



City of Tempe
Cultural Services
3340 South Rural Road
Tempe, AZ 85282
480-350-5287
480-350-5161 FAX
www.tempe.gov/arts

Twelve Purple Benches Public Art Project Fact Sheet



Photo: Craig Smith

Title: Twelve Purple Benches

Location: Tempe Performing Arts Center Plaza, at Sixth Street and Forest Avenue.

Artist: Ron Gasowski

Completion: 1993

Medium: Ceramic tiles, polystyrene foam, steel, polyethylene pipe, fiberglass and Dryvit panels

Description: In a collaborative effort with the community, the benches were covered with a mosaic of handmade and hand-glazed tiles created by students from Connolly, Fees, Gililand and McKemy schools. These tiles, which featured personal imagery and designs influenced by the visual and performing arts and images of the environment of the city of Tempe, were edited, dried, fired, glazed, refired, applied and grouted by the artist.

Funding: The project was funded through city of Tempe Capital Improvement Project Percent for Art funds.

Artist biography: Ron Gasowski is a Professor Emeritus of Art at Arizona State University, currently teaching in the areas of intermedia and the core foundations program. His mixed media graphics and sculpture have been exhibited in museums and galleries in the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Korea and Japan. More than 25 solo exhibitions and 100 group shows include traveling exhibits organized by the Portland (Oregon) Museum of Art, the Mississippi Museum of Art, Colorado State University Museum of Art and the Arizona Commission on the Arts. The bulk of his public art projects have been community-based involving more than 1,000 local students.

Artist statement: The *Twelve Purple Benches* are site specific, designed to provide comfortable seating without impeding the flow of pedestrian traffic within the plaza environment. The simple geometry of this project respectfully integrates into the public space, while the visual impact of the community-based mosaic artwork unifies the benches with the environmental color of the surrounding space.