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Introduction

Valley Metro Public Art Grows with the Community

It’s been nearly eight years since light rail began serving the metropolitan Phoenix region. Since then, Valley Metro Rail has become an important and essential part of the communities it serves. Ridership has exceeded projections contributing to significant economic investment along the initial 20 miles.

As rail expands in the Valley, so does the public art program. The public art engages riders and communities by celebrating history and progress at the same time. Inspired by downtown Mesa’s rich culture, the artists and designers created the theme “Old Roots, New Growth” to capture the spirit of its re-emergence. Each art project is a study in the community’s past influences and future endeavors.

The artwork and station design combine to make Valley Metro Rail a point of pride for the neighborhood with new colors and canopies enhancing the original station kit of parts. Besides being an origin or destination for every journey, the stations offer the rider a safe, comfortable, well-maintained space. The artwork adds an element of introspection, fun and place-making that completes the experience.

The six artists showcased along the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension were selected by community representatives, as well as art and design professionals from the region. These artists are recognized for their works of art locally and around the country.

Valley Metro is proud to continue the tradition of including art that is meaningful to the rider, the community and the public transit system.
Valley Metro Rail Overview

WEST

19th Ave/Montebello
19th Ave/Camelback
7th Ave/Camelback
Central Ave/Camelback
Campbell/Central Ave
Indian School/Central Ave
Osborn/Central Ave
Thomas/Central Ave
Encanto/Central Ave
McDowell/Central Ave
Roosevelt/Central Ave
Van Buren/Central Ave
Washington/Central Ave
3rd St/Washington
12th St/Washington
24th St/Jefferson
38th St

TC Transit Center
P Park-and-Ride Location

PHOENIX
STATION ART INITIAL 20 MILES
19th Ave/Montebello

19th Ave/Camelback

Indian School/Central Ave

Campbell/Central Ave

Osborn/Central Ave

3rd St/Jefferson

Thomas/Central Ave
Alma School/Main St.

Daniel Martin Diaz
Tucson, AZ

Emergence

The artist designed a series of cut metal screens whose patterns are both organic and scientific. It serves the community by reflecting desert and farming communities of the past and celebrating the technical emergence of the nearby East Valley Institute of Technology. View the entryway screen tree imagery to experience a mimic of the “Voronoi Fractal,” as seen in the center of saguaro cacti and other desert plants.

The kinetic, wind-driven, metal pinwheel located high in the center screen is surrounded by colored glass inserts that provides a dynamic focus for the piece. Emergence is one that hopes to embrace a historic past and an emergent, thriving community.
Country Club/Main St.

Ed Carpenter
Portland, OR

Mesaflora

Seen by many as the entry point into the historic downtown, the art is in response to the city’s request for a special gateway piece. Mesaflora was created as a 30-foot steel and glass structure that depicts a blooming desert plant. The metaphor is revealed with the ongoing development and flowering of downtown.

The dichroic glass elements create a dazzling rainbow display of colored lights that constantly change and shift as the day evolves. At night the art is illuminated, creating an added dramatic effect.
Located where the city’s civic, arts, education and business institutions meet, this art showcases the combination of urban icon, outdoor room and collective portrait of community. Standing beneath the 50-foot steel sculpture, the viewer can see through the profiles to the sky above. Viewed from afar, the station art serves as the metaphorical front door to City Hall and the Mesa Arts Center. Dramatic programmable lights will change color as it relates to community events.
Stories of Mesa’s history are told through the eyes of its youngest residents. These stories have been translated into illustrations and featured on sixteen porcelain panels as storybook pages. Two 21-foot steel panels bookend the center section of the station depicting a mother and father who represent the gift of storytelling from one generation to the next.

The station includes vine-covered, trellised entryways that extend the natural elements of Pioneer Park to the north and the park-like grounds of the Temple located to the south.
Morris Plaza Traction Power Substation

Mary Shindell
Phoenix, AZ

The Memory of a Tree is Strong

In her dynamic artwork, this local artist chose pecan trees as the subject matter to screen the traction-powered substation at Morris Plaza. Pecan orchards were once located adjacent to Main Street, originally serving as crop trees and later as shade trees in the neighborhoods. The pecan trees are a fixture of her childhood memories growing up in Mesa.
Hibbert Signal House

Roberto L. Delgado
Los Angeles, CA

Palo Verde

A tile mosaic in the shape of a yellow Palo Verde is fashioned to adorn the wall surrounding the signal house at the corner of Hibbert and Main Street. The tree is native to the Sonoran Desert and was cultivated by native residents of the area. The silkscreened photo and painted tiles feature images of Mesa’s local culture history.
Acknowledgments

This important and amazing part of the Central Mesa Light Rail Extension would not have been possible without the contributions and support of the Mesa city staff, Valley Metro staff and design and engineering consultants who helped guide the artists in their final designs. Special thanks to the volunteers of the Regional Rail Arts Committee, Station Arts Review Committees and the City of Mesa Museum and Cultural Advisory Board for their important contributions and insight.