it incorporated an ambitious public art program funded through private and corporate donations. Today this tradition continues through an extensive program of new commissions for the expansion of Civic Plaza by artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Tony Oursler, Tom Otterness, and others.



Former Mayor Terry Goddard with artist Roberto Delgado at the dedication ceremony for Delgado's McDowell Road mural in 1988.
(opposite page) The pink sidewalk was first constructed in approximately 1920 by a wrangler employed at the Biltmore Hotel.

TWENTY YEARS OF GROWTH

In 1984, then-Mayor Terry Goddard convened a group of Phoenix residents to examine how the city could better support the arts. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Arts, chaired by attorney and arts patron Edward “Bud” Jacobson, consisted of 25 members and an auxiliary of 125 permanent guests. This group studied arts issues for more than a year before presenting the “1990 Plan” to the City Council. The plan recommended the formation of an arts commission, the establishment of a grants program, and the establishment of a percent-for-art ordinance. There was tremendous community support for the committee’s recommendations and the plan was unanimously approved by the City Council.

The Phoenix Arts Commission, established by City Council in 1985, was recently renamed the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture and the Phoenix Arts and Culture Commission. The percent-for-art ordinance was passed by the City Council in 1986. The ordinance established dedicated revenue for the Public Art Program that has allowed the Office of Arts and Culture to plan public art projects well in advance. Two years later in 1988, the city passed a billion-dollar bond, one of the largest in the country, with 1 percent dedicated to public art.

Even before the passing of the bond, it was obvious that the selection and siting of public art would need to be governed by a master plan that could take into account the city’s expansiveness and diversity. The team of architect William Morrish, together with urban designer Catherine Brown and artist Grover Mouton, was commissioned by the City of Phoenix to develop such a plan. The result, *Public Art Plan for Phoenix: Ideas and Visions*, adopted by the City Council in 1988, became the first

A MEANDERING PINK SIDEWALK

The vision expressed in the Public Art Program can be traced in part back to a pink sidewalk that meandered aimlessly in the desert foothills of Phoenix, ending abruptly at no location in particular. Whether intended or not, the sense of whimsy it inspired captivated a young child and engaged her sense of wonder. This child, a rare native of Phoenix, later became the first director of the Office of Arts and Culture (then the Phoenix Arts Commission). As an arts advocate, Deborah Whitehurst believed firmly that engagement with art should be available to every citizen, regardless of geographic location or economic status.

During the development of the 1988 plan, Whitehurst, on her own time, traveled to the California studio of William Morrish and Catherine Brown. She brought with her the city’s five-year capital program and a map of the city. Before GIS mapping was widely available, Whitehurst meticulously color-coded each department’s planned capital projects, a process that revealed numerous overlaps in construction between different departments. The layers discovered through this process, where multiple projects coincide, continue to serve as a way to prioritize public art project locations. The overlaps between city systems provide opportunities for public art enhancement, not only because multiple percent-for-art funding resources can be applied, but also because these sites are often significant places in the community.

As the Arts Commission’s first executive director, Whitehurst started out in 1986 housed in the city’s Parks Department, in an office furnished with a card table and folding chairs. From there, she initiated the first projects and allocated the first grants that amounted to over \$600,000. When the time came to present a percent-for-art ordinance to the City Council for approval, Whitehurst researched similar documents around the country and wrote the ordinance during the month of December of that year, in time to present it to the council where it easily passed. Her energy and guidance in the commission’s early years set the stage for its continuing expansion and growing maturity.

That pink sidewalk, dating from the 1920s, is lodged in the memory of many Phoenicians, but perhaps it is in the inspiration it gave to Whitehurst that it has had the most influence on the city itself. The sidewalk that apparently led nowhere had a significant destination after all.





View of the construction of the space in the new Phoenix Civic Plaza convention center expansion which will house the proposed artwork by Louise Bourgeois. (opposite page) Louise Bourgeois, ART IS A GUARANTY OF SANITY. Proposal for the Phoenix Civic Plaza convention center expansion.

citywide public art master plan in the country. Its most significant contribution was to insert public art into the planning and development of infrastructure in a rapidly growing city.

When the Office of Arts and Culture recently set out to update the 1988 plan, it became apparent that the agency had in place a resilient framework for planning public art. The vision, or “big ideas,” in the original plan remains intact and in everyday use. The planning process established at the outset has been a successful tool that has shaped the way the city thinks about the role of public art in civic life. The original master plan set in place a fundamental vision and methodology that is not only relevant but that still continues to inform the success of one of the most innovative and progressive public art programs in the country. That vision has evolved into an annual planning process that is now integrated into the city’s capital improvement program and budgeting process.

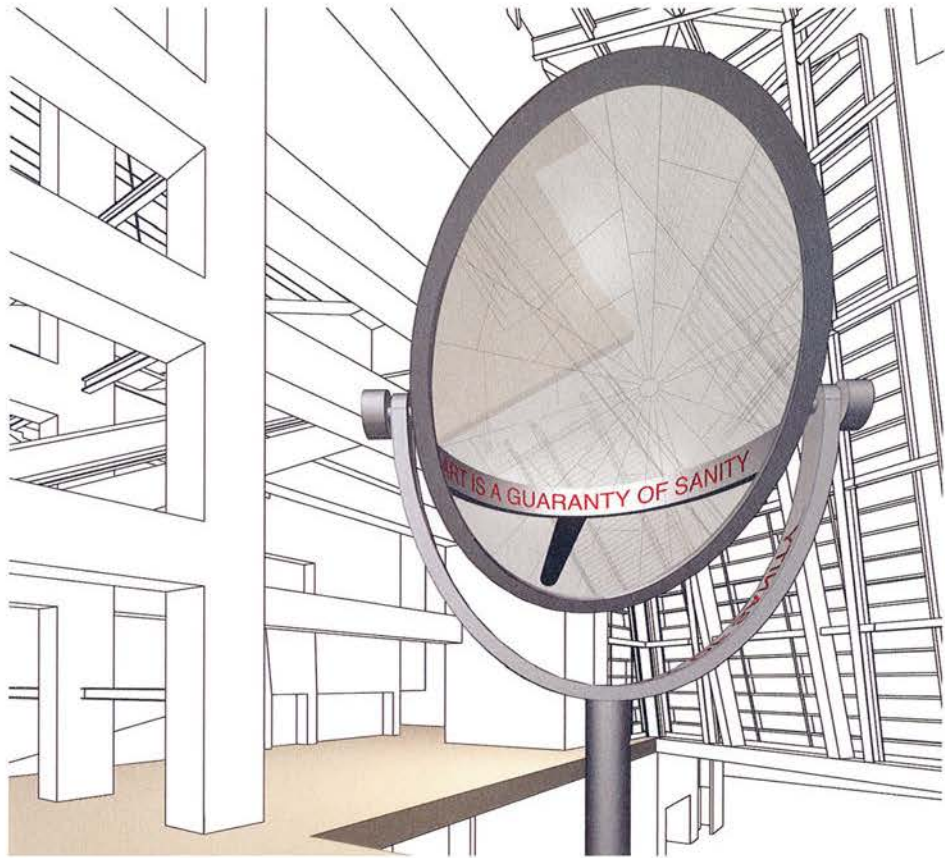
The Public Art Program budget and priorities are developed with input from the mayor and city council, community members, artists, the Phoenix Arts and Culture Commission and the Public Art Program staff. The recommendations for specific projects and funding levels are contained in the Public Art Project Plan, which is approved annually by the mayor and city council.

PUBLIC ART IN PHOENIX

Several features of the Phoenix Public Art Program set it apart from similar programs nationally. Phoenix involves artists in the earliest stages of the design of new infrastructure, giving artists a peer-to-peer voice with engineers, architects, urban planners, landscape architects, and city staff. These collaborative efforts result in unique infrastructure that reflects the characteristics of Phoenix. Also, through the structure of its ordinance, the city is able to pool percent-for-art funds within various departments and combine them for use at high-priority sites, allowing these public art projects to exceed the potentially limiting threshold of 1 percent of the underlying capital project budget.

In the short period of time since its inception, the Phoenix Public Art Program has achieved significant distinction that has earned this southwestern desert city international acclaim for its innovations in the built environment. The infusion of public art into the built environment has resulted in some of the most visible and memorable elements in the city’s growing infrastructure, many of which are highlighted in this publication. The Public Art Program, now two decades old, is poised to continue to foster the reputation of Phoenix as a cultural destination and an American city that not only values the contribution of artists but includes them as an integral part of civic life from the conception of public space through its construction.

It is upon this foundation that the future direction of arts and culture in this city will be built. As citizens and city leadership embark on ambitious planning initiatives for the future, it is important to value the successes of the past and to recognize the vitality of what is unique to Phoenix. Public art may be one of the best tools available to help build the vital and vibrant Phoenix of tomorrow.



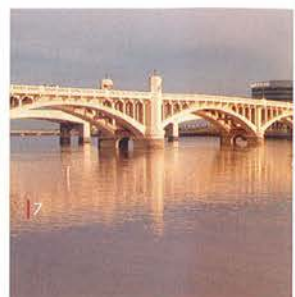


Designed by Orcutt/Winslow, landscape architect Christy Ten Eyck and artist Tom Strick, the Rio Salado Gateway is the first completed element of the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration project first envisioned more than 30 years ago at Arizona State University. (opposite page) Several rare views of the Salt River with native water flow following heavy rainfall. The viceroy is normally dry as a result of the construction of Roosevelt Dam in 1903.

Turquoise Necklace

**WHEN IT'S DRY, WE
CALL IT A RIVER. WHEN
IT'S FULL OF WATER, WE
CALL IT A FLOOD.**

*Native American community
participant, Rio Salado Gateway
public art workshop*





Detail of Layers of Time, relief tiles by Tom Strich that depict tactile elements from five historical eras of the Rio Salado Gateway site. (opposite page) View of the Tres Rios Habitat, part of an 11-acre water reclamation project.

BY DR. FREDERICK STEINER

Picture for a moment a lone man, a postmodern Gary Cooper, facing an angry crowd. The local government has assembled the area landowners for a hearing, and our protagonist, the consultant, is hearing a great deal. The residents are opposed to . . . you can fill in the blank. For a moment let's assume it is a greenway, a rails-to-trails connection. The assembled public is saying they don't want strangers in their backyard. There is one skinny man with a holstered firearm who rambles on about Commies, black helicopters, and the sanctity of private property. The consultant gets a little nervous. Hostile citizens or no, he still believes that the greenway is a good project, one that will make their lives better and will benefit the natural systems of the area.

And so the consultant who confronts this disgruntled public becomes something of a performance artist and the hearing becomes a participatory event. Like all good art, the performance has to be honest and should be derived from the nature of the place. Considerable preparation went into this moment, this public hearing. Hours of careful research and practice preceded this presentation. If the plan, which the consultant believes in so strongly, passes, the presentation will leave its mark on this place for years to come. Bikers and joggers will use the path that follows a restored creek below a cottonwood grove. The children who play in the clean water of the stream will never know about their grandparents' reluctance or the consultant's persistence toward this project that will seem to them timeless.

There are three main approaches to the design of large landscapes. The first involves grand gestures that are intended to completely transform a city or a region. The second is to initiate change throughout a region by studying and incrementally adjusting environmental processes. The third approach is that of an individual designer or a school of designers and artists who, through a lifetime of work, can transform a city or region.

The first of these can be characterized as the "make no little plans" approach. It was Daniel Burnham who made that famous statement, saying that "they have no magic to stir men's blood. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work." Burnham and the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted and their friends certainly heeded this proclamation. Their City Beautiful plans for Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. are their legacy to us. The senior Olmsted, with Charles Eliot, conceived a whole new system for Boston that they called the Emerald Necklace. Their vision remains today as the connected green space that is enjoyed every day by the people of that city.

In our own region, over thirty years ago, a vision known as Rio Salado was launched by an architecture studio at Arizona State University. The vision to transform the dry Salt River bed, which had been abused by gravel mining and random dumping, into a linear open space and flood control system was quickly championed by the dean of the college, Jim Elmore, who has pursued that vision ever since. Now both Tempe and Phoenix are implementing Rio Salado projects. Another grand vision was created for the City of Phoenix with the establishment of the Phoenix Arts Commission when Terry Goddard was mayor. The public art master plan commissioned by that agency provides a remarkable vision of using the infrastructure of the place to create an identity for the region.

In Don DeLillo's book *Underworld*, whose story takes place in Phoenix and New York, the icon chosen to represent New York is Brooklyn's Ebbets Field. To represent Phoenix, the author chose an unusual but extremely successful project that came out of the

city's public art master plan, the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility. Here is a quote. "The landscape made him happy. It was a challenge to his lifelong citiness but more than that, a realization of some half-dream vision, the otherness of the West, the strange great thing that was all mixed in with nature and spaciousness, with bravery and history and who you are and what you believe and what movies you saw growing up." In many ways, the vision of the Public Art Program has helped create an identity for this place that is now working its way into literature.

If we take Jim Elmore's vision of the Rio Salado, pull back and look at it as Olmsted might have, we could imagine a "Turquoise Necklace" for the Phoenix metropolitan area with the Rio Salado connected to the Indian Bend Wash on the east, the Agua Fria River on the west, and the Central Arizona Project canal on the north. Such connections, a primary focus of the Public Art Program, have the potential to become a turquoise necklace here in the Phoenix region.

Enough of the big schemes. Another approach is incrementalism, and incrementalism can work, too. Cities from Tel Aviv to Phoenix are getting hotter, prompting residents to grow more concerned about controlling temperature. The urban heat island effect, or what some climatologists are calling the urban heat archipelago, reduces comfort in already warm cities. Those of us in desert cities should be concerned in our public infrastructure projects about how we use black asphalt. That knowledge can transform, incrementally, how we view our region. What can artists, landscape architects, and architects do with such knowledge? They can transform a region bit by bit, parking lot by parking lot, street by street, one sidewalk at a time, by using more appropriate surfaces and planting more trees. I think if Vitruvius was around today, he would write an eleventh book on architecture, one on



parking lot design.

There is another approach I call the cumulative effect. That is when a single designer, or school of designers, transforms large landscapes over time. Consider the influence of Antonio Gaudí on Barcelona. What would Barcelona be if Gaudí hadn't lived? I would argue that there are, here in our own region, schools of architecture and landscape architecture that are emerging that could potentially have the same impact. The work of Will Bruder and the Jones Studio in architecture, or Steve Martino,

Christy Ten Eyck, and Michael Dollin in the area of landscape architecture, indicate such interwoven schools of thought.

In contemporary American planning situations, the placemakers struggle with the rulemakers for ascendancy. For our contemporary postmodern Gary Coopers to prevail in the face of NIMBY (not in my backyard) and BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anybody), the placemaking and the rulemaking traditions have to be balanced. The proposal may be a grand gesture, such as a Rio Salado or a Turquoise Necklace, or it might be an incrementally provocative step, such as a parking lot with climatically appropriate materials. In either case, the design becomes a portion of a much larger canvas, and its success and failure will ultimately be determined by how well it fits the larger scheme.

Dr. Frederick Steiner is dean of the School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin. Prior to moving to Austin, he was the director of the School of Planning and Landscape Architecture at Arizona State University. His books include Human Ecology: Following Nature's Lead, The Living Landscape, and To Heal the Earth (with Ian McHarg). Steiner is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome and the American Society of Landscape Architects. He was a Fulbright scholar in the Netherlands and received his planning and design education at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Cincinnati.

This essay was originally presented on January 18, 2001, as part of the Dean's Forum sponsored by the Arizona State University College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

Early 1930s view of the Grand Canal looking east toward Bishop College Preparatory.





Finding the Flow:
Canal Corridors in Phoenix

BY MARIE NAVARRE AND SHARON SOUTHERLAND

How does a 133-mile canal system, one that winds through the heart of a major metropolitan area, disappear? Even more remarkably, how does it re-appear, not only as a working utility but as a recreational trail system with memorable points of interest along its length? After years of invisibility, how does it recapture the public's imagination? This story is about the return of the canals as important places in Phoenix, and how the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture acted as a catalyst to make that happen.

CONNECTION

One hundred and thirty-three miles of open water channels, fed by the Verde and Salt rivers and traversing fourteen cities, deliver water to fields and homes in greater metropolitan Phoenix. The canals have supported the growth of these cities to their current population of three million, a number that is expected to double over the next fifteen years. The water they bring has fueled the cities' metropolitan economies.

In a period of less than twenty-five years prior to 1970, the canals went from popular shaded waterways and a well-understood water delivery system to barren and invisible utility corridors, understood by few. Making this hidden system visible again, and attracting people back to enjoy it, was possible because the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture (formerly the Phoenix Arts Commission) arrived at the right time with a powerful vision that supported, with actual on-the-ground projects, a grassroots movement that came together in the late 1980s. The Office of Arts and Culture was armed with an effective process and a funding structure that brought together artists, engineers, city departments, the community, and various governmental entities to realize this remarkable change.

How was this important resource lost from the public mind and later regained? A short dip into the history of the Salt River valley will make this clear. The history of the Phoenix area—a history of repeated cooperative efforts to solve water disputes—is fundamentally linked to canal history. When farmers in the 1880s first abandoned their original every-man-for-himself mentality and formed companies to dig diversion channels from the Salt River that would benefit everyone, it was a major step. They wisely followed the lead of the ancient inhabitants of the valley, people now referred to as the Hohokam, who dug an elaborate system of canals that formed the basis of the modern system. The farmers went one step further and formed a cooperative that, with federal assistance, built dams to store water and manage its distribution.

Once the canal system was established, its importance to daily life was obvious. The working utility system became part of the culture. People felt connected to the water, the canal bank trails that ran throughout the valley, and the places that evolved around unique features such as elevation drops, footbridges, and large trees.

It wasn't only farmers who used the water for irrigation: city dwellers' yards and gardens were also nourished by open flowing watercourses. The system consisted of large main canals that diverted water to open laterals. The laterals, which paralleled streets and roads, diverted water into smaller open ditches that supplied neighborhoods and individual properties. The water system originally



worked, and still does, on gravity. The water ran open and uncovered, for all to see and understand. Cooperation was required to keep it running efficiently. If your turn for irrigation water happened to come in the middle of the night, you got up to open the valve. Neighbors faithfully kept the ditches upstream clean and free of obstacles to ensure flow to their own properties.

For children, the network of laterals and ditches and the lush growth of grass and cottonwood trees that sprouted along them provided treasured places to explore and learn. The attraction of water, even fishy, muddy, or fertilizer-laden water, was highly seductive in the dry desert environment.

Most two-lane roads were bordered by tree-lined laterals. “Everywhere there is shade and plenty of it,” observed a visitor in 1905. “The entire valley, from Mesa into Phoenix, is one solid mass of green, and every road is a perfect avenue. Chinaberry trees, palm and cottonwoods line the driveway, or lanes as they call them, and the entire distance from Mesa to Phoenix can be driven under an almost unbroken arch of shade.”¹

DISCONNECTION

But things changed. The tremendous growth in population and automobiles of the 1950s and 1960s caused streets to be widened, hiding many of the laterals and ditches underground. Thousands of large shade trees were cut down. A 1958 essay in *Arizona Days and Ways* documented the destruction: “As recently as 1950 an estimated 28,000 of the huge trees dominated Valley skylines, bordered fields, dipped their thirsty roots into hundreds of miles of irrigation canals and ditches. In seven years approximately 20,000 of the cottonwoods have been destroyed. In a few more years they probably will be a rare sight.”²

The many subdivisions that sprang up in the 1960s were not connected to the canals, partly because they used treated city water instead of canal water for irrigating lawns. Developers built long monotonous block walls that separated people in their new homes from the canals, as much mentally as physically. It became increasingly difficult to get to the canals; the banks could only be accessed from major street crossings.

As liability became a household word in the late 1970s and early 1980s, people, and especially children, were sternly advised of the dangers of the canals and vigorously discouraged from going near them. The tens of thousands of newcomers, who quickly became the majority of the population, ignored and even shunned the canals. The now barren, hot, and treeless banks were of little interest. Older neighborhoods that were still connected to the irrigation system began to hire *zanjeros*, or water managers, to open and close yard valves, rather than have individual property owners do it themselves. Some valley cities took over that process entirely, collecting a service fee from homeowners. The old sense of connection to the canals died almost entirely.

Three views of Dutch Ditch in Central Phoenix, May 1952, September 1952 and March 2005.
(opposite page) Open lateral in 1950 and the same view one year later.



RECONNECTION

The rich history and future potential of the canals as recreational corridors, however, was not lost on everyone. In the 1960s, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation commissioned an Outdoor Recreation Resource Review, and agreements were crafted allowing non-motorized recreational use of the canal banks. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department commissioned a study that produced guidelines for a chain of canal-side aquatic parks “like beads on a necklace,”³³ and students in the Arizona State University School of Architecture designed potential amenities for the canal banks.

While governmental agencies and academics pondered the recreational potential and larger cultural meaning of the canal system, it had virtually disappeared from the public mind as a place for people. However, by the mid-1980s, residents, searching for places to walk, run, and bike off the increasingly busy street grid, rediscovered the canal banks, this time as recreational corridors. The Junior League of Phoenix formed a committee to encourage more use of the canal banks. Their strong organizational effort brought together a valley-wide coalition of advocates that became the Metropolitan Canal Alliance, a non-profit advocacy group that supported public access to and enhancement of the canal banks. The Junior League asked professors at Arizona State University to develop design guidelines for the canals to guide future decision-making and ensure that the canals would be appropriately integrated into new development projects. *Canal Design Guidelines* was published in 1990 by Arizona State University, with cooperation from the Junior League, SRP, and, notably, Phoenix and six other valley cities.

In the mid-1980s, the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture was established, and a progressive percent-for-art ordinance was approved by then – Mayor Terry Goddard and the City Council. The timing was extremely fortunate for those advocating more canal use. The 1988 public art master plan by William Morrish, Catherine Brown, and Grover Mouton was visionary. It used the city’s infrastructure systems as foundations for the placement of public art in order to create “a strong sense of history, awareness and orientation.”³⁴ It also emphasized the importance of a parallel system of “cultural infrastructure” that was based on historic urban patterns such as the canals, urban terrain, and the “public cognitive map.”³⁵ This concept was particularly pertinent for the canal system at that time. According to the authors, the “public cognitive map is an even more ethereal aspect of a city’s cultural



FROM OPEN, SHADED WATERCOURSE TO STARK, CONCRETE-LINED CHANNEL





Artist Jackie Ferrara and landscape architect M. Paul Friedrich at the dedication of the Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project in 2000. Historic postcard of the Arizona Canal in Sunnyslope ca. early 1900s. (opposite page) Architectural model and the completed space for one of two grass "rooms" along the Sunnyslope Canal featuring native desert grasses.

infrastructure. It includes landmarks, boundaries, any roads the community uses to navigate from home to work, to shop and to special events.”⁶ The canal system had historically been part of this public cognitive map and the new public art plan sought to encourage its re-emergence in the public’s awareness and imagination. The Office of Arts and Culture was in the perfect position to take on the task of revealing this hidden system as a place rich with meaning and connection to the community.

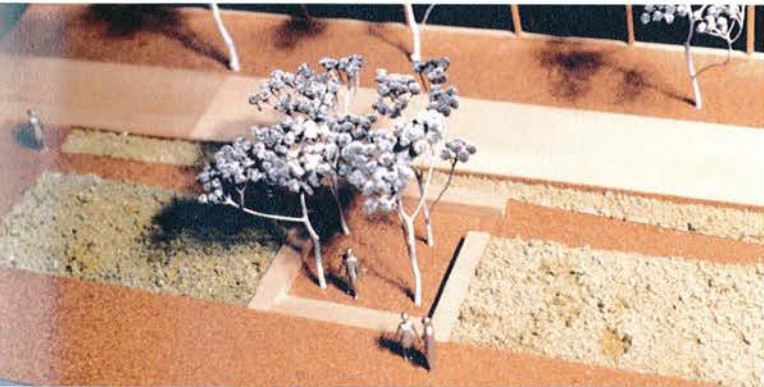
The public art master plan identified five spatial systems: water, parks and open space, vehicular, landmark, and pedestrian. A total of fifteen working zones were designated within these systems—one of those zones was the canal system.

The canals, though not owned and operated by the city, were identified as integral to the workings of the city. They were recognized as not only an important water delivery system, but also an important spatial system. They presented a perfect opportunity to blend public infrastructure, urban design, and public art to make the city more comprehensible, sustainable, and beautiful.

Five locations in the system were highlighted in the original public art master plan as primary public art opportunities. To date, the Office of Arts and Culture has completed three of the five: the *Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project*, the *Old Cross Cut Canal Linear Park*, and *WaterWorks at Arizona Falls*. Two more projects are currently in the works, one on the Arizona Canal at 24th Street and one on the Highline Canal at Baseline Road. Phoenix is also working with Tempe and Scottsdale on the design of the Papago Salado Trail.

The challenges in implementing such a visionary plan are very real. However, the city’s Office of Arts and Culture, through its Public Art Program, is in a position to do what other city departments often can’t. Where other departments were developed to implement standard policies and apply strictly defined rules and procedures, the role of the Public Art Program is to innovate and to take risks to achieve things that have never been done before. This often requires creating an arena of cooperation around a project or idea and bringing together several departments and other jurisdictions to solve a problem and accomplish goals that are outside any single department’s mission. The Public Art Program is most successful when the vision of its ideas leverages other resources and corrals the tremendous power of citizens working with government to achieve a goal.

One example of this success is the brokering of a master agreement between the City of Phoenix and SRP (formerly the Salt River Project, the public utility company that evolved from the initial cooperative effort to irrigate the valley). Though the canals and their banks are owned by the federal government through the Bureau of Reclamation, they are managed by SRP. Before the city could build artist-designed pedestrian amenities on canal banks, liability and maintenance issues had to be resolved. The issues had implications not only for the city and SRP, but also for the Maricopa County Flood Control District and the Bureau of Reclamation. After years of negotiation between the legal representatives of the various governmental jurisdictions, a master agreement was signed, allowing the City of Phoenix, through its Office of Arts and Culture, to develop and build public art projects along the canal banks.



THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM IS MOST SUCCESSFUL WHEN THE VISION OF ITS IDEAS LEVERAGES OTHER RESOURCES AND CORRALS THE TREMENDOUS POWER OF CITIZENS WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT TO ACHIEVE A GOAL.



SUNNYSLOPE CANAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The *Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project* was the first project to be realized. Sunnyslope is a community bordering the Arizona Canal in north central Phoenix. The canal and its banks have long been an important amenity for Sunnyslope residents. A 1.5-mile section of the canal between Northern and Dunlap Avenues was targeted by the Office of Arts and Culture for a series of public art projects.

Landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg and artists Jackie Ferrara and Doug Hollis headed a team that designed improvements for the canal bank trail and connected it to other trail systems. The artist team used native landscaping on a long, continuous berm to separate the paved bike trail and maintenance road from the unpaved pedestrian and equestrian trail. They punctuated the berm with open-air “rooms” that create an understated backdrop for experiencing the natural desert and the movement of the adjacent water. The rooms highlight the purposes of the canal, native desert vegetation, mountain views, the desert climate and water issues of the valley in subtle, quiet, but interactive ways. The design is an elegant tribute to the desert environment on this line of demarcation between irrigated land to the south, where gravity-fed ditches once carried water from the canal to the fields, and dry land to the north.

WATERWORKS AT ARIZONA FALLS

WaterWorks at Arizona Falls is an example of the intent of the public art master plan. In 1998, when the Office of Arts and Culture initiated the project, the site resembled a barren bunker covered with dirt and surrounded by a chain-link fence. The falls, named for a 21-foot drop in elevation on the Arizona Canal, were obscured by structures built in the early twentieth century to generate electricity and control water flow. The generators, operated by SRP, were shut down and abandoned in the 1950s.

Today, when one approaches Arizona Falls from the adjacent Herberger Park, the new structures peer up over the high, landscaped canal bank, providing a tantalizing clue of what awaits.

A winding, rising path takes visitors up the canal bank and then down toward the canal through terraced walls planted with flowering jacarandas and desert willows. The floor of the former generator room has become an outdoor Water Room, lined with desert stone and surrounded by falling water. Water, diverted from the canal into two new elevated aqueducts that frame the room, falls back into the canal in two glistening ribbons. Visitors enter the Water Room by passing under one of the aqueducts. There they can sit on stone blocks in the cool mist, protected from the sun by a wave-shaped perforated metal canopy. The noise of the street traffic disappears with the rush of falling water. Other visitors in the Water Room may be strangers, but a different relationship is created in this oasis, a camaraderie that would not occur on the busy street outside. The mood is one of contemplation, awe, and reflection. At the back of the Water Room is the heart of the site—its history: the rusty iron gears and levers

of the 100-year-old former hydroelectric generator, shimmering through a veil of water falling to a shallow pool.

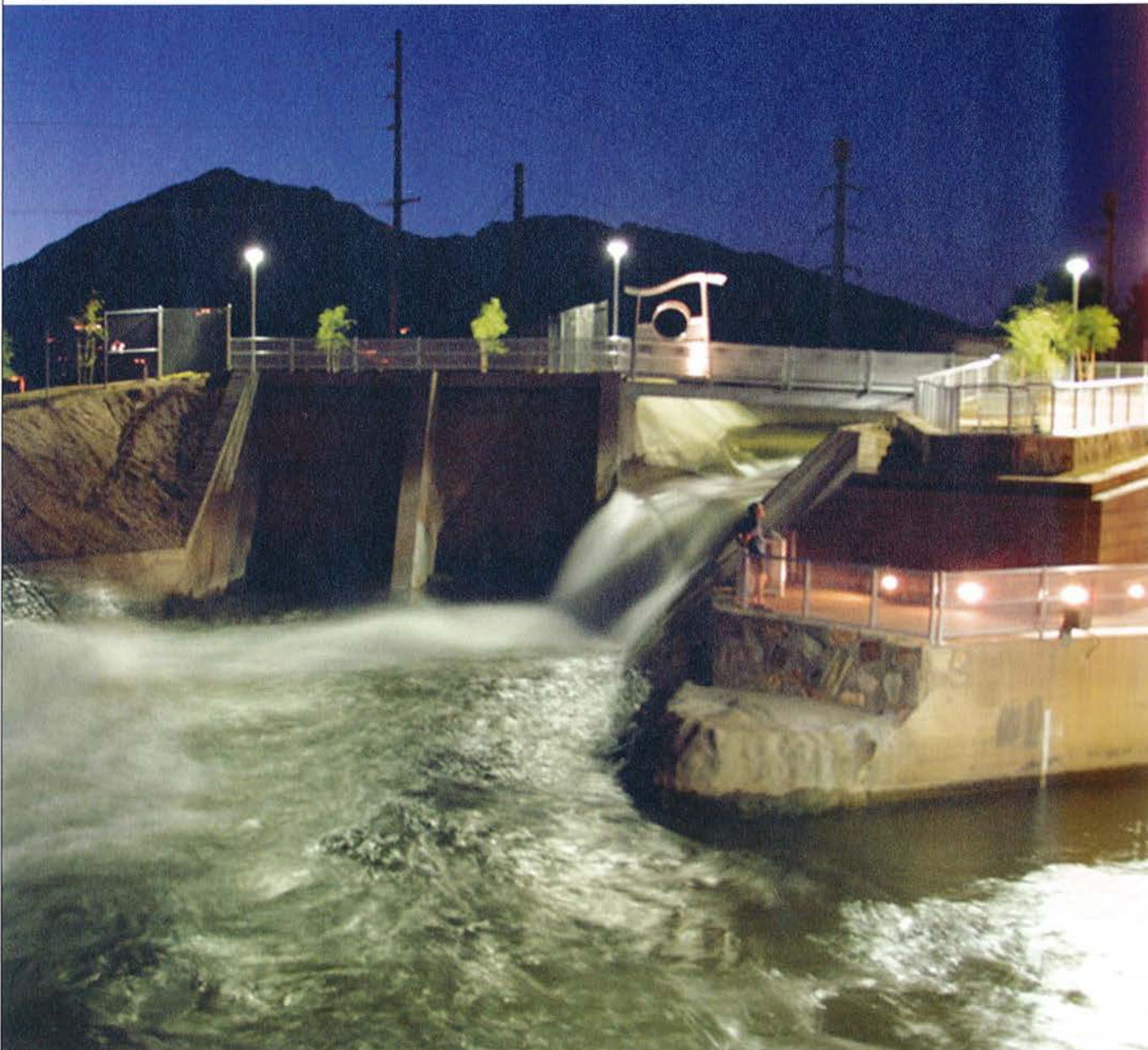
From the Water Room, visitors can walk to an observation overlook and to the Stoa, a large gathering place for school groups (inspired by the courtyards where Greek philosophers met with students.) The Stoa deck is stamped with a reed pattern and engraved with lines of poetry by Alberto Ríos about water. Ríos was commissioned to write poetry celebrating water as part of SRP's centennial celebration. Another overlook is reached by crossing the checkered dance floor next to the turbine house. The dance floor is both a nod to history and to the current meaning of the site. In the 1920s, nearby Ingleside Inn patrons gathered for elegant picnics and dances next to the falls. Today, visitors can contemplate the dance of water and power occurring at the site as the hydroelectric turbine spins unseen beneath the turbine house, generating pollution-free power for approximately 150 homes. The deck of the dance floor contains a large grated opening that lets us hear, see, and smell the water rushing beneath our feet as it plummets down the 21-foot drop in elevation.

From the dance floor, visitors look down on the Water Room below and see the canal water flowing to the west. This is the perfect place to consider the meaning of water in this desert city. This place of beauty, function, inspirational delight, and environmental understanding was created by the artist team of Lajos Héder and Mags Harries, working with landscape architect Steve Martino.

The artists worked with a straightforward industrial aesthetic that grew out of the function of the site and the water delivery system. The meaning and history of the place informed many aspects of the design. The materials the artist team used—galvanized steel, stone, concrete, rusted iron, and perforated metal—can withstand the rigors of the climate and the contact with water. The working parts of the structures are exposed and appreciated, rather than hidden. In time, the crisp, utilitarian edges will be softened by the trees and flowering shrubs planted on the site. With all the water flowing in different ways through the site, it gives sublime satisfaction to know there are no pumps, no mechanisms involved, only water's friend—gravity—and superb engineering design.

Community involvement is a critical component of any public art project. Since this project involved a site rich in history that was embedded in the heart of a large residential area, the Office of Arts and Culture developed a community steering committee that was organized at the beginning of the project and continued to meet throughout the design and construction phases. This proved to be an extremely useful tool for the Office of Arts and Culture, SRP, and the community at large. Drawn from neighborhood associations, citizen groups, and interested residents, the committee members were able to keep the larger community informed, advocate for the project as challenges arose, and serve as a resource for the artist team as the project progressed.





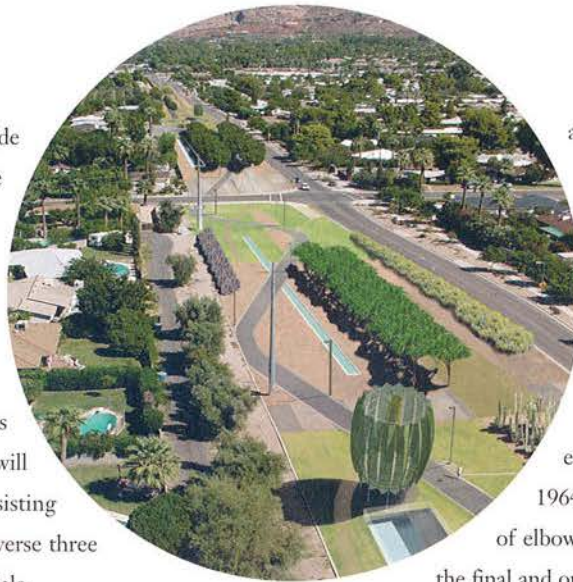
An aerial view of the site while under construction in 2003. A 10-foot diameter concrete pipe serves as an entry to the site. It is flanked by pillars topped by a water scupper and an electric insulation, each representing a working aspect of the water celebrated at the site. Accessible 24 hours a day, WaterWorks takes on a mystical glow after sundown. A lit, spinning waveform circulating in the high windows of the turbine house alerts visitors, as well as people driving by, when the hydroelectric power is being generated.



Completed in 2003, *WaterWorks at Arizona Falls* uses the falling water to generate green power and to provide a cooling waystation for canal bank users. Support for the project was drawn from the city's Water Services Department percent-for-art funds. Critical financial support for the recreational aspects of the project came from the Bureau of Reclamation. The next phase, to be completed by SRP, will provide educational signage regarding green electricity and the sustainability issues our community faces. This is the second large-scale canal bank enhancement project to be completed by the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture as a part of its public art master plan.

PAPAGO SALADO LOOP

Since the canal system is a valley-wide network, no canal is limited to one city. This presents opportunities for multi-city cooperation and myriad complex challenges that public artists relish solving in creative ways. The Papago Salado Trail demonstrates such challenges and solutions. When complete, it will be an 11.6-mile loop trail consisting mostly of four canal banks that traverse three cities: Phoenix, Tempe, and Scottsdale.



and Culture. Many more opportunities and challenges lie ahead. As the City of Phoenix continues to grow at a dramatic rate, this work becomes even more important. In the last twenty years, since the Office of Arts and Culture's efforts began, the canals have come to embody a prediction made in the 1964 *Canal Parks Report*: "the final piece of elbow room, the final breath of open air, the final and only great stretch of open space in the

... future Valley of the Sun."⁸

A primarily local design team including environmental artist Laurie Lundquist, Studio Ma (architects Christopher Alt, Christiana Moss and Dan Hoffman), historian Nancy Dallet, and others was selected through a national design competition sponsored by the Papago Salado Association and funded in part through the National Endowment for the Arts Design Program. The team developed *Portals and Loops*, a set of design guidelines that would define the Papago Salado Trail and provide an identifiable, cohesive network of trails that connect to this central loop. They proposed a system of portals (or access points) that would provide rest stops and draw attention to views, attractions, other trail loops, and the working elements of the canal system. The team has created interpretative themes promoting the desert climate, waterways, and the many natural and cultural attractions that occur along the loop trail. Like Arizona Falls, the *Portals and Loops* project uses "water at work" as an interpretative theme. "We want to emphasize that water is not only at work generating power and irrigating lawns, but is also at work in our imagination, conjuring visions of the past and possible futures."⁷

These public art projects reveal, interpret, and re-create places within an important city system that had become invisible to the majority of its residents. The man-made canals remain a working system of industry, but they have also survived as corridors of nature, culture, and history through the efforts of artists, community members, and public agencies like the Office of Arts

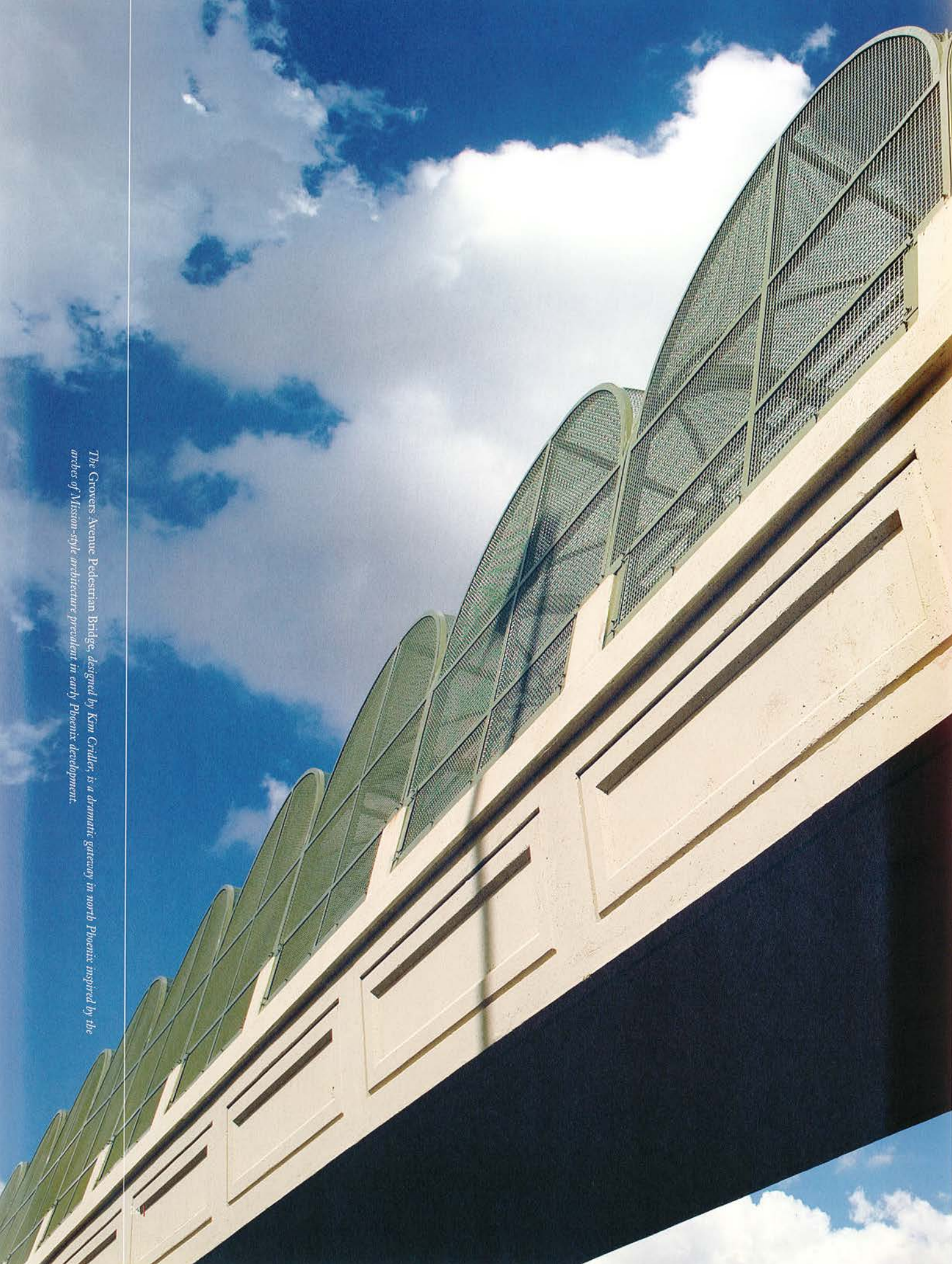
1. Lebow, Edward, *Following the Water: A Century of Change* (Scottsdale, Arizona: Scottsdale Center for the Arts, 1997): 2.
2. Moore, Hal, "Passing of the Giants," *Arizona Days and Ways Magazine, Arizona Republic and Phoenix Gazette* (19 October 1958): 28.
3. Pickney, Victor, *Canal Parks Report* (Phoenix, Arizona: Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department, September 1964): 4.
4. Morrish, William, Catherine Brown, and Grover Mouton, *Public Art Plan for Phoenix: Ideas and Visions* (Phoenix, Arizona: Phoenix Arts Commission, 1988): 2.
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6. Ibid.
7. Hoffman, Dan, Christiana Moss and Christopher Alt, *Portals + Loops: Ways Along the Papago Salado Trail* (Phoenix, Arizona: Studio Ma, May 2002): 10.
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Sharon Southerland is a Public Art Project Manager for the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture. She has a Master of Environmental Planning degree from Arizona State University where her thesis was "The Relationship between the Canals and Neighborhoods." She is co-author of *Metropolitan Canals: A Regional Design Framework* published by Arizona State University and founder and former president of the Metropolitan Canal Alliance.

Marie Navarre is an artist and a Public Art Project Manager for the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture. She managed the Arizona Falls public art project, among others. She holds a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Photography and a Master of Arts in Education.

Illustration of the proposed Desert Garden, enhancements along the Old Crosscut Canal Linear Park. (opposite page) Other proposed elements of the Papago Salado Loop Trail in Phoenix include the Waves, a transformation of the open flood control diversion channel running from McDowell Road to the Grand Canal. The Waves includes a community skate park. A trail section currently under design will connect Indian School Road to the Arizona Canal in the Arcadia neighborhood. This segment includes a pedestrian bridge over the canal with a distinct, cylindrical shape. Taken together, these projects will provide a continuous and integrated experience for residents and visitors along the existing canal system, helping to transform this unique Valley feature into landmark that serves the function of a paratour and pleasurable pedestrian network.





The Groovers Avenue Pedestrian Bridge, designed by Kim Cridder, is a dramatic gateway in north Phoenix inspired by the arches of Mission-style architecture prevalent in early Phoenix development.



Public Art Along the Piestewa Peak Parkway

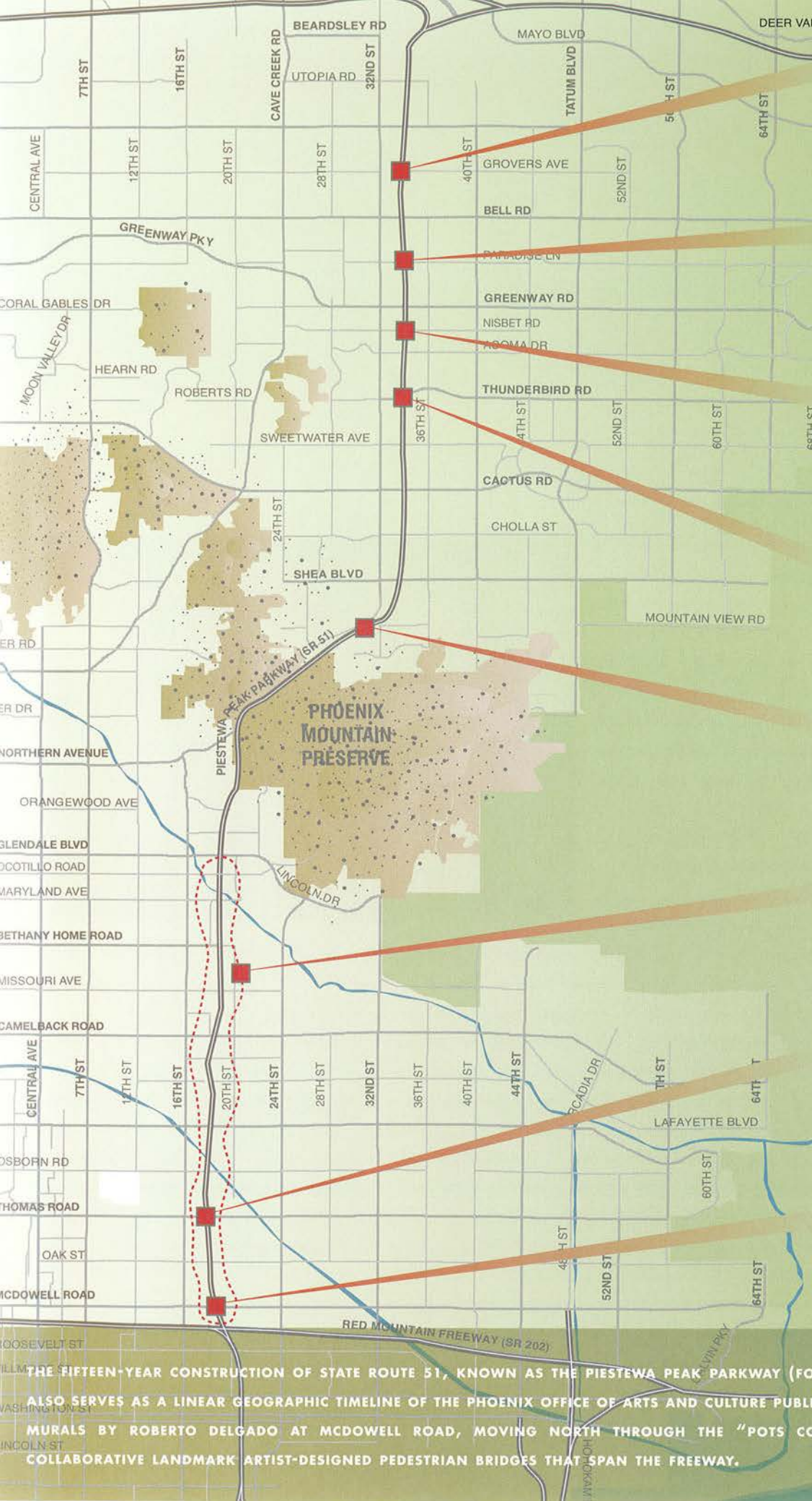
BY ROBERT SCHULTZ

Piestewa Peak Parkway¹ is a six-lane freeway that runs north/south through the center of Phoenix. Its construction, because it took place during the 1980s and 1990s, afforded the newly formed Phoenix Arts Commission (now the Office of Arts and Culture) a chance to site many innovative art projects along a well-used public corridor. In the public's mind, the projects ranged from instantly successful to controversial, but they all made a distinctive stamp on this busy freeway that had transformed the heart of an established city.

The siting of art projects along the parkway was originally suggested by William Morrish and Catherine Brown in their 1988 public art master plan. They argued for “commissioning artists to generate ideas for how public art can not only enhance the spatial environment of overpasses and intersections, but working with road engineers to actually improve the visual orientation and cognitive process of driving, for example by creating landmarks and gateways to villages and their cores.”

To address the concept of art-in-infrastructure, the underpass at McDowell Road was chosen by the Office of Arts and Culture as the location for their very first public art project, a double mural by Roberto Delgado completed in 1988. One mile north and two years later, *Our Shared Environment* was completed by Marilyn Zwak at the Thomas Road overpass. A striking and monumental work, the project proved to skeptical design team engineers that stabilized adobe could be used as a primary material for integration into a major highway bridge. In 1992, *Wall Cycle to Ocotillo* was created by Harries/Héder Collaborative. This project was bolder still, featuring thirty-five individual vessel-related artworks placed at locations along both sides of a five-mile stretch of the freeway. Only a fraction of the artworks was visible to traffic on the freeway, since many were located adjacent to freeway abutment walls facing the surrounding neighborhoods, and even along two canal banks. Several miles north, Vicki Scuri completed the *Dreamy Draw Pedestrian Bridge*, a bridge over the freeway that referenced the surrounding peaks of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve. When Scuri's bridge was fully completed in 1995, the freeway ended another mile north, pending additional construction funds to complete it to its eventual merger with the Loop 101 freeway, in north Phoenix.

When the freeway construction continued in the mid-1990s, the Office of Arts and Culture identified locations for four more freeway projects beyond Scuri's bridge. Heading north, the first of these is the *Thunderbird Road Vehicular Bridge*. Artist Beth Galston, in partnership with BRW, Inc., and Bolduc, Smiley and Associates, joined the design team after a basic overpass design had been developed. Because she did not participate in the original design, Galston's role was one of embellishment rather than integration. She says her goal was “to create a broad gesture that people would see whether they're in a car, on foot, or in a nearby house.” She sought to soften the boxy shape of the bridge and “make it more sculptural.” The site is characterized by large, landscaped mounds extending out from the freeway walls toward neighborhood homes 150 feet to the west, and eastward to Indian Bend Wash, which runs parallel to the freeway (the normally dry flood control wash also serves as a bicycle/pedestrian pathway). Nearer to the overpass, graceful terraces were added to soften the vertical height of the freeway roadbed. Brightly colored undulating railings enhance the terraces. The overall impression is reminiscent of balconies in a theater.



Grovers Avenue Pedestrian Bridge
Kim Cridler



Paradise Lane Pedestrian Bridge
Linnea Glatt



Mountain Pass Pedestrian Bridge
Laurie Lundquist



Thunderbird Road Vehicular Bridge
Beth Galston



Dreamy Draw Pedestrian Bridge
Vicki Scuri



Wall Cycle to Ocotillo
Mags Harries and Lajos Héder; Harries/Héder Collaborative



Our Shared Environment
Marilyn Zwak



Untitled
Roberto Delgado

THE FIFTEEN-YEAR CONSTRUCTION OF STATE ROUTE 51, KNOWN AS THE PIESTEWA PEAK PARKWAY (FORMERLY SQUAW PEAK PARKWAY) ALSO SERVES AS A LINEAR GEOGRAPHIC TIMELINE OF THE PHOENIX OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM FROM THE FIRST MURALS BY ROBERTO DELGADO AT MCDOWELL ROAD, MOVING NORTH THROUGH THE "POTS CONTROVERSY" AND ON TO THE COLLABORATIVE LANDMARK ARTIST-DESIGNED PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES THAT SPAN THE FREEWAY.



The dedication ceremony for the project included a traditional American Indian dance to honor the history of the site. The adobe designs by Marilyn Zarak at Thomas Road were inspired by Hohokam pottery shards that were excavated at the site during construction. (opposite page) Views of Zarak's proposal model, working drawings, construction forms, and the artist on site with the finished artwork.

The underpass through which Thunderbird Road pierces the freeway roadbed is treated with a rough, undulating, granite-like horizontal surface pattern, in approximately 5-foot square blocks. At the end of each wall are smooth, unadorned columns, and here the wall pattern changes to vertical. The ceiling of the underpass is smooth concrete, and small rosettes at each end complete the design. Special lighting is a further enhancement. At night, the columns are highlighted by a wash of soft, blue light, with yellow backlighting that also illuminates the railings.

Galston's design did sidestep one potentially problematic turf issue. The City of Phoenix and the State of Arizona own different parts of the site, so the customary procedure would have been to simply install a chain-link fence right at the terrace walls to demarcate the respective ownership boundaries. Fortunately for the project's overall aesthetic appeal, the city eventually agreed to maintain all the landscaping, and the idea of a fence was dropped.

Traveling less than a mile north, local artist Laurie Lundquist's *Mountain Pass Pedestrian Bridge* at Nisbet Road, comes into view. The design team for the project included SVR, Inc., HDR Engineering, Inc., Bolduc, Smiley and Associates, and the Arizona Department of Transportation. The 260-foot span connects residential areas on either side of the freeway and serves to establish a link for the bicycle path on the west side. The rose-hued bridge is topped by tight-weave silver chain-link fencing that echoes the profile of the surrounding mountains, while also keeping pedestrians from throwing things onto the roadway below. The fabrication of the fencing was itself a substantial feat, as subcontractors devised an ingenious system for stretching the material over the arch shapes while keeping the profile clean and fluid. Lundquist felt pressure to use colored fencing, but she says that she "...fought to keep the standard finish on the fencing with the hope that the bridge would have a somewhat transparent appearance. I am pleased that it seems almost like a ghost mountain from a distance."

The illusion of a ghost mountain is strongest at a particular vantage point from the freeway when the ridged top seems to momentarily align with the distant, jagged range of the Phoenix Mountain Preserve. Lundquist also carefully considered the visual interest for pedestrians using the bridge. Strolling through the interior of the chain-link and steel pole structure, one notices the engaging shadow patterns that play across the deck. The artist meant to convey the feeling of walking through a mountain pass and to give users a sense of volume and space as they moved between shorter arches and taller ones along the spine of the bridge cover.





The bridge's location is itself scenic. In addition to the mountain preserve to the south, the McDowell Mountains east of Scottsdale are clearly visible, as is the hazy outline of the Mogollon Rim beyond the freeway corridor to the north. In an interesting contrast, another pedestrian bridge can be glimpsed just north of the site. The Greenway Road bridge, designed by the Arizona Department of Transportation, is a boxy, rectangular chute, built simply and existing purely for a utilitarian purpose.

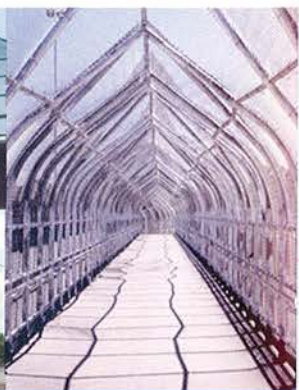
Another mile north along the freeway sits *Paradise Lane Pedestrian Bridge*, designed by Texas artist Linnea Glatt, in partnership with HDR Engineering, Inc. This bridge also functions to unite the neighborhood that was divided by the freeway and it serves as a link for the north/south bicycle path. Glatt chose to use natural gray concrete for the switchback entry ramps and for the support structure for the bridge. For the upper bridge cover, she pondered how to illustrate a solution to the disruption caused by the construction of the freeway through the neighborhood. The result was a basket-like structure that would help weave the two sides back together.

Glatt created an engaging, carefully crafted bridge that has separate meanings and visual experiences for freeway travelers and pedestrians. For cars on the freeway, the bridge functions mainly as a physical reminder of location. However, the basic premise of the weave pattern and the gentle arching of the structure is plainly visible, even at sixty-five miles per hour. Pedestrians, in contrast, can take their time to examine the attractive woven strips of galvanized metal, perforated on their bottom halves and solid on top. Within the Romanesque vaulted shape of the bridge cover, the play of light and shadow is wonderful, changing constantly with passing clouds and the angle of the sun. Each end of the bridge cover is peeled away to define the pedestrian entrance, providing a break from the continuity of the smooth, rounded shape. The bridge location shares the same scenic vistas as those enjoyed by Lundquist's project.

Most recently, artist Kim Cridler designed the final pedestrian bridge at Grovers Avenue just before the Piestewa Peak Parkway connects with the recently completed Loop 101 freeway to the north. Her vaulted groin arch design is inspired by the Mission style of architecture prevalent in the Phoenix area. Plaques inscribed with memories of area residents line the sides of the bridge cage. For motorists, Cridler's bridge serves as a gateway into Phoenix; for pedestrians, the plaques serve as a reminder of the neighborhoods they are walking in.

These projects are the result of a fifteen-year effort by the Office of Arts and Culture to address a significant linear feature of Phoenix's built environment with a series of eight integrated projects that can be experienced, compared, and contrasted in

Thunderbird Road Vehicular Bridge by Beth Galston with views showing what would have been constructed without the artist's participation, an artist's rendering of the proposed project, and the finished project.
(opposite page) Lauric Lundquist's Mountain Pass Pedestrian Bridge.



Paradise Lane Pedestrian Bridge over Piastewa Peak Parkway designed by artist Linnea Glatt is a visual metaphor for rearing the two communities back together that were separated by the freeway construction.



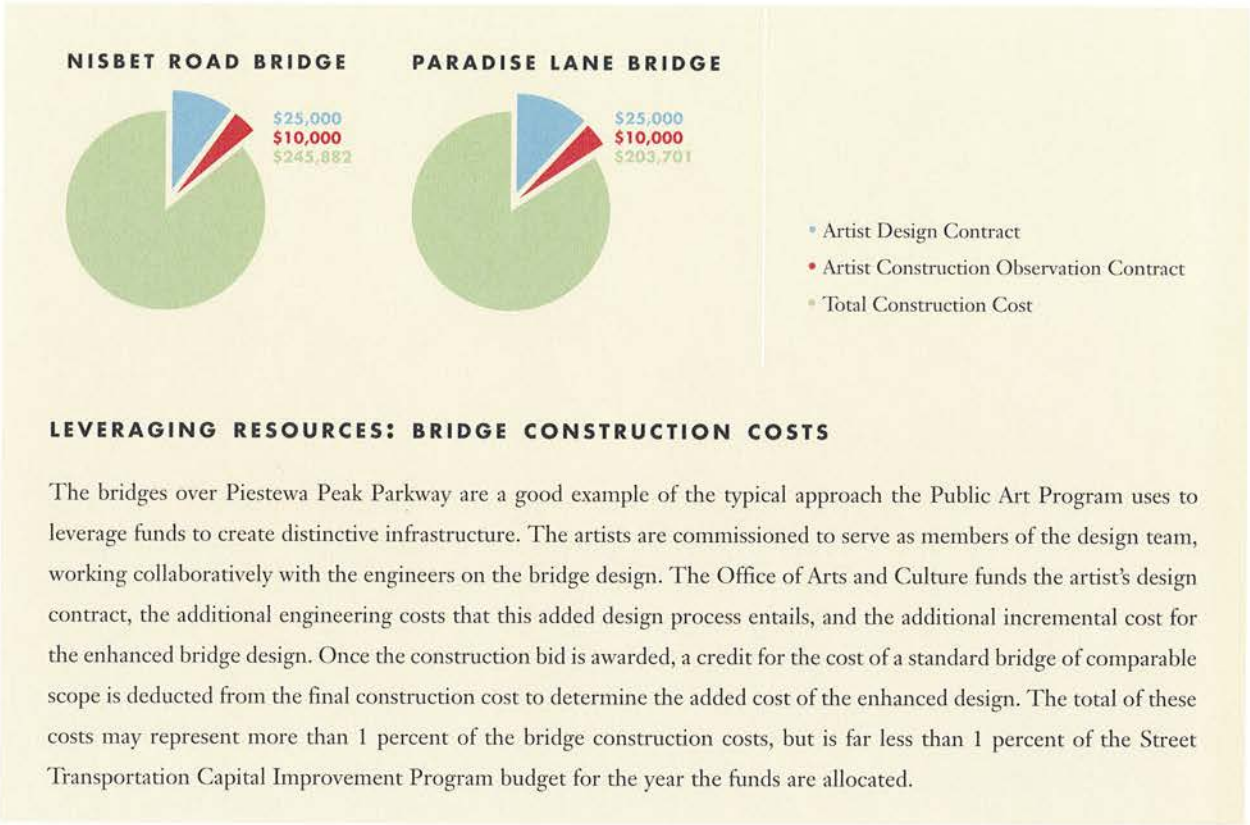
succession. The vision and stewardship of two executive directors and their respective staffs, the support of hundreds of Commission members and artist selection panelists, and the opinions and suggestions of the public have come together to carry out a significant vision of the public art master plan. The series of projects along the Piastewa Peak Parkway reflects, in many ways, the growth of the Public Art Program as much as it does the growth of the freeway infrastructure.

Robert Schultz was registrar for the State of Michigan Art in Public Places program from 1989 to 1990, and art collections manager for the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture from 1990 to 1993. Since 1998, he has been director of the Mesa Arts Center in Mesa, Arizona. He holds master's degrees in studio art and in arts management.





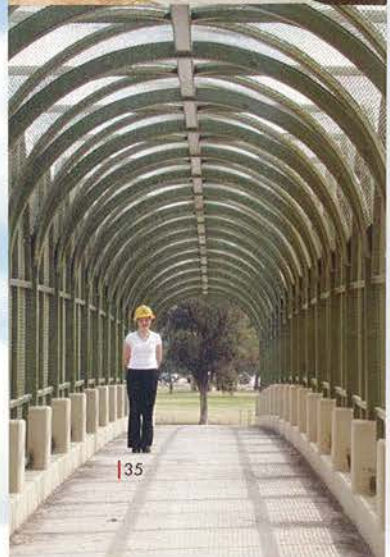
Preliminary artist's model of the Grover Avenue Pedestrian Bridge by Kim Cridler. (opposite page) The Grover Avenue Pedestrian Bridge designed by Kim Cridler reflects the evolving history of the residents that live in the surrounding neighborhoods. The artist is shown during a post-installation walk through the bridge.



LEVERAGING RESOURCES: BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION COSTS

The bridges over Piestewa Peak Parkway are a good example of the typical approach the Public Art Program uses to leverage funds to create distinctive infrastructure. The artists are commissioned to serve as members of the design team, working collaboratively with the engineers on the bridge design. The Office of Arts and Culture funds the artist's design contract, the additional engineering costs that this added design process entails, and the additional incremental cost for the enhanced bridge design. Once the construction bid is awarded, a credit for the cost of a standard bridge of comparable scope is deducted from the final construction cost to determine the added cost of the enhanced design. The total of these costs may represent more than 1 percent of the bridge construction costs, but is far less than 1 percent of the Street Transportation Capital Improvement Program budget for the year the funds are allocated.

1. The parkway was originally named after Squaw Peak, a distinctive peak in the Phoenix Mountain Parks and Recreation Area that is popular with hikers. Squaw Peak was renamed in 2003 to honor Lori Piestewa, an Arizona resident who was the first Native American woman killed in combat on foreign soil.





The vibrant red lines of the Dreamy Draw Pedestrian Bridge, designed by Vicki Savri, are a reference to the mercury ore once mined in the area. The area was named Dreamy Draw in part because of the effects of the mercury ore on the miners. (Opposite page) Preliminary rendering of the artist's proposed design, the structure under construction, and view of the project upon completion in 1992.



Photo simulations of the future METRO light rail system at Central Avenue and Osborn in mid-town Phoenix and at 3rd and Jefferson Streets in front of Bank One Ballpark in downtown Phoenix.

THE AVAILABLE LAND, THE CONNECTIONS TO CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SPORTING FACILITIES, THE PROXIMITY OF THE AIRPORT—ALL OF THIS HAS THE MAKINGS OF ONE OF THE GREATEST LIGHT RAIL STORIES IN THE COUNTRY.

Tad Savinar



Light Rail As Change Agent





BY TAD SAVINAR

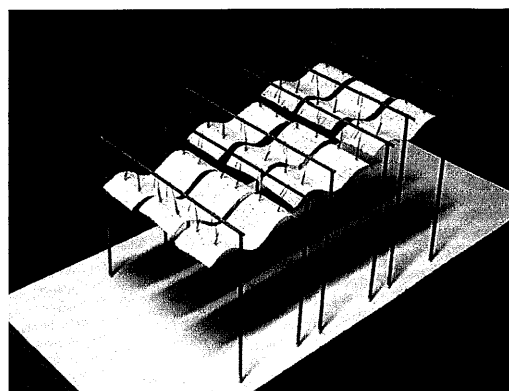
There are few undertakings as complex as building a railroad through an existing city. Imagine the sheer magnitude of a rambling piece of infrastructure whose construction affects not only politics and urban design, but also the little old lady who's lived in the same house for fifty years, a house that now must be moved. The railway touches the relics of a Native American village that must be respected and it touches the safety of school kids waiting for the train. It touches families, corporate businesses, churches, and hamburger joints.

Building a light rail system here in the Phoenix area adds another layer of challenges. Citizens are spread out, land use patterns have already been shaped by a single mode of transportation and, of course, it's hot. Possibly nowhere else in America are these factors magnified to the extent that they are here. In other cities, people move about with a host of choices: here there is one. In other cities, communities grow organically, like ivy that puts down roots as it moves along the land: here, isolated neighborhoods spring up like barrel cactuses that are each tapping a lone water source. The development of light rail offers a choice—not an answer, merely a choice. The available land, the connections to cultural, educational, and sporting facilities, the proximity of the airport—all of this has the makings of one of the greatest light rail stories in the country.

Phoenix neighborhoods facing similar growth and development challenges have often come up with differing solutions. There is the need, now more than ever, for these neighborhoods, each with its own identity, amenities, and story, to see themselves as connected to each other in the greater urban fabric. This steel and concrete trackway with its string of stations can be so much more than just a rail system. It can be the new infrastructure for a new infrastructural way of thinking. It can create the realization that this is a diverse and vital place. A place of opportunity. A place full of choices. A place that is not limited by boundaries. A place where ingenuity, culture, and nature have formed a valuable partnership.

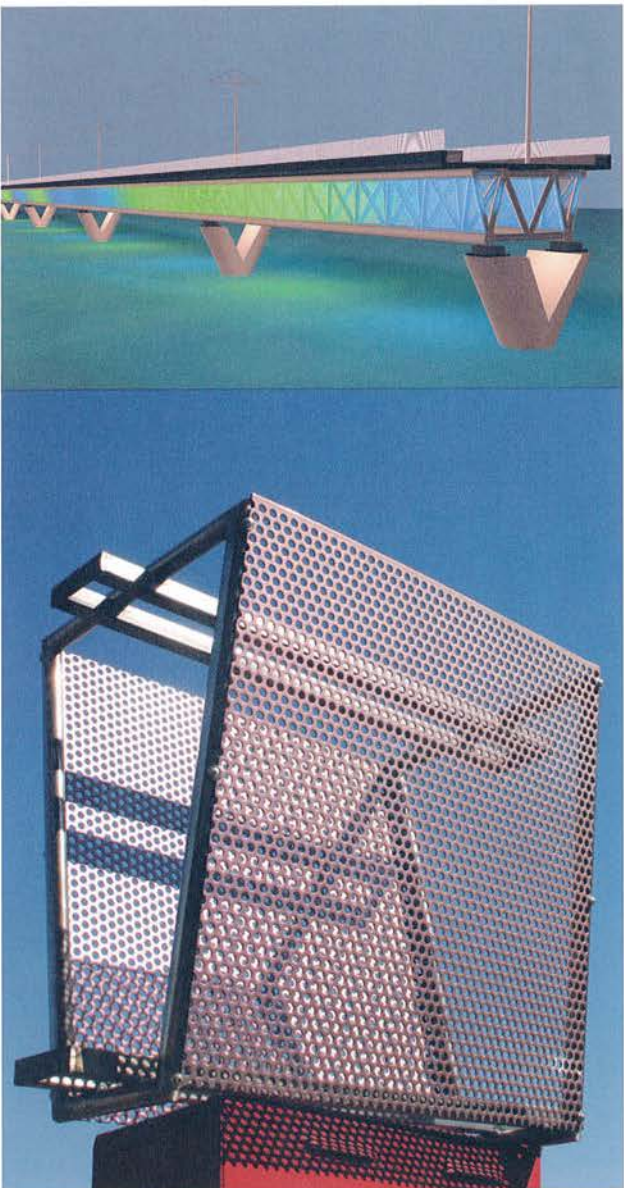
The Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail Transit Project has the potential to be the single most important tool since the air conditioner to bring change to this urban desert environment. A civic-based fixed-rail system is the furthest thing on earth from how Phoenix functions now, where the current land use and behavioral patterns all stem from the use of the automobile. While cities in other parts of the country have a variety of ways to move people about, Phoenix residents are limited to answering the questions of where is work and where is home, and then picking a freeway than can connect the dots.

As planned, the light rail system could become a physical and social symbol that connects neighborhoods to culture, recreation to government, commerce to home life, and education to civic amenities. It will bring new landscaping, new streetlights, and a shiny new civic infrastructure both to neighborhoods that are vital and to neighborhoods that are in transition. This new connection will encourage people to walk from home to station, and from station to destination. With walking, people will come face to face more



Proposal by Mona Hegabdi for shade canopy artwork in the entryway of the 44th Street and Washington Street station and a proposal for a monumental sculpture by Ilan Averbach for the Central Avenue and Camelback Road station. (opposite page) Architectural illustration of shading options.





Computer rendering of the proposed design for Town Lake Bridge with changing light patterns by Buster Simpson. Dichromatic panels designed by Robert Adams for the 19th Avenue and Monticello station. (opposite page) The light rail system brings new connections to the communities of metropolitan Phoenix.

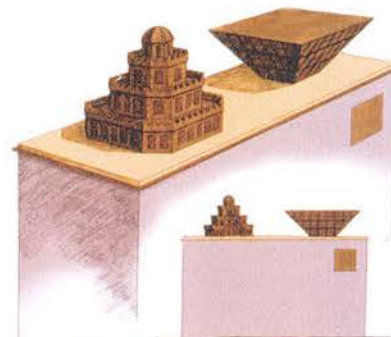
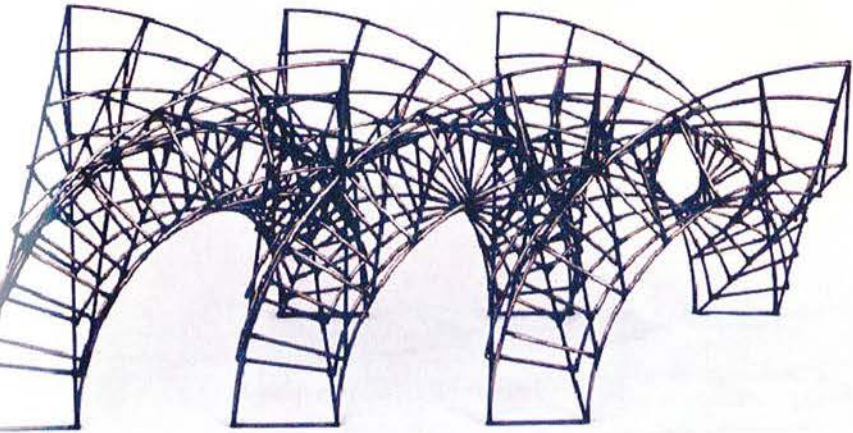
The transit environment is a unique viewing experience. It serves a captured audience of return visitors throughout the seasons, offering repeated viewings of the art, an experience more akin to living with a work of art on the walls of one's own home than a one-time visit to a gallery or museum. And, though everything around the station could change in the next hundred years, the station will most likely remain intact. For this reason the content of the art needs to remain valid during that station's centenarian lifetime.

The large scale of light rail public art will create new neighborhood landmarks. It will identify station locations, bring identity to place, and act as an open invitation to ride the rails. It will signal change and rebirth, or perhaps celebrate an existing cultural heritage. In the fine grain it will bring a level of craft, detail, and wonder to a station environment. It will promote ideas, conjure up memories, and create a respectful human-scaled environment in which to wait. To the everyday commuter, this transit art may replace the car radio by providing meaningful moments free of commercial information. It may call attention to natural landforms and place while the drivers of single-occupancy vehicles must focus on freeway signage and advertising. And finally, if undertaken wisely, the art can be the tool that opens the door to civic interaction and pride among citizens.

In most light rail systems, it is not the single-modal trip that makes the system work at its most efficient level. Rather it is the multi-modal trip, which may include walking, bus, bike, or even (gasp!) the use of a private automobile in conjunction with the rail. Clearly, the personal experience one has while riding a bicycle to a light rail park-and-ride lot is different than traveling to the same facility by car or by bus. The diversity of those experiences could be expressed differently in the particular artworks associated with those specific transit-related improvements. A more collaborative approach would study all future light rail, bus, bus rapid transit, express, paratransit, bike paths, recreational trails, canals, right-of-way improvements, pedestrian freeway overpasses, and freeway plans and could identify regional goals for public art in each of these various modes. If one acknowledges that getting from one place to another is the DNA of Phoenix, then one can see the dynamic role that public art can play in defining connections and bringing diversity to those experiences.

While most other light rail systems across the country have seen fit to focus on the art in the stations, a more entrepreneurial approach that reaches beyond the station into the spaces that link it with the neighborhood could be revolutionary both for the region and the industry. Thoughtful artists in collaboration with thoughtful architects and planners could be the spark that ignites new neighborhood development or new investment in older neighborhoods. These partnerships could begin to establish a true identity for this region, one that is part thriving metropolis, part Sonoran desert habitat.

A city can be understood through the design and condition of its transit and right-of-way improvements. It is these improvements that shape our perceptions of livability, place, safety, and the interconnectedness of neighborhoods. Who could think of a more powerful context in which artists can work to knit this city together for the twenty-first century?



Tovrea Castle • Tempe City Hall

Tad Savinar is a visual artist and writer living in Portland, Oregon. For the last dozen years he has been concentrating his public work on large-scale infrastructure design team projects and the design of national and regional memorials. Current projects include cultural planning and urban design work for the Phoenix, Seattle, and Portland light rail systems and the design of the Columbine Memorial and the Oregon Holocaust Memorial.



CONTROVERSIES OVER PUBLIC ART
REALLY UNMASK DEEPER CONCERNS THAT
MANY AMERICANS HAVE REGARDING
THEIR INFLUENCE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE.

Erika Doss



Los Angeles artist Marc Pally has suggested the use of the term "animated conversation" to describe the inherent differences of opinion that public art projects often provoke, rather than the negative connotation of "controversy" favored by a ratings-driven media. Now approaching fifteen years since its installation, Wall Cycle to Ocotillo in Phoenix has generated one of the most widespread and longest-lasting "animated conversations" around a work of public art in the United States, still serving as a point of discussion in public meetings in 2005.

Public Art and Controversy



BY ERIKA DOSS



In 1992, when motorists on State Route 51, then known as the Squaw Peak Parkway, began seeing the tops of giant pots peeking over the noise wall, public art controversy erupted in Phoenix.

Fueled by an occasionally vicious and sometimes satirical mass media, a bad economy, and, especially, still-smoldering resentment about the construction of the parkway in the first place, controversy over the “Squaw Peak Pots” raged for several years and threatened the very existence of the city’s five-year-old Public Art Program. Some lashed out at the high price tag (\$474,000) for seemingly frivolous sculptures, especially at a moment in the early 1990s when Phoenix (like the rest of the nation) was in economic recession. Some objected to the choice of non-regional, non-Arizona artists for local public art. And some complained about a seeming lack of civic participation in the public art project known as *Wall Cycle to Ocotillo*,

though artists Mags Harries and Lajos Héder and the Phoenix Arts Commission (now the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture) had actively and energetically attempted to engage residents in the public art process.

Local anger brought a response from local politicians anxious about their jobs and authority. The controversy also found national currency, ranging from coverage in *The New York Times* to a pun-filled piece in *The National Enquirer* with the headline, “City blows \$500,000 on roadside pots & pans—while people are losing their jobs . . . Now angry citizens want someone’s head on a platter.”¹

Phoenix is not alone. In recent years, more than a few works of public art have been controversial.

In 1988, for example, Cincinnati citizens protested the presence of winged bronze pigs in the *Cincinnati Gateway*, a public art project designed by artist Andrew Leicester and located near the city’s waterfront. Local politicians damned the “swine image” the sculptures could create for Cincinnati and local newspapers and radio and TV stations escalated the controversy by conducting public opinion polls on whether Cincinnati was pro or anti flying pigs.²

In 1989, *The National Enquirer* sponsored an “America’s Ugliest Tax-Funded Sculpture” contest.³ The winner was the *Concord Heritage Gateway*, a large sculpture in Concord (about 25 miles east of San Francisco), which artist Gary Rieveschl described as a “living monument to Concord’s past and a symbol for the city’s present and future prosperity.” By the time the sculpture was dedicated, however, it had been re-named “Spirit Poles” in the local press and dubbed “Porcupine Plaza” by an outraged citizenry angered by its abstract style and high cost (\$500,000). As one of the winners of *The National Enquirer* contest remarked, “I have to drive past that thing all the time and it just about makes me sick.”⁴ The controversy died down but in 2002, the sculpture was removed and a substantial financial settlement, paid out of city funds, was negotiated with the artist.

In 1992, in the Southern California beach community of Carlsbad, residents protested that a public art garden designed by artist Andrea Blum blocked their ocean views. Titled *Split Pavilion*, the piece was nicknamed “The Bars” because of its use of

Headline from the November 10, 1992 issue of *The National Enquirer* about *Wall Cycle to Ocotillo*, then already widely referred to as the “Phoenix Pots.” (opposite page) Controversial at the time of its selection and construction, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial designed by Maya Lin is now the most visited memorial in the nation’s capital.



galvanized pipe and its resemblance to cellblock architecture. Local assemblymen introduced bills to overthrow California state laws protecting public art and within a few years *Split Pavilion* was completely dismantled.⁵

In 2001, in Memphis, inclusion of the phrase “Workers of the world, unite!” in a walkway outside the city’s new public library drew the wrath of local politicians. They protested that the phrase, originally from the *Communist Manifesto* and long the axiom of international labor unions, was anti-American and unpatriotic. As one city councilman put it: “Over 100,000 Americans were killed in two wars trying to rid the world of Communism. We just don’t feel a public place is appropriate to inscribe the motto of our enemy for 70 years.” Memphis librarians and members of the Urban Arts Commission, the agency that commissioned the public art project, pointed out that the words of Karl Marx were among many inscribed on the sidewalk—including passages from *Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss and a W.C. Handy ode to the local musicians of Beale Street—and that the entire piece was about “the history of information: it’s trying to present visually what the library is all about.”⁶ Eventually, local politicians backed down and the sidewalk remains in place in Memphis.

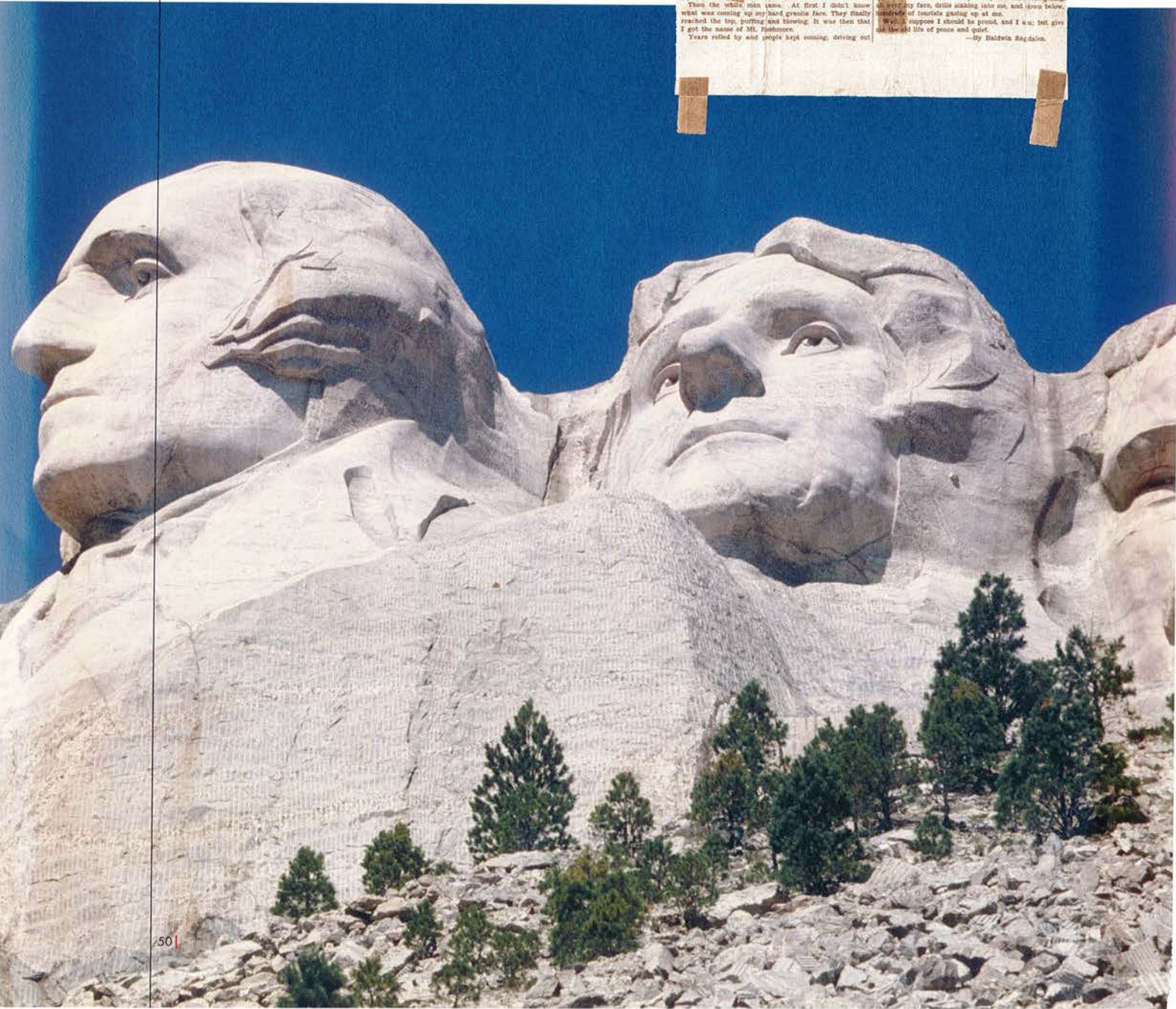
And in Milwaukee, controversy raged from 2001 to 2003 over Dennis Oppenheim’s *Blue Shirt*, a 34-foot sculpture chosen by the city’s public art commission (from among ninety-eight submissions) for installation outside a new parking garage at Milwaukee’s airport. Made of a translucent blue plastic called Lexan, shaped like the torso of a body, and filled with furniture and other domestic items, the sculpture, according to the artist, engaged issues of architectural form and space. Some in Milwaukee, however, saw *Blue Shirt* as a slur on the city’s blue-collar heritage; as one letter-to-the-editor writer complained, “The shameless characterization by eastern and local artistic elites that Milwaukee is only a ‘blue shirt’ community is without merit.” Or as another person put it: “At a time when we are making every effort to attract and be known as a high-tech city, we want to hang a two-story sign that will forever label us as a blue-collar town?”⁷ Although many Milwaukee residents wanted *Blue Shirt*—including thousands who signed petitions and took out a full-page ad of support in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*—County Executive Scott Walker brusquely terminated Oppenheim’s contract.⁸ In 2003, a compromise was reached and another public art piece by Oppenheim, a nautical-themed sculpture titled *Submerged Vehicles*, was installed at the airport instead.

Episodes like these reveal how much, and how often, public art is at the center of civic controversy. Indeed, controversy seems to be a regular, even a necessary, component in the public art process. Two especially memorable public art controversies in recent decades were over the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, designed by Maya Lin and dedicated in Washington, D.C., in 1982, and *Tilted Arc*, an abstract sculpture by Richard Serra that was installed in Manhattan’s Federal Plaza in 1981. Sometimes public art controversies end badly: *Tilted Arc*, like the *Concord Heritage Gateway* and *Split Pavilion*, was removed and destroyed.⁹ More often, they result in a heightened awareness of civic process, public spaces, and visual identity: today, the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* is the most visited memorial in the nation’s capital, and *Cincinnati Gateway* is a much-loved local monument and “must-see” destination for city visitors. Public art controversy involves issues of art style and assumptions about audience, concerns about community identity, and often, political posturing. Most of all, it centers on debates regarding democratic expression in America.

Now an American icon, Mount Rushmore was vigorously opposed at the time of its construction as a defacement of the natural environment.

**COMPLAINT TO BORGLUM BY BALDWIN SAGDALEN
CA. 1931. ONE OF NUMEROUS LETTERS
PROTESTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF GUTZON
BORGLUM'S MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE OF FOUR
U.S. PRESIDENTS ON MOUNT RUSHMORE. THE
PORTION OF MOUNT RUSHMORE DEPICTING
PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT WAS DEDICATED
IN 1939. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY CHAMPIONED THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT
DAM, A KEY FEATURE OF THE SALT RIVER VALLEY
IN ARIZONA. CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAM TOOK
PLACE FROM 1903 TO 1911.**

COMPLAINT TO BORGLUM
Well, well, here I have stood for thousands of years
right here in the same place, looking above my fellow
men.
It has been a good job, just standing here and watch-
ing history unfold itself. First came the Indians, who
lived and fought bloody wars all my time. Forest fires
has passed through the forest with smoke. Deer have
been in the forest to around me; bear, mountain
sheep and wild cats have gambled the sun, secure on
my lower ledge.
Then the white men came. At first I didn't know
what was coming up my hard granite face. They finally
reached the top, puffing and blowing. It was then that
I got the name of Mt. Rushmore.
Years rolled by and people kept coming, driving out
the Indians and the wild animals that I had come to
see and watch for.
I've seen a group of very distinguished looking
men come up on my top, their actions were very queer
to me. First they would climb a little in one place and
then in another. I later learned that the men were
making my formation for somebody named Gutzon
Borglum. This man it seemed, was going to carve my
face all up, just to make some statues of some States
men.
I have never the same any more, with these men
all over my face, drills sinking into me, and down below,
hundreds of tourists gazing up at me.
Well, I suppose I should be proud, and I was; but give
me the old life of peace and quiet.
—By Baldwin Saldalen.



It's also nothing new. Davy Crockett protested against the proposal for the first public art the United States government ever commissioned, a colossal marble statue of a bare-chested George Washington, sculpted by Horatio Greenough, that was installed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol in 1841. As Crockett put it: "I do not like the statue of Washington in the State-House. They have a Roman gown on him, and he was an American; this ain't right." Subsequently, the sculpture was relocated to the Capitol's front lawn and then transferred to various museums of the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁰ Similarly, in 1855, members of the Know-Nothings, a "semi clandestine political party that aimed to rid the country of Catholics and foreigners," sabotaged the construction of the *Washington Monument* by throwing blocks of the marble shaft into the Potomac River. They also interfered with funding for the 500-foot Doric obelisk and for "almost twenty-five years after this debacle, the monument stood as a pathetic stump in the very heart of the capital."¹¹ In the twentieth century, public art controversy raged over pieces ranging from the *Iwo Jima Memorial* (criticized in the 1950s for costing \$850,000) to the Chicago Picasso (criticized in the 1960s for looking like a giant baboon).¹² Ironically, these formerly contested sculptures and monuments are considered civic and national treasures today.

Style plays a significant role in many public art controversies. The abstract style of *Spirit Poles* in Concord and *Split Pavilion* in Carlsbad, for example, certainly heightened the hostile public reaction and the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* showed that abstract forms can evoke emotional responses. But representational works of public art can also be controversial: in 1991, Jonathan Borofsky's *Molecule Man*, a monumental sculpture installed in front of Los Angeles's Federal Center, was targeted because holes in the figures (which Borofsky said reflect the water molecules that make up 97 percent of the human body) looked to some observers like bullet holes. And in 1997, Lawrence Halprin's design of the *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial* (Washington, D.C.) was criticized by disability activists because a sculpture of Roosevelt only subtly alluded to his physical impairment of polio. In 2001, Robert Graham's statue of Roosevelt in a wheelchair was added to the memorial.¹³

In fact, controversies over public art styles, whether abstract or representational, really unmask deeper concerns that many Americans have regarding their voice, their influence, in the public sphere. Many feel marginalized by what they perceive as an unaccountable group of so-called experts, especially city managers and politicians, who claim to speak for the people yet are often detached from real-life public concerns. When people feel that public art belongs to them, they tend to respond to it with enthusiasm and support. In Portland, Oregon, for example, in October 1985, some fifty thousand citizens turned out to watch the unveiling of *Portlandia*, a giant copper sculpture designed by Raymond Kaskey and placed atop Michael Grave's Portland Building. Then-mayor Bud Clark, perhaps best known for opening his trench coat before an outdoor sculpture in the infamous "Expose Yourself to Art" poster of the 1970s, welcomed the gigantic hammered-copper sculpture with a kiss on her cheek. As author Tom Wolfe later remarked, *Portlandia* was "one of America's four or five most important public artworks," chiefly because of the public sculpture's ability to "emotionally move the people of Portland."¹⁴

Public ownership of public art can take many forms. In 1993, a Seattle street personality named Subculture Joe shackled a 700-pound ball and chain to the ankles of Jonathan Borofsky's *Hammering Man*, a 48-foot motorized metal statue that had been installed

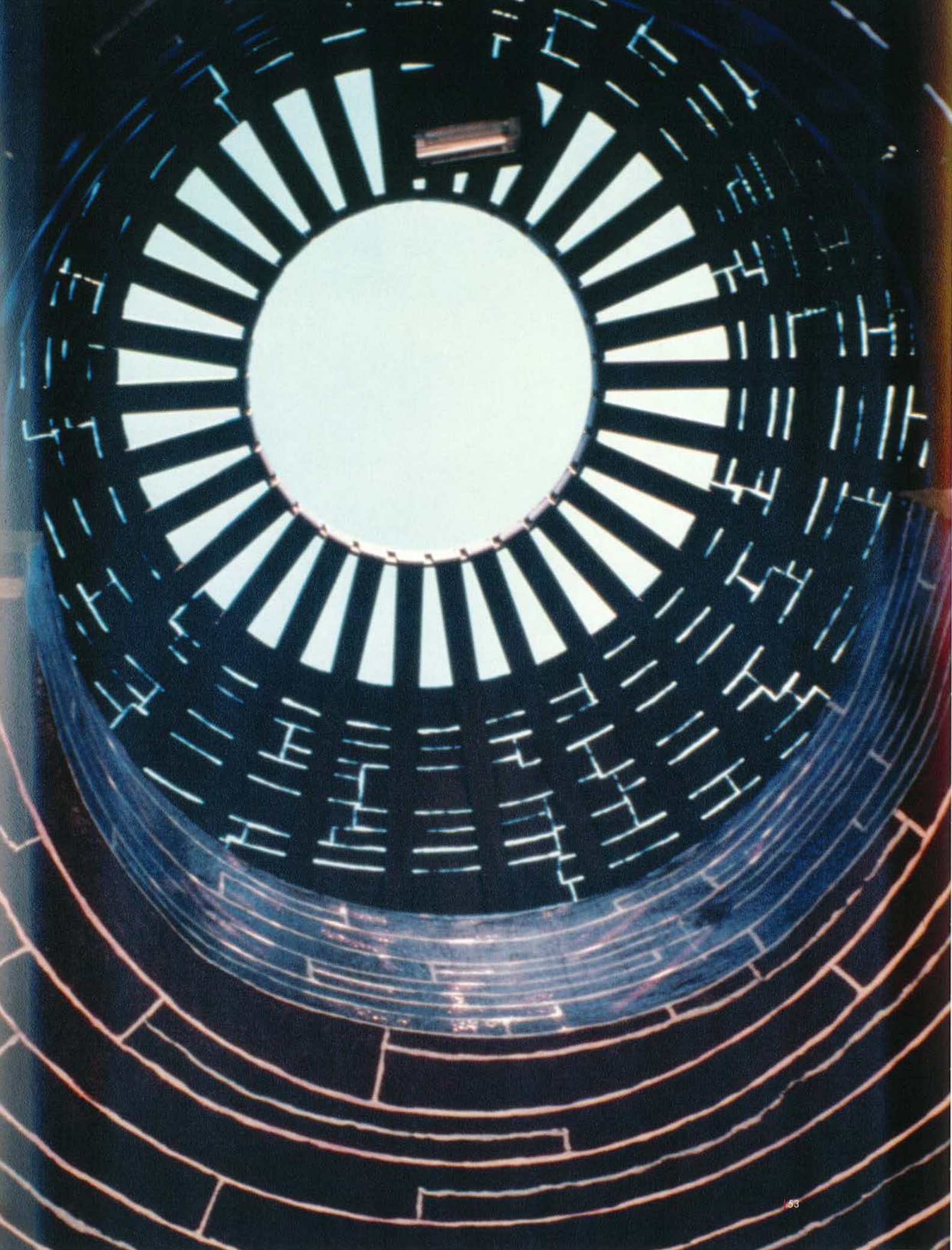


in front of the Seattle Art Museum a year earlier. For the first time, Seattle citizens began to respond enthusiastically to the sculpture, and over 70 percent of those polled said they supported the ball-and-chain addition.¹⁵ While the irons were eventually removed, Subculture Joe's act inspired conversations about the voice of the people in the development of public art.

Even if controversial, in other words, contemporary public art can serve as a symbol of civic examination, can prompt debates about public life, and can even become a catalyst for community revitalization. Sometimes controversial public art can shape and direct civic consciousness. This was the case in Phoenix, where controversy about the pots installed along State Route 51 turned into meaningful conversations about the nature of public design and public space, and the role of public participation in civic life. Controversy that had threatened the future of arts funding in the city turned into heightened civic interest in public art.¹⁶ Today, the "Squaw Peak Pots" have become, like the pigs that adorn *Cincinnati Gateway*, acknowledged symbols of neighborhood identity and civic pride. "I love bringing out-of-town guests," remarked one Phoenix resident. "They are always so pleased a freeway can be this colorful."¹⁷ Some locals include views of the pots in their annual Christmas cards; others enjoy their quiet, park-like settings. And recently, when the Arizona Department of Transportation announced plans to increase the height of the noise mitigation wall, which will displace a few of the pots perched on top, some citizens protested in favor of keeping them. The success of the pots can be further measured in another public art project that Harries and Héder produced for the city: *WaterWorks at Arizona Falls*, dedicated in 2003 and the recipient of numerous accolades including the President's Award from the Valley Forward Association, the top honor for environmental design projects in the region.

Erika Doss is an author and professor of Art History at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she teaches courses in American, modern, and contemporary art. Her book, Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs (1995) addresses controversy and public art in the United States. She served on the Boulder Arts Commission for seven years, has served on numerous public art panels, and continues to write about public art and issues of public response.

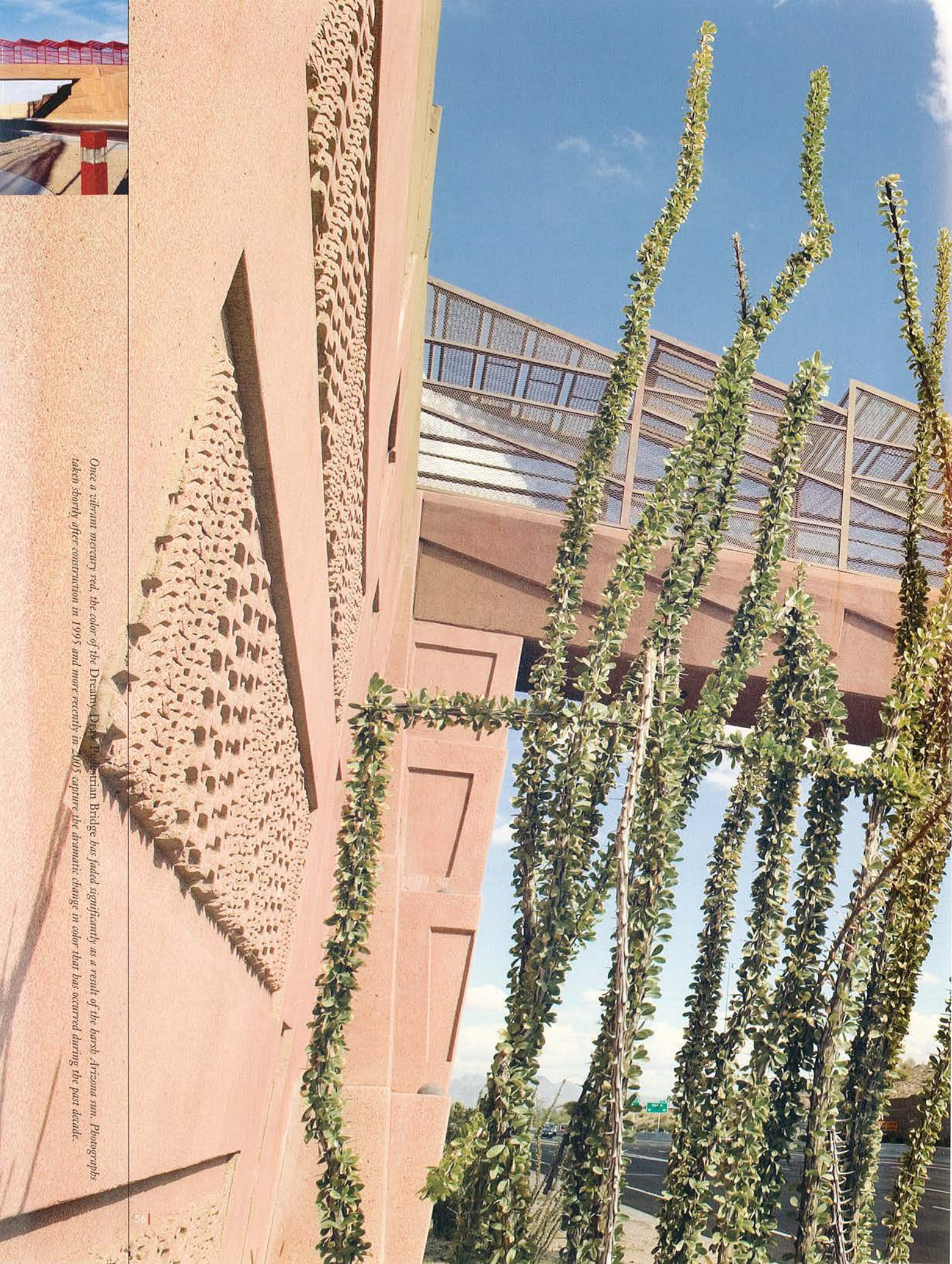
The scale of the vessels created by Mags Harries and Lajos Héder for Wall Cycle to Ocotillo is difficult to appreciate from the vantage point of the freeway because the height of the noise mitigation wall is deceptive. What appear to be diminutive pieces are actually quite large (as seen before installation on the back of a flatbed truck above) and range in size up to seating gazebos, only the tops of which were visible from the freeway. (opposite page) Interior view of the Moroccan vessel, one of several seating gazebos on the neighborhood side of the freeway noise mitigation wall.



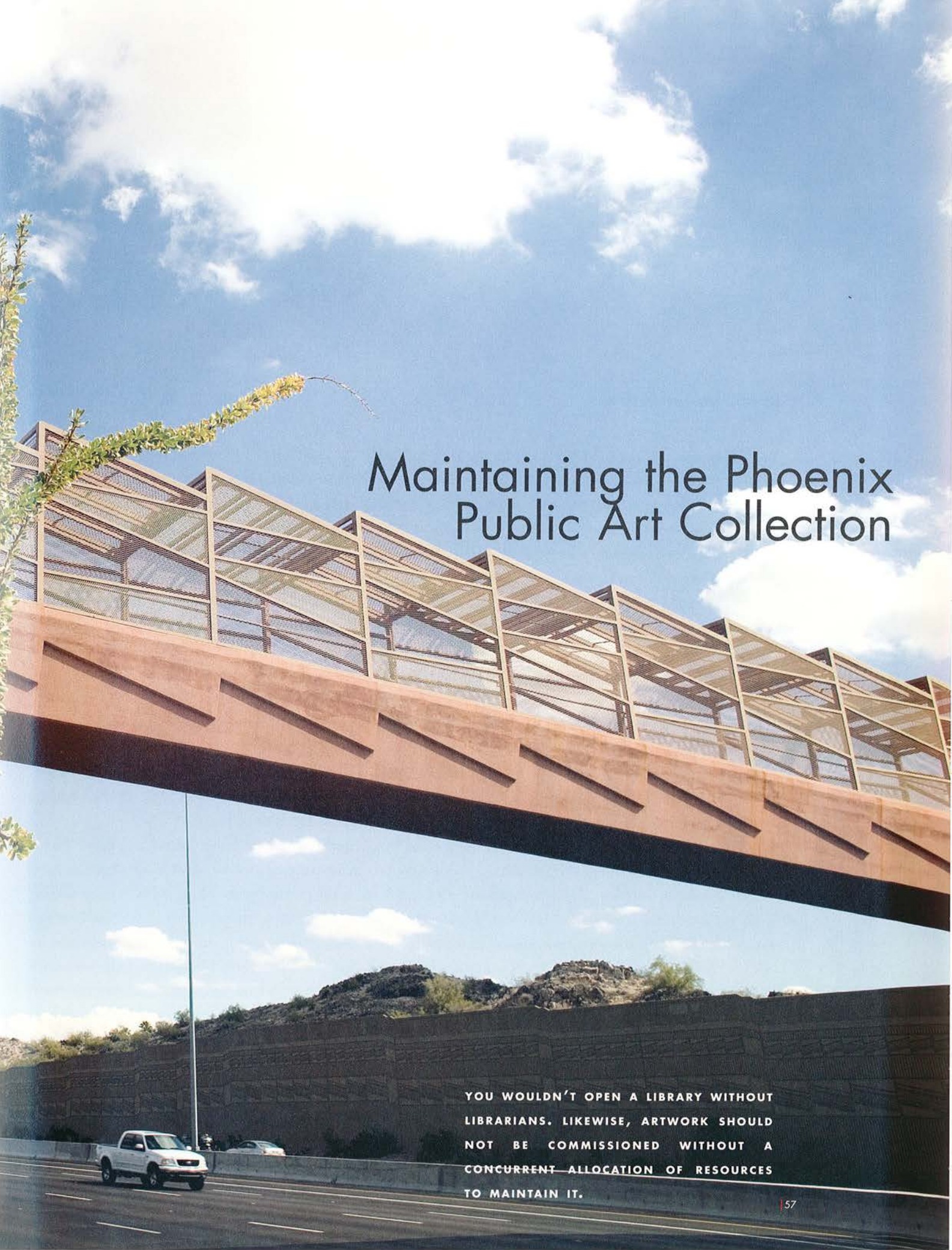


A faint line is still visible today where construction of the Washington Monument was halted by opponents and the stone for the memorial was thrown in the Potomac River. The replacement stone was not an exact match.

- 1 Herbert Muschamp, "When Art Becomes a Public Spectacle," *New York Times* (August 29, 1993): Section 2-1; "City blows \$500,000 on roadside pots & pans," *National Enquirer* (November 10, 1992): 4.
- 2 Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), pp. 197-236, 271-273.
- 3 "Is America's Ugliest Tax-Funded Sculpture the Laughingstock of YOUR Hometown?" *National Enquirer* (December 5, 1989): 29; John Blosser, "Enquirer Contest Winners Pick America's Ugliest Sculptures—and Your Taxes Pay for 'Em," *National Enquirer* (March 6, 1990): 5.
- 4 On the Concord public art controversy see Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs*, pp. 35-69.
- 5 Robert L. Pincus, "Public Problems," *The San Diego Union-Tribune* (February 20, 1994): E-1, E-6.
- 6 Adam Nossiter, "A Tantrum Over Art in Memphis," *New York Times* (December 29, 2001): A-27.
- 7 "Letters to the Editor," *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (February 3, 2001): A-23.
- 8 See the full-page advertisement, titled "An Open Letter to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors" and paid for by the Ad Hoc Committee of Citizens In Support of Public Art, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* (February 27, 2001): A-5.
- 9 Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk, eds., *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991).
- 10 Russell Lynes, *The Art Makers: An Informal History of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Dover 1970), pp. 119-21; Vivien Green Fryd, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the U.S. Capitol, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 62-89. In 2006, Greenough's *George Washington* will be installed in the courtyard of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.
- 11 Kirk Savage, "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 235.
- 12 Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 195; Harriet F. Senie, "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats: Public Art and Public Perception," in Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 239.
- 13 Sally Stein, "The President's Two Bodies: Stagings and Restagings of FDR and the New Deal Body Politic," *American Art* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 32-57.
- 14 Lois Allan, "Civic Emblem: *Portlandia* Becomes Instant Symbol for Oregon City," *Artweek* (January 11, 1990): 24; see also Tom Wolfe's essay on sculptor Frederick Hart, "The Invisible Artist," in *Hooking Up* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000), p. 137.
- 15 Eric Scigliano, "Unchain My Foot: Subculture Joe Tells His Story," *Seattle Weekly* (September 22, 1993): 15-16.
- 16 Judith Small, "Turnaround in Phoenix: Public Art Returns," *Public Art Review* 6, no.1 (Fall/Winter 1994): 5, 29.
- 17 Reed Kroloff, "Brilliant Disguise," *Landscape Architecture* 85, no. 3 (March 1995): 54-57.



Once a vibrant mercury red, the color of the Dreamy Dunes Pedestrian Bridge has faded significantly as a result of the harsh Arizona sun. Photographs taken shortly after construction in 1995 and more recently in 2005 capture the dramatic change in color that has occurred during the past decade.



Maintaining the Phoenix Public Art Collection

YOU WOULDN'T OPEN A LIBRARY WITHOUT
LIBRARIANS. LIKEWISE, ARTWORK SHOULD
NOT BE COMMISSIONED WITHOUT A
CONCURRENT ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES
TO MAINTAIN IT.

To illustrate wastewater treatment, Su-Chen Hung created seven sculptures that each reflect a stage of the treatment process for her artwork WATER Spells at the 23rd Avenue Wastewater Treatment Facility. For the first stage, the removal of large solid objects, Hung created clear cast acrylic letters with representative objects as identified by staff at the plant. Common objects found include rings and children's toys. This element of her project was commissioned with an awareness that the material would have a limited life-span in its exterior environment.

BY GLENN WHARTON

Dramatically faded, the paint on Vicky Scuri's *Dreamy Draw Pedestrian Bridge* over State Route 51 no longer grabs the attention of motorists and neighborhood residents. The intense ultraviolet rays of Arizona's desert sun have faded the once vibrant red hue to a chalky pink. If this was just another public work, a fresh coat of paint would be a simple thing to arrange. But this bridge is a work of public art and its maintenance involves a host of concerns, including an understanding of the artist's aesthetic vision and intent.

Like other successful site-specific works that link the past to the present, Scuri's design, with its hot red color that was meant to evoke the mining of mercury ore in the area, evolved from a sense of place and the collective memory associated with the nearby landscape. Knowing the artist's specifications and upholding her intent are central concerns of the staff of the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, who must research new coating technologies and hire crews to work through the night above a freeway closed to oncoming traffic.

Public art requires regular maintenance. Aggressive agents, including water, pollution, sunlight, wind, and vibration combine with human and animal interactions. Whether it is acidic residue from bird guano or wear from the continuous pelting of sand-laden winds, bridges must be repainted, bus shelters cleaned, and corrosion treated with protective chemical coatings. Like other similar agencies, the Office of Arts and Culture tries to anticipate the tendency of materials to deteriorate, a condition known as inherent vice, in its contracts and negotiations, but some element of risk is always built into the art equation. Occasionally a work fails and must be de-installed. Other projects serve as lightening rods for social interaction and attract graffiti or other forms of vandalism. All this compounds the need for preventive care, public outreach, and art maintenance.

Many artworks in the city's collection require special attention and expertise. Some artists push material boundaries. The cast acrylic letters in Su-Chen Hung's *WATER Spells* will alter in appearance as the plastic polymer is changed by the ultraviolet rays of Arizona's sun. Plastic sculptures often yellow or become brittle and cloudy as their polymer structure decomposes. Limiting exposure to sun and water can slow their rate of deterioration. Some artists experiment with new technologies. Jim Campbell and Nam June Paik created two of the collection's most challenging works, both relying on electronic media, that were formerly housed at the America West Arena in downtown Phoenix. New media rapidly become obsolete and periodically require new storage systems, new projection equipment, and even new software to run on ever-changing computer hardware. To preserve Paik's *ElectroSymbio-Phonics for Phoenix*, composed of neon and sixty television monitors in the form of three robots, the Office of Arts and Culture transferred the original video onto DVD. For Campbell's *Ruins of Light*, whose sixty-four monitors interlace live images of viewers with images from the recent past, the city will commission the artist to develop new software that can be used on current computer hardware.

The boom of public art in Phoenix is part of a phenomenon that has gathered steam across the United States since the 1970s. There are now over three hundred public art programs in the country on municipal, county, and state levels that spend millions of dollars annually on public art. Unfortunately, most of these programs did not consider maintenance in their early commissions, nor did they structure maintenance programs as they installed their first works. A number of early works corroded and self-destructed in their outdoor settings. Models for art maintenance programs evolved in the 1990s, as professional conservators and collections



managers realized the need for condition monitoring and cyclical coating procedures to prevent more expensive conservation interventions.

In 1992 the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) held a symposium titled “Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture: Whose Job Is It?” In 2001 the City of Cambridge sponsored a conference titled “Conservation and Maintenance of Contemporary Public Art.” At these meetings, conservators, collections managers, artists and other art professionals gathered to discuss practical and theoretical matters. Topics ranged from the ephemeral nature of conceptual works to the details of budgeting, staff training, and contracting maintenance procedures. Participants traded horror stories of negligence and ill-conceived maintenance strategies, including sand blasting and acid cleaning. Some of these strategies may work on ordinary concrete, stone, and metal surfaces, but they destroy subtle finishes applied by artists.

A recent survey of percent-for-art programs established between 1976 and 1988 concludes that, in most cases, formal maintenance plans did not start until the late 1990s, as the programs began realizing the high cost of deferred maintenance.² The survey found budgets of up to \$250,000 that come from an array of sources, including general funds, state heritage preservation allocations, donations, and even a fine arts insurance policy. Agencies set aside up to 20 percent of their public art funds for maintaining their collections. For instance, Florida’s Broward County targets 15 percent of its 2-percent-for-art allocation for maintenance. In 1995, Seattle conducted a citizen-led task force on maintenance of its capital assets citywide. The task force determined that the city wasn’t doing a good job, and it now allocates an annual budget of \$120,000 for art maintenance.



ElectroSymbio-Phonics for Phoenix by Nam June Paik used state-of-the-art technology at the time of its construction. The original content of the work has been preserved while new technology has been utilized to upgrade the work after construction required the removal of the work from its original location. A view of the work in its original site-specific context in the foyer of America West Arena in downtown Phoenix. (opposite page) A view of the work while on temporary loan to the Scottsdale Center for the Arts.



Phoenix is lucky. It was able to hire a full-time art collections manager in 1990, only four years after establishing its percent-for-art ordinance in 1986. Starting the maintenance program shortly after installing many new works helped curtail the structural failure found in recent condition surveys of East Coast cities with historic collections.

How is a public art maintenance program developed? The basic steps in shaping the program include developing a digital inventory of the collection, assessing the current condition of each artwork, and planning cyclical strategies of care. Typically, a contracted art conservator performs an object-by-object condition

survey and works with agency staff to prioritize routine activities and major capital projects. Budgeting requires input from the collections manager, conservators, and other contractors with specialized expertise to establish bottom-line costs for regular maintenance and special funding for individual projects, such as repainting a faded bridge.

Today in Phoenix, the collections manager carries out hands-on work and oversees a wide variety of maintenance activities. The municipal art collection continues to expand, paralleling the rapid growth of the city itself. There were 40 site-specific works of public art in 1996 and today there are over 100. Similarly, the portable works installed in offices and public spaces around the city currently number over 840 objects, including paintings, prints, photographs, and ceramics.

The collections manager operates on a shoestring budget while carefully developing relationships with host agencies where projects are located, such as the city's Parks and Recreation, Water Services, and Street Transportation departments. These departments collaborate by providing lifting devices, personnel, and expertise for maintenance activities. In part, these collaborations are built into the original commissioning contracts for the artworks. For some projects, a memorandum of agreement establishes jurisdiction and responsibility for maintenance. For instance, the Public Transit Department removes garbage and powerwashes the artist-designed transit shelters in Phoenix, whereas the Office of Arts and Culture repairs the artistic elements and typically handles graffiti removal. Planning for maintenance can get complicated and expensive.

Dreamy Draw Pedestrian Bridge presents a fairly typical case. The bridge was originally a joint project of the Office of Arts and Culture, the Street Transportation Department, and the Arizona Department of Transportation. The original commission also involved local residents and parents from a nearby school who continue their active interest. The bridge spans a freeway that passes through a mountain preserve, and access to the structure is difficult. This mandates closing the freeway while powerwashing the structure and applying the new primer and paint. The original paint itself is a polyurethane enamel color that is no longer made. The paint on the surrounding walls consists of a five-layer splatter process that developed as the artist worked directly with paint

contractors. The lights on the abutment walls are no longer manufactured. After a labor-intensive process to map the details and obtain contractor bids, the estimate to repaint the bridge came in at \$120,000, almost twice the annual budget allocation for maintaining the entire city collection.

As the city's collection ages, the number of projects in need of repair will only increase. The city's rapid growth itself instigates new art maintenance concerns. As the airport expands and as freeways widen, the expansion of these public facilities affects the integrated works of public art. Some are de-installed and others are destroyed. Expansion and interior renovation of the America West Arena necessitated the removal of the two prominent video art installations there by Jim Campbell and Nam June Paik.

The budget problem for maintenance faced by all public art programs is compounded in Phoenix. Whereas many agencies allocate a portion of their funds generated from construction projects to maintenance, such allocation is restricted in Phoenix. Capital dollars and bond funds can only be used for new construction, not for maintaining or operating existing projects. This forces the Office of Arts and Culture to lobby annually for its maintenance budget. With shoestring funding that at times gets cut, staff spends much of its time putting out fires rather than executing routine maintenance activities to mitigate against the paint loss and corrosion that lead to major structural failure. Even the portable works collection is shortchanged. The art collections manager originally rotated the collection every two years. It's now been five years since most of these artworks were moved.

Suddenly Phoenix is the fifth largest city in the country with a splendid public art collection. As it refines its art maintenance program, it clearly needs additional staffing, basic equipment, and a facility to work and house the equipment as well as for storage of large form liners and replacement parts. It needs additional funding to enhance its regular program of care and address the backlog of conservation projects that must be carried out by outside specialists. With sufficient funding, additional public outreach can reignite the lively engagement with existing art that often subsides after initial installation.

Glenn Wharton is an author and one of the nation's leading outdoor sculpture conservators. He has been active in developing collection management and conservation initiatives throughout the world.

1. Naudé, V. and G. Wharton. *Guide to the Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture* (Washington DC: American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1993).

2. Becker, J. "Public Art Maintenance Funding Survey" in Yngvason, H. (ed.) *Conservation and Maintenance of Contemporary Public Art* London: Archetype Publications, 2002): 119-121.

Shortly after installation, vandals damaged the stone floor of one of the features of the Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project. The art collections manager oversees repair and remediation of such vandalism for more than 100 completed public art projects citywide. A new iteration of Jim Campbell's interactive video installation, Ruins of Light, will be commissioned at a different location as a result of renovation at America West Arena that necessitated removal, and thus destruction, of the original integrated site-specific artwork.





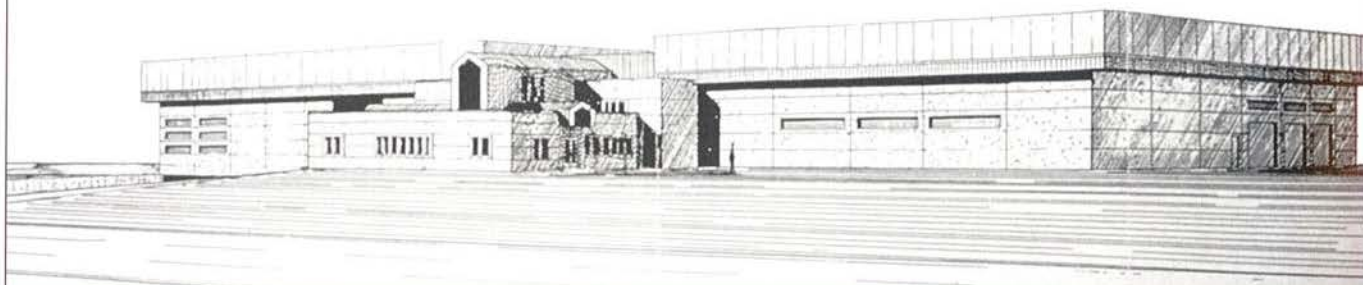
INFUSION:

IN PHOENIX NOW, WITH THE YEARS BLOWING BY, I TAKE A DRIVE SOMETIMES OUT PAST THE REGIMENTED TYPEFACE ON THE MAP AND DOWN THROUGH THE STREETS NAMED FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND PAST THE ROOFING SUPPLY AND SANDBLASTING . . . AND FINALLY I SEE THE IMPRESSIVE OPEN-STEEL TRUSS OF THE WASTE FACILITY DOWN OFF LOWER BUCKEYE ROAD, WITH GRACKLES SPARKING ACROSS THE LANDFILL AND THE PLANES IN A LONG LINE COMING OUT OF THE HAZY MOUNTAINS TO DROP INTO APPROACH PATTERNS . . . I PARK BENEATH TERRACED GARDENS THAT SEND BOUGAINVILLEA SPILLING OVER THE PASTEL WALLS.

Underworld
Don DeLillo

The Evolution of Public Art in Phoenix

THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM
INFUSES ART INTO THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT OF THE CITY OF
PHOENIX AND INTO THE LIVES
OF ITS CITIZENS AND VISITORS.



Rendering of the simple box-shaped design first proposed by the consulting engineers Black and Veatch. Two views of the exterior open steel truss and sculptural garden walls of the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility and a view of the courtyard outside of the administration offices designed by artists Michael Singer and Linnea Glatt. The construction cost estimates were the same for both designs.

BY GREG ESSER

BUILDING A LEGACY

Civic enhancements create pride and demonstrate that public spaces are important to the city and to the citizens that use them. With modest funding and an expansive vision, the Public Art Program has infused the City of Phoenix with a layer of amenities that have become a part of the lives of its citizens. As the program heads into the future, it will continue to leverage resources and plant seeds in strategic locations in order to build a network of paths and shaded recreational corridors that will be one of the lasting legacies of this generation.

REFLECTING PLACE

Not surprisingly, many of the artists commissioned to work in Phoenix develop projects that address the ecology of a growing urban metropolis in this fragile Sonoran desert setting. Public art in Phoenix reflects the unique elements of the area's environment, from the rugged desert mountain preserves, to the open canal systems that cross the grid of city streets, to the early patterns of prehistoric and early modern settlement. The projects of the Public Art Program, both planned and completed, are inextricably tied to this unique environment.

The Papago Salado Loop Trail is a planned 11.5-mile trail that will link the banks of four canals in the cities of Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe to cultural and recreational amenities such as the Desert Botanical Garden, the Phoenix Zoo, and Papago Park. The Office of Arts and Culture's *WaterWorks at Arizona Falls* on the Arizona Canal is the crown jewel along this trail. *WaterWorks* is connected to a necklace of other public art projects, including the *Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project* further north along the banks of the Arizona Canal. Completed in 2000 in partnership with SRP, the regional utility company that manages the canals, the Sunnyslope project paved the way for additional amenities along all the valley's canal banks.

Another new trail system is the Baseline Road Corridor, which links together sites in the South Mountain area of Phoenix. Artist-designed elements and landscaping create wide multi-use trails that evoke the history of the area, once rich with orchards, fruits stands, and Japanese flower gardens. South Mountain Park, the largest urban park in the United States, will be linked to the Army Corps of Engineers' Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project, which restores the Salt River's wetlands and riparian habitats. The trails will reconnect once-isolated communities in the southern part of the city to the central core.

In other projects, technology is combined with public education. The 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility, built in 1993, was a collaboration between artists and engineers on the design of a facility for waste removal and recycling. Building on the success of this venture, a new project just north across Lower Buckeye Road creates an educational tour through the city's 23rd Avenue Wastewater Treatment Facility. Together, these two projects are the foundation of an environmental education campus where the most progressive technologies developed by the City of Phoenix are explained to engineers and school students alike through public art.



This site in southwest Phoenix is a nexus where numerous public art projects converge. The planned Rio Oeste project will carry the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project and multi-use trail systems through the southern boundary of the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility, the site of the planned Center for Environmental Learning and Enterprise. The western boundary of the campus is currently under design with new streetscape enhancements and a new bridge at 35th Avenue crossing the Salt River. Through the Public Art Program, artists will develop connections to both the environmental campus and the future riverbed trails.

Upgrades in transportation and development in the city's center exemplify "working zones" where public art enhances facilities and creates new linkages. The city's Ed Pastor Transit Center at South Mountain Village, an important transportation hub, incorporates artistic elements that reflect the history of the region and the site and that tie into bus transit. Artwork will also enhance the connection between bus transit and the new light rail system. These two systems intersect in the core of downtown Phoenix, where a planned expansion of Arizona State University will take place. Shaded walks will eventually connect cultural facilities such as the Herberger Theater and Symphony Hall. Just east of the Phoenix Civic Plaza convention center, the expansion of which is currently under construction, Heritage and Science Park houses the Phoenix Museum of History, where Tom Joyce has developed a dramatic lighting centerpiece, and the Arizona Science Center, with artwork by Bill and Mary Buchen that complements Antoine Predock's design and creates a small sound garden with the notes of a pentatonic scale.

Projects also reflect the mission of host funding departments. Two new public art projects completed at Phoenix fire stations reflect the importance of community outreach and education for the city's fire department. At Fire Station #30 at Northern and 27th Avenues, Arizona artist Joe Tyler has created *Willow Gazebo*, a 30-foot-high welded steel gazebo in the form of a willow tree that provides a gathering place for fire fighters and community members. The piece includes over six thousand individually cut and welded leaves. On Phoenix's west side at Fire Station #44 Arizona artist Garry Price has created an outdoor seating area and shade canopy adorned with ceramic tiles that reflect the rugged and majestic beauty of the Arizona desert.

In addition to being site-specific and reflecting the mission and values of city government, public art also can reflect and respond to the unique character and residents of the communities in which it is located.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

One of the unique benefits of public art is that it creates opportunities for residents to become involved in the design of their shared urban space. Public participation and community engagement are hallmarks of public art. Another benefit, and challenge, of public art is that it defies easy categorization. There is no universal yardstick by which the success of a public art project can be measured. Art can express the multiplicity of backgrounds and viewpoints that comprise a community. It can help us recognize perceptions and interpretations different from our own and can enhance our ability to acknowledge and appreciate those differences.

Public art is accessible to the broadest and most demographically diverse audience of perhaps any artform. Individuals that enter a museum or gallery are prepared for the specialized language of contemporary art and can engage the artwork with some understanding of its place in history. Public art, on the other hand, is on view in settings where it is seen by individuals of diverse backgrounds. Viewers may range from sophisticated proponents of non-representational contemporary sculpture to staunch opponents of any form of taxation and government. The desire of every taxpayer to exert his or her expertise in terms of aesthetics must be balanced with the need to develop a collection that serves the public.

The Office of Arts and Culture strives for meaningful community engagement without resorting to formulaic approaches. Each project is defined by unique parameters including location, budget, and type. The Office of Arts and Culture analyzes the scope of each project and develops approaches to lace community input and review through the project's various stages, from conceptualization to completion and dedication and on to maintenance.

Artists, accustomed to thinking outside the box, often devise interesting techniques to engage community members. Some artists prefer to develop concepts without any outside influence while others rely completely on input from the community to develop their work. Each approach has an appropriate context. Several recent projects provide models for the engagement of communities.

One of the most compelling early successes of the Public Art Program was the Thomas Road Overpass at State Route 51, completed in 1990. Artist Marilyn Zwak drew people together with her hands-on approach to working with community members.

Artist Robin Brailsford served as a member of the design team for the Ed Pastor Transit Center at South Mountain Village. Her designs for the facility evoke the ecology and history of the site. Brailsford based the design of the metal screen covering the stone catchment basin on a Hohokam bowl found at the Snake Canyon excavation at nearby Gila Pueblo in 1934-35. A construction worker installing the meandering lithoerite barkscape designed by Brailsford with blue and green glass that alludes to the importance of the adjacent Salt River. (opposite page) View of the dramatic shade canopy that extends across the transit station waiting area. The structure captures and funnels rainwater into a hand-carved stone catchment basin.





Bronze plaques placed on the inside of the Grovers Avenue Pedestrian Bridge capture the memories of the residents that have lived through the rapid change of the neighborhood where the bridge is now located, an area which had been natural desert and then rural and agricultural earlier in their lives.

District 3 Councilwoman Peggy Bixten cutting the ribbon with students at the dedication of the Grasshopper Bridge.

(opposite page) Artist Ed Carpenter with his daughter during construction of the Grasshopper Bridge in Moon Valley. Carpenter developed computer renderings of his designs and asked the community to select their favorite to construct. Students drew their own insects that were then sandblasted onto the deck of the bridge.

OUR STREET BACKED UP INTO THE DESERT PRESERVE, THUS BECOMING A COLLECTIVE BACKYARD. EACH DAY AT SUNSET, YELLOW WASHED OVER THE DESERT. IT WAS IN THIS GOLDEN MOMENT THAT EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD WAS RIGHT AND THE DESERT WAS A GIGANTIC PLAYGROUND.

REBECCA BLUME

MAKE SURE WE CAN DANCE ON THE BRIDGE. WE LOVE TO DANCE. WE HAVE DANCED OVER 60 YEARS ALREADY.

FRED VANBEEK

THE MAGIC OF ARIZONA BRINGS HEALING HEAT, COMFORTABLE WINTERS, A CASUAL LIFESTYLE WITH MOUNTAINS, VALLEYS, SUMMIT SUNSETS, PALM TREES, DESERT CACTUS AND CREATURES. THE EXPERIENCE HAS ADDED 26 YEARS TO MY LIFE. BLESSINGS TO ALL.

HELEN WILCOX

The artist, known primarily for her adobe sculpture, worked onsite for over five hundred hours. Area residents honked in support as they drove by. She invited residents, construction workers, city officials, and other stakeholders to each make an individual mark or contribution to the applied adobe surfaces. One resident walked to the project site on a cane that was then embedded in the wall. Other objects included keys to homes that were torn down to make way for the parkway, handprints of the children of the contractors working on the project and a drawing of Bart Simpson. The project was finished ahead of schedule and under budget.

A decade later, and several miles north on State Route 51 at Grovers Avenue, Kim Cridler, in partnership with the Office of Arts and Culture, conducted a series of community workshops in which she solicited short written memories, impressions, and perceptions of the community from residents where her bridge was being built, an area undergoing rapid change from rural and agricultural to sprawling suburbs. Cridler then collected all of the text into a publication and asked residents to choose their favorite selections. A series of quotes were cast in bronze plaques and installed on the interior of the bridge, serving as both a time capsule and narrative walking history of the community.

In a project completed in 1997, California artist Will Nettleship took a new approach to soliciting community input at the site for a new box culvert and linear park at the Old Cross Cut Canal. The artist conducted several workshops in the community in which he created a sandbox in the scale and proportion of the planned park. Residents were able to design and sculpt potential park features in the wet sand. The workshops helped the artist to learn that the space was heavily used by residents for walking and that the most important element of the area was the view north to Camelback Mountain. These both emerged as primary themes for the integrated artwork later developed by the artist for the park. As a continuing connection with the community, Nettleship was the only member of the design team that stayed with the project for the entire ten-year time frame from design through completion of construction.

Oregon artist Ed Carpenter, known primarily for large architectural glass installations, developed designs for a pedestrian bridge over a wash that served a middle school in Moon Valley. Carpenter generated computer renderings of four designs based on elements of the Sonoran Desert including a grasshopper, a cactus, a cicada and a fish. The designs were presented at a community meeting where residents were asked to vote for their favorite design. While the bridge was being fabricated, Carpenter conducted several workshops with the students that would use the bridge. The students made drawings of insects that were then sandblasted onto the deck of the *Grasshopper Bridge*.

In another recent award-winning project, Phoenix artist Al Price worked with fifth-grade students at an Ahwatukee elementary school to design the *Kyrene Monte Vista Pedestrian Bridge*. He conducted several workshops where students were able to design and





The Kyrene Mome Vista Pedestrian Bridge is based on a double-helix design that creates a dynamic environment to pass through and to view while driving below along Thunderhill Road.

Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Executive Director Phil Jones and District 6 City Councilman Greg Stanton with students and neighborhood residents at the dedication ceremony for the bridge.

(opposite page) Wearing a white Greek suit, Phoenix artist Al Price becomes part of the projection as he talks to fifth-grade students about texture during a workshop. The workshops were an integral part of the artist's design development for the bridge that primarily serves the students.

build bridge models. All of the designs were presented at an open house at the school along with a slide show of previous work by the artist. The work of the students helped to inform the artist's own approach to designing the bridge.

Other artists have successfully used participatory workshops as a means to build understanding and awareness of the artistic process, create ownership and community support, and solicit inspiration and content for projects. Laurie Lundquist conducted a bridge-making workshop with students for her *Mountain Pass Pedestrian Bridge*. Lundquist also worked with residents on a streetscape project located at 48th Street, part of the Papago Salado Loop Trail. George Peters created kites and hats with students as part of his project to create a mobile for the Desert Sage Branch Library.



Projects such as *WaterWorks at Arizona Falls* and the Baseline Road Corridor were guided by community steering committees established at the outset of the projects to develop an understanding of community priorities. These groups work with the city and the artists through the design and construction of the projects, serving as a resource for the city, the artists, and for their neighbors and the greater community.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS

The original vision for public art in Phoenix recognized that the success of the program depended in part on the existence of a vibrant local arts community. Over the years, the Office of Arts and Culture has provided professional development opportunities for artists throughout Arizona. Artists entirely new to the field of public art when the program was first established in 1986 are now competing successfully for public art commissions around the country.

Public policy professor and author of *The Rise of the Creative Class* Richard Florida has demonstrated the connection between creative communities and economic vitality. As a productive industry, artists are among the most resilient elements of our economy, often working second and third jobs to support their creative work which may not reach full maturation until later in life. Artists also provide residual economic benefits to the local economy through taxes, fees to foundries and fabricators, insurance companies, and the other professional services they require.

Several initiatives that the Office of Arts and Culture has undertaken to provide professional development opportunities for Arizona artists include workshops with speakers such as art critic Lucy Lippard and public artist Judith Baca, studio visits, one-on-one meetings with artists, open houses, a mentorship program, an artist-in-residence program and temporary public art projects.

The mentorship program is a flexible opportunity that allows artists new to public art to learn through first-hand experience many of the technical and business aspects of public art as a profession. While there are now a small number of educational



institutions addressing the professional requirements of public art management, most artists are not prepared in their professional artistic training for the unique requirements of working as contractors with commissioning agencies, particularly those in the public sector where there is little flexibility in such areas as scheduling, accounting and taxation, bonding, and insurance. The mentorship program helps to close a gap between the professional training needed and that currently available to most artists.

Applications are accepted on an on-going basis from artists interested in participating in the mentorship program. Artists commissioned for major projects are given the option of hiring an emerging artist to work directly with them on aspects of their project. Funding is set aside in project budgets to pay both artists for their time.

An artist-in-residence program has allowed an artist to work with the city's Planning and Street Transportation departments and the regional transportation authority Valley Metro to enhance the connections between the new planned light rail system and surrounding neighborhoods and amenities. Implementation of the resulting plan will allow for a new program of commissions for artists to enhance the transit corridor.

Temporary public art projects represent a significant opportunity for artists to create work in the public realm, often for the first time in their professional career. They provide a transition from smaller-scale studio work to larger public installations. After completing temporary projects, many artists go on to compete for larger permanent commissions while others reaffirm a preference for a studio-based practice. In March 2000, six artists were commissioned to create new temporary projects using recycled materials at the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility in order to celebrate the mission of the proposed Center for Environmental Learning and Enterprise. In order to foster partnerships within the growing downtown Phoenix arts community, the most recently completed temporary projects were unveiled in a variety of downtown sites during Art Detour 2004, the annual self-guided tour of artists' studios and art spaces organized by Artlink, Inc.

A number of new projects have been created specifically to create opportunities for artists whose studio work is primarily two-dimensional. A significant percentage of artists in Arizona are painters, printmakers, photographers, and other artists whose work is not necessarily well-suited to outdoor integrated site-specific commissions.

Along 7th Avenue in central Phoenix, a comprehensive streetscape enhancement project, designed by a studio in the Arizona State University School of Architecture and Environmental Planning, was funded in part through federal intermodal surface transportation funds. As part of this project, a series of 5-foot by 8-foot backlit signage panels were developed to provide shade during the daytime and pedestrian lighting at night. The artistic content of the panels is rotated as new artists are selected to create work every year. The Office of Arts and Culture purchases reproduction rights for the period of display and the artists retain the original artwork. The Office also funds the fabrication and installation of the artwork panels. The result is an urban outdoor gallery visible to both pedestrians in the neighborhood and the significant vehicular traffic along 7th Avenue.

Each of these initiatives both foster the growing community of artists in Arizona and provide unique artistic experiences for residents and visitors. The Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program, often better known around the country than

Temporary projects are a vital part of the Public Art Program. Temporary mural by the late Keith Haring created with Phoenix students. Temporary biodegradable organic sculptures by Allison Young. (opposite page) Clickcase from upper right; Two wires of Citizen Eyes, a video projection by Lewis Alquist of citizens' eyes watching City Hall. Red Vinyl Lama by Richard Hermann at the Barton Barr Central Library with inset images of Hermann's small-scale studio work, and Coyotes, Theodore Trossel's temporary sculpture made from recycled bicycle parts at the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility.



The backlit panels incorporated into the streetscape enhancements along 7th Avenue between Indian School Road and Camelback Road provide a venue and opportunity for artists that work primarily in two-dimensional media. Erin Soak is a performance artist that documents her work through color photography.



within Phoenix, is continuing to establish new standards in the field of public art. The art collection that has been built up through the Public Art Program is a remarkable resource that is available to the public free of charge. The future direction of the program includes specific measures to address public education, outreach, and marketing.

The goals of this update to the public art master plan include building on the past strengths of the program, continuing to enhance the built environment of the City of Phoenix, and furthering the Office of Arts and Culture as a national leader in the field of public art. The Public Art Program is continuously evolving and undertaking new and unprecedented challenges in order to create a lasting legacy of a culturally rich urban experience.

Greg Esser served as the Director of the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program from 1996 to 2005. He was Director of the Public Art Program for the Denver Mayor's Office of Art, Culture and Film from 1991 to 1996. He is also an artist and arts advocate active both locally and nationally.

Next Steps: Updating the Framework and Deepening the Public Art Program

BY JESSICA CUSICK AND WILLIAM MORRISH

PUBLIC ART IN PHOENIX

Phoenix was among the first cities to have its public art tied not just to individual buildings but to larger projects that support the varied functions of the city. The success of early projects such as the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility and the pedestrian bridges along the freeways established the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program as a national model, one that other cities were eager to emulate.

THE 1988 PLAN

The 1988 publication of William Morrish, Catherine Brown, and Grover Mouton's *Public Art Plan for Phoenix: Ideas and Visions* set an important precedent in the field of public art. It was the first plan to take an arts perspective in looking at the systems that shape a city, systems such as transportation, water, and housing. It was also the first plan to link a public art program directly to a city's physical infrastructure projects. The plan leveraged the city's major public works initiatives to create a unique cultural infrastructure for a burgeoning city.

Phoenix has grown and evolved considerably since the Public Art Program was first established. High standards have been set for the design and construction of the public realm. The vision embodied in the original plan has been realized to such an extent that city residents now consider it standard for artists to play a meaningful role in the city's construction projects.

THE 2006 UPDATE

The goals and objectives set forth in the original public art plan have been accomplished and in the intervening years Phoenix has been transformed, but the broad vision established by the plan remains valid and applicable today. The program continues to advocate for high quality design, for a systematic and integrated approach to public art, and for the inclusion of artists in all aspects of the life of the community.

Since 1988, the skyline of Phoenix has been enhanced by a rich array of new civic and cultural institutions. With a sustainable cultural infrastructure in place, the Public Art Program has opportunities to deepen and expand its parameters. The program is in a position to focus on developing the cultural landscape to complement and enhance the cultural infrastructure it helped establish, thus providing a rich layer that is critical to a mature city and a sustainable environment.



The possibility of combining public art and the formal elements of the city's urban design with public infrastructure into a unified urban spatial system offers a unique opportunity to create civic monuments which create the Phoenix urban landscape. It allows one to translate large-scale utilitarian systems into the context of civic art. It is possible to render the city's large functional elements into grand symbolic landmarks.

From the 1988 plan

THE FRAMEWORK:

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES, SPATIAL SYSTEMS, AND WORKING ZONES

The framework established in the 1988 plan, which outlined goals and objectives and offered a unique way of thinking about the city through spatial systems, has proven to be an effective tool for prioritizing the investment of public art resources in Phoenix. Now, as Phoenix continues to grow at a dramatic rate, resulting in changing land use patterns and shifts in new infrastructure investments, the city faces a new array of challenges and opportunities that suggest the need for an update of the framework.

The original 1988 framework consisted of three elements: organizing principles, spatial systems, and working zones. Each of these elements has been analyzed and then enhanced or modified from its 1988 version to address current opportunities and issues and to offer a guide to the future direction of the program.

I. ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The organizing principles represent the broadest level of thinking about the Public Art Program.

1988 ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The 1988 plan was based on a series of sites linked to the spatial and public infrastructure systems of Phoenix. The four organizing principles of the plan were intended to let individual works of art and the public art system work as a whole to help visitors and residents better understand both the city and the region.

- 1988 ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES**
- Sense of Place
 - Unity and Diversity
 - Growth and Foundation
 - Public Celebration and Civic Art

2006 ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The 2006 organizing principles reflect suggested areas of emphasis for the Public Art Program over the next ten years. They represent the Public Art Program's broadest goals.

- 2006 ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES**
- Creative Partnerships
 - Sustainability
 - Clusters
 - Care

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS By forging creative partnerships with client departments, the private sector, and communities, the Public Art Program will be able to accomplish its objectives more effectively.

- Work with affected city departments to institute a public art planning process that is more fully integrated into the overall Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning process.
- Expand the Public Art Program's current project development process to include a joint quarterly meeting with representatives from all client departments.
- Explore restructuring staff responsibilities. One option is to assign project managers to a single department or group of departments, depending on the number of projects. Currently certain project managers are responsible for specific departments, such as aviation, and this has proven particularly effective at building working relationships and expertise. Another option is to assign project managers to "big works" and/or specific working zones.
- Work with the city's planning department to develop incentives for private developers to incorporate public art in their projects.

The Phoenix Public Art Program pioneered an approach to public art that makes ecological issues, such as recycling and water treatment, visible to the public in innovative city facilities such as the 27th Avenue Solid Waste Management Facility and the 23rd Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant. Together, these two facilities provide a world-class environmental educational center that serves as the foundation for the planned Center for Environmental Learning and Enterprise.

SUSTAINABILITY By making sustainability an organizing principle, the program will continue to develop unique projects that reflect the ecological concerns of the city and its residents.

CLUSTERS By concentrating projects by type or by location, the Public Art Program will be able to leverage its resources and have a more significant impact on a city with the dramatic horizontal scale of Phoenix.

- Allocate substantially larger budgets to projects that are part of a cluster or big work. Staff will need to continue to balance these major initiatives with smaller community-oriented projects.
- Develop an annual artist-in-residence program. This will provide an opportunity to build closer ties with various departments, identify projects and issues that impact multiple client departments, and bring creativity to many of the city's standard details.
- Using the success of Central Avenue as a model, explore the development of a public art requirement for private development in certain areas of the city or in conjunction with specific types of development. This will enable a greater concentration of projects to have a heightened impact on a priority area. The blocks surrounding the light rail stations might be one such priority.

CARE By developing new ways to care for the city's considerable investment in public art, the Public Art Program can ensure that the remarkable collection continues to delight visitors and residents and to serve as a lasting legacy for future generations.

II. SPATIAL SYSTEMS

The spatial systems provide a unique way of looking at the city as a whole through its geography and its connecting built elements. They serve as a series of lenses, allowing the planner or decision-maker to focus on one of the many complex systems that define and connect the land and the people that live, work, and play here. The spatial systems are the threads that stitch the urban fabric together. Public art that is linked to these threads can help produce a vital network of civic places that contribute to a beautiful and sustainable city.

1988 SPATIAL SYSTEMS

In the 1980s, Phoenix was entering a period of unprecedented residential growth, maturing from its agricultural and resort heritage to that of a metropolitan employment and service center. The city's energies centered on building and upgrading public and civic infrastructure to service existing residential needs and to accommodate diversified new industries from other parts of the nation.

The 1988 plan reflected this emphasis on infrastructure and identified five primary spatial systems that described the basic features of the city. The systems were defined by overlaying traditional urban design planning terms with the pattern of the primary public infrastructure systems.

The goal was to locate public art in the primary peopled areas in the city—places where it would hold both meaning and position in the viewers' mental map of the city. A secondary goal was to describe to the various funding city departments how public art could enhance their visibility and illustrate their mission and goals concerning the development of the city.

1988 SPATIAL SYSTEMS

- Water System
- Park & Open Space System
- Vehicular System
- Landmark System
- Pedestrian System

2006 SPATIAL SYSTEMS

- Sustainable Urban Ecology
- Natural Habitat & Cultural Landscapes
- Field of Movement
- Landmarks & Destinations
- Live/Work Communities

2006 SPATIAL SYSTEMS

Phoenix, like many other American cities, is seeking to meet the demands of a sprawling, diversified, and maturing metropolitan region in 2006. The city is upgrading existing systems while continuing to lay down new infrastructure to accommodate growth

and change. Infrastructure remains a critical issue, but from a different perspective—from the view of the urban village model. As described in the revised Phoenix General Plan: “urban villages will only be accomplished by adherence to the basic principles underlying the model: 1) balancing housing and jobs, 2) concentrating intensity in the village cores, and 3) promoting the uniqueness of each village.” These themes were implicit in the 1988 plan. In 2006, livable urban communities, sustainability and quality of life have become explicit public goals. The five spatial systems of 1988 have been expanded and updated to reflect the deepening of the Public Art Program’s impact on Phoenix as well as the tremendous growth of new facilities and resources that were non-existent in 1988. There is a greater degree of overlap and fluidity between the new spatial systems.

The new drawings (pages 82, 84, and 88) illustrate the evolution of the five original spatial systems to reflect the changing urban ingredients and conditions.

III. WORKING ZONES

The working zones serve as a broad and somewhat open-ended list of objectives for the Public Art Program. They were originally designed to clarify the areas (places or systems) where the Public Art Program could have the most positive impact. The working zones are the most detailed level of thinking about the Public Art Program and begin to provide specific recommendations for projects or areas of focus and concentration and suggest categories of specific capital projects.

1988 WORKING ZONES

The 1988 plan identified two types of working zones. The first referred to a specific geographical area of Phoenix. The second referred to a large network or system spread throughout the city. Since 1988, the Public Art Program has worked on projects associated with these fourteen zones in order to enrich the whole community.

2006 WORKING ZONES

The revised working zones emphasize issues and method rather than place. A new production category has replaced the geographic type of zone. This new set of open-ended objectives addresses the structure and working methods of the Public Art Program.

The four categories in the production working zone – big works, community engagement, artist education and development, and preservation – were formulated to provide a way for the program to tackle the key issues that were identified during the update process. The detailed recommendations that follow outline projects and/or programs that further address specific concerns.

1988 WORKING ZONES

- Geographic
 - Downtown Pedestrian Core
 - Central Avenue from South Mountain Park to the Arizona Canal
 - Papago Park/ Pueblo Grande
 - Baseline Scenic Parkway
 - Squaw Peak Park
 - Cave Creek Park
 - Maryvale Village
- Development
 - Village Cores
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Mountain Parks
 - Canals
 - Roads, Freeways, Transit
 - Special Projects
 - Building-Related Projects

2006 WORKING ZONES

- Production
 - Big Works
 - Community Engagement
 - Artist Education and Development
 - Preservation
- Development
 - Village Cores
 - Shade Corridors
 - Neighborhood Building (Housing)
 - Movement Network (Vehicular, Pedestrian and Transit)
 - Mountains, Parks and Preserves
 - Water, Wastewater and Solid Waste Facilities

Detailed on pages 85-89

THE 2006 PRODUCTION WORKING ZONE: DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations were developed with the input of city staff, artists, and design professionals during the planning process facilitated by Jessica Cusick and William Morrish.

BIG WORKS

Big works are designed to:

- 1) Make infrastructure systems into networks of public art spaces at the scale of the city.
- 2) Focus the Public Art Program's many efforts, talents and activities for a multi-year period into concentrated initiatives.
- 3) Aggregate the creative potential and practices of diverse governmental agencies and local institutions through creative partnerships.

The approach of the Public Art Program is evolving from the implementation of a series of distinct projects to a broader regional approach tied to specific geographic areas in the city. Examples of this new approach include the Papago Loop Trail, Laveen, Baseline Road Corridor, light rail connections, and downtown pedestrian corridors.

RECOMMENDED BIG WORKS

WATER, CORRIDORS AND HABITAT This production working zone combines the critical urban desert ingredient of water with the shade corridors of the development working zones and with human and natural habitats to emphasize ecology, sustainability, and habitat preservation. Through a series of successful projects, the Public Art Program has demonstrated how the water and canal systems and their adjacent human and natural habitats can be transformed into an ecological network that connects neighborhoods and comes to signify the City of Phoenix. When fully developed, this network, a turquoise necklace ringing the city, has the potential to transform the Valley of the Sun into an urban oasis of trails. This could be the city's big idea and cultural landmark, the marvel that tourists come to visit and that defines neighborhood communities in Phoenix.

FIELD OF MOVEMENT This production working zone combines two concepts of the development working zone, vehicular and pedestrian systems, into a more comprehensive model. The words "field of movement" are used in transportation to signify the shift in planning towards a multi-system approach that supports a broad range of movement patterns. Here the term is used to signify the new comprehensive light rail system that intersects with an enhanced bus system and is connected to pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development.

The tendency in planning large-scale transit projects and big mixed-use projects is to focus on the internal organization of the project. The critical connections between these new insertions and adjacent neighborhoods are neglected. Often, local consumers are cut off from the new neighborhood assets. In many cases they are separated from these new services by barriers such as bus idling zones, park-and-ride lots, and maintenance areas. The Public Art Program can take the lead in making all the small but critical connections between neighborhoods and these new services safe, beautiful, and user-friendly. Whether they are pedestrian bridges, elegant sidewalks, way-finding systems or landmark gateways, these public art links can create the necessary pedestrian connections that will help make the transit system more effective.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

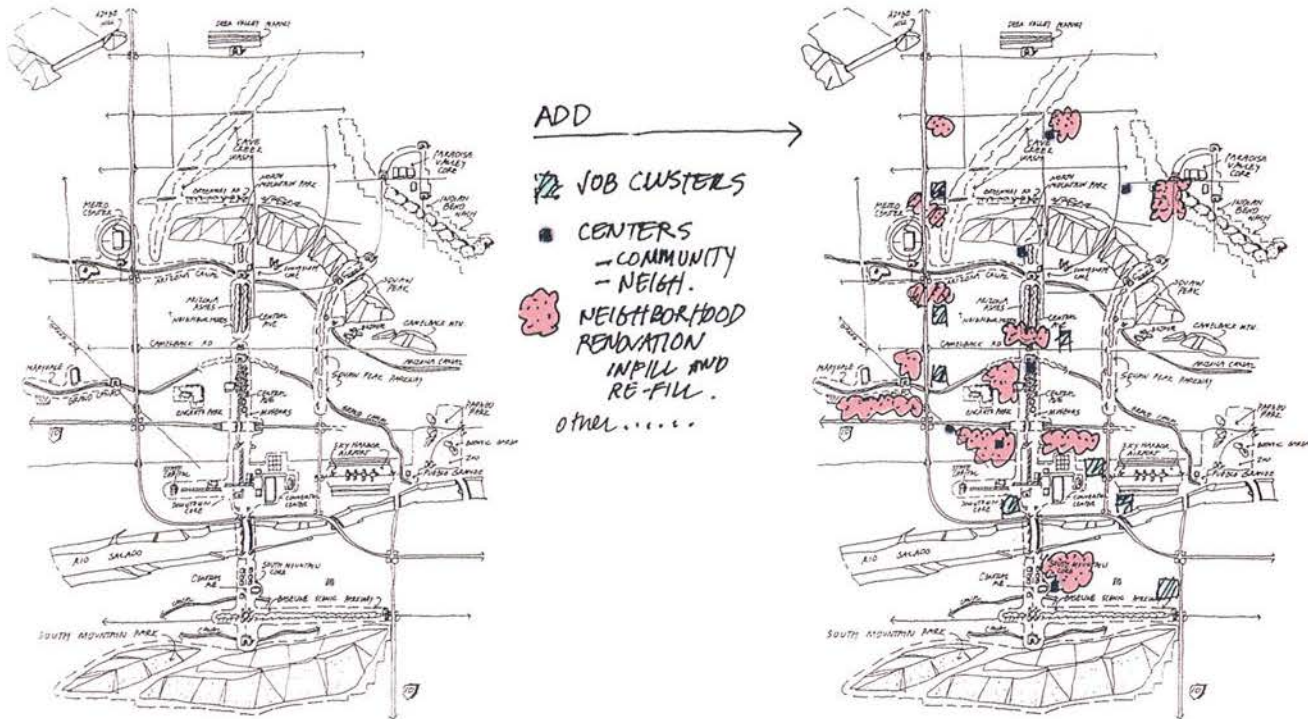
The Public Art Program is in a unique position to build connections between different city departments, between different neighborhoods, and between the city and community members. During the update planning process, representatives from each of these focus groups noted the connective qualities of successful public art projects, both of the process and the product.

- The current administrative funding structure limits the program's ability to consistently engage in broad community outreach for each project. A more flexible and creative approach to the use of existing funds would enable the program to better serve the community. Create a full-time Public Art Program Outreach Manager position.



Landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg at work in the field during construction of the Sunnyslope Canal Demonstration Project. The project paved the way for improvements that enhance the canal as shared corridors and multi-use recreational trails. The project created new partnerships that brought together diverse funding sources such as city, county and state resources and federal transportation enhancement funding in support of a common goal.





Spatial Systems, 1988 and 2006.

- An allocation for community outreach should be built into the budget for each project. For example, as part of his or her project, the artist might develop an interactive website. These funds could also be pooled to support broad outreach initiatives that are not project-specific but benefit the entire community.
- Community engagement could also be enhanced by placing an artist in residence in one of the city's parks or preserves. The artist could develop projects that would increase the public's understanding of the significance of these tracts of land.
- A mechanism could be created for the identification, support, and implementation of community-initiated projects. For example, as part of the annual planning process the Public Art Program could work with the city's Village Planning Committees to explore specific projects that they might wish to initiate. The Public Art Program might also work with the Neighborhood Services Department to make public art funds available to groups that receive one of the city's grants under the federal Fight Back program.
- Other suggestions to increase community engagement include expanding public awareness with the use of public service announcements and publications; the creation of a virtual tour of the city's public art collection on a CD and accessible through the city's website; the creation of a public school curriculum based on the city's public art collection; and partnering with one or more organizations to create an award that recognizes the contributions of artists to the built environment in Phoenix.

ARTIST EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

During the research phase, the topic of local artists was frequently raised and was discussed from a variety of perspectives. Concerns ranged from the number and type of opportunities being afforded to how an artist might acquire the skills required to manage a substantial multi-year project with a large budget. It is clear from these discussions that the program needs to continue successful initiatives such as the mentorship program and temporary projects that have been created to address artist development.

- Explore the development of an artist-in-residence program for key departments with large-scale capital programs, such as streets, water and aviation. This type of program can build broader understanding of the benefits of public art, provide opportunities for the development of long-range projects uniquely tailored to the department's needs and issues and can assist program staff in developing close working relationships with colleagues in other city departments.
- Expand the existing mentorship program to include a clustered approach. An artist with extensive experience in public sector projects would be assigned a series of similar projects, such as bridges. This artist would have primary responsibility for the design of one of these projects, and would work with several less experienced local artists to assist them in the design of the others.
- Develop several locations as sites for ongoing temporary installations. Possibilities include parks, traffic medians, vacant lots, and the windows and lobbies of city facilities. Temporary projects provide opportunities for local artists to gain experience addressing the issues associated with public projects. Grouping the projects at several locations addresses the concept of creating art clusters, and the changing yet serial nature of the installations fosters awareness and dialogue.

PRESERVATION

The acquisition or construction of works of art comes with a corresponding obligation to protect and maintain the investment of public funds. Care needs to be taken to ensure that as new public spaces are created, funding is allocated to provide for the basic maintenance of these spaces and the artist-designed amenities that they include. In many ways, Phoenix is taking better care of its public art collection than many other cities around the country. Program staff should review each project with consideration of long-term maintenance issues. In addition, the program has a full-time art collections manager responsible for overseeing the care of the works in the collection. However, many large-scale projects are in need of extensive refurbishment or restoration.

- An interest-bearing fund reserved for the care of the collection should be created.
- The program could partner with artists and libraries to create accessible oral histories of neighborhood art projects. This would help to generate new stakeholders for each of the art projects as neighborhoods evolve and area residents change.
- The program should work with client departments, such as parks, to explore the establishment of certain standard details that would contribute to ease of maintenance without posing undue restrictions on future art projects.
- Another suggestion would be to work with area high schools and community groups to establish an ongoing program for the care of public art and public spaces, such as the Adopt-an-Artwork program developed by the City of Denver. As an additional example, a partnership in Los Angeles between a non-profit arts organization and the school district has retrofitted two school buses with workshops in which artists teach students basic woodworking and metal skills. Such a program would combine job training, community beautification, public/private partnerships and art and could potentially draw upon a variety of funding sources.

CONCLUSION

The 1988 public art master plan has proven to be a flexible and effective instrument that simply needs to be revised and expanded to reflect current circumstances. In 1988, the emphasis was on developing a cultural infrastructure. Now that the infrastructure is in place, the focus needs to shift to cultivating a new layer of amenities, the cultural landscape. Partnerships with other departments, local institutions, and the private sector will be critical to expanding the reach and impact of the program. Sustainability needs to be a major criterion in evaluating new projects and allocating program resources. The allocation of a significant portion of the program's talent and resources to a select number of large-scale multi-year initiatives will better serve the diverse residents of the Phoenix metropolitan region. The Public Art Program's ability to connect disparate interests can be enhanced by supporting and expanding community outreach and artist development initiatives. New initiatives should be developed to enhance the city's ability to care for its public art collection. In addition, a number of minor administrative changes will further integrate the Public Art Program into the city's planning and capital improvement processes.



Mayor Phil Gordon with artist Ed Dwight at the dedication of Dwight's sculpture of Dr. George Washington Carver. The Papago Park City Boundary Project, designed by Jody Pinto and Steve Martino, was a collaborative project between the City of Phoenix and the City of Scottsdale. On the morning of the summer solstice, the columns cast a shadow in a continuous line that marks the border and the connection between the two cities. A group of citizens gathers every year at the site to celebrate the event.



AN EVOLVING FIELD

PUBLIC ART IS A COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC FIELD THAT EVOLVES FROM PROJECT TO PROJECT. IT REPRESENTS THE CROSS-FERTILIZATION OF MANY DISCIPLINES—ARCHITECTURE, URBAN PLANNING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ENGINEERING, ART HISTORY, STUDIO ART AND FABRICATION, CONSERVATION, RISK MANAGEMENT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, ACCOUNTING, MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS, EVENT MANAGEMENT, POLICY, AND DIPLOMACY. AS A PROFESSIONAL ENDEAVOR, IT REQUIRES FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, AND AN OPEN MIND.

THE FIELD OF PUBLIC ART HAS MATURED CONSIDERABLY IN THE LAST DECADE, GROWING IN BOTH BREADTH AND DEPTH. INCREASING NUMBERS OF NEW PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND THE SOPHISTICATION OF APPROACHES TO PUBLIC ART NATIONWIDE HAS REACHED NEW LEVELS.

PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS TEND TO LEARN ORGANICALLY FROM ONE ANOTHER WHILE ADAPTING TO LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS MUTUAL LEARNING HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PUBLIC ART NETWORK, A PROGRAM OF AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS. THIS PROGRAM, ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE INITIATIVE AND SUPPORT OF PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS NATIONWIDE IN 1999, IS A NATIONAL

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PUBLIC ART NETWORK, VISIT www.americansforthearts.org/pan. FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION ON THE PHOENIX OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE AND THE PHOENIX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM, VISIT www.phoenix.gov/arts.



This publication is dedicated to the memory of visionary philanthropist and pioneering arts leader Edward "Bud" Jacobson, and also to artist Lewis Alquist, a friend and mentor to the Phoenix arts community.

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Credits

The success of the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program is the result of the fusion of the energy, talents and commitment of hundreds of individuals including the past and present staff of the program, community representatives and selection panel members, city staff and consultants, and most importantly the vision and creativity of the artists commissioned through the program and in the Phoenix arts community. This publication benefits from the incredible skill of the photographers that have documented the completed projects and the eloquence of the writers that capture the context in which the works have been created. Special thanks to Frank Fairbanks, Sheryl Sculley, George Flores, Marsha Wallace, Phil Jones, Gretchen Freeman, Ted Decker, Michael Doyle, Eddie Shea, Kim Shetter and Dan Hunting.

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