



METRO Art Program

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Overview

Public art can bring a level of craft, detail, history, human scale and beauty to a transit station environment, and has been recognized by the Federal Transit Administration as a deterrent to vandalism and crime by providing a sense of pride and ownership in the neighborhoods where it is located. Public art also helps riders distinguish one neighborhood and one station from another.

The cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa each have ordinances that require or recommend that a percentage of the construction costs of any capital improvement project be set aside for the incorporation of public art works. METRO's \$6.3 million public art program is required or guided by these three city ordinances.

Each light rail station will include artwork, and the Tempe Town Lake Bridge incorporates art into its structure. The light rail project features work from both local and national artists in a variety of media, either as stand-alone pieces or aesthetic elements integrated into the station design. More than 25 artists are involved in various aspects of the METRO project.

Selecting artists and artwork

Regional community oversight of the METRO art program was provided by the citizen-based, multi-jurisdictional Regional Rail Arts Committee. This 20-plus-member committee includes arts professionals, representatives from each of the participating cities' arts commissions, and from businesses and community groups. In 2003, the Regional Rail Arts Committee selected six artists to identify opportunities for art and worked with METRO architects to determine how art could be integrated at each station. These artists also collaborated with the architects in "customizing" each station to fit within the environment of adjacent neighborhoods. Along with METRO's lead artist, who helped develop the public art program, these design-team artists each selected one station on which to work.

Twenty-three station artists were then selected to produce artwork specific to each of the remaining stations. All of the METRO artists sought information from nearby residents about the unique neighborhood characteristics that could be incorporated into their art concepts. Final designs were then presented to their municipal art committees and to neighborhood residents.

This process has resulted in some pieces which will serve as landmarks, and others that be encountered within the human-scaled environment of the station platforms. The works are diverse; they include cast bronze, carved stone, welded steel and aluminum and etched glass. The works range from the very representational to contemporary, and are certain to become wonderful additions to existing public art collections in the communities of Mesa, Phoenix and Tempe.

METRO's artists were selected through an open call to artists by committees that included residents, business owners, city representatives and other stakeholders adjacent to each station. These committees reviewed, commented upon and approved the designs for each station.

All of METRO's art projects were reviewed and approved by the METRO Board of Directors.

All METRO art meets strict requirements related to safety, maintenance, longevity and accessibility.