

Riverside Office Plaza 1

Art in Private Development Fact Sheet



City of Tempe
Cultural Services
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Photo: Craig Smith

Artwork: Ghost Forest

Development: Riverside Office Plaza 1

Address: 1200 West Rio Salado Parkway

Artist: David Brant

Completion: 2007

Materials: concrete, rusted steel, concrete masonry unit, river stone, gabion walls and planting

Description: The artist has been inspired by both the former raging river edge and the name Riverside to create a memory of what was once along the former river-turned-lake. When the river was an active habitat, significant bosques of mesquite, willow and cottonwood with accents of reeds and cattails were fed by the rich soil and abundant waters where wildlife once flourished. This piece is, therefore, a celebration of the river. The rusted steel poles placed at numerous angles and heights pay homage to the bosques that once lined the river, while abstracted birds are positioned on similar rusted poles to appear to be in flight toward a new water body: the Town Lake. In addition, over-scaled, rust-finished steel cattails inside a mass planting of Giant Hesperaloe recall the riparian ground plane of a river's side. The river stones that once defined a beach have been gathered and are held in place by a rusted steel grid work in the form of retaining walls which hold the building pads. The retained layers are planted with masses of Evening Primrose, Deer Grass and Desert Museum Palo Verde to create a beautiful desert garden. This garden, or outdoor room, is defined by a grand lawn in the midst of the bosque homage, the result of which creates a contrast between the former and the now deceased riverside bosque and a renewed fresh plane of green grass, celebrating the renewal of life on the riverside.

Funding: This project was funded by the individual developer as a requirement of Tempe's Art in Private Development Ordinance.

Artist biography: Brant has more than 35 years experience in a variety of projects and media throughout the western United States. He was educated formally in landscape architecture and trained in a variety of artistic arenas. For 20 years prior to the formation of the company, IDEA, he held responsible positions with design firms throughout Phoenix and Southern California and was a founding partner in a major southwest landscape architecture firm. Brant is responsible for all aspects of IDEA's projects, utilizing his award-winning experience in project themeing and story rendition through landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, public art and graphic design.

Artist statement: Despite the continuous change in his artistic style, one common thread unites each project he undertakes. No matter how small or large the piece, it must not only "fit" into its environment, but also abide by the rules of simplicity, wherein each element serves a specific purpose. Be it sculpture, painting, reprographic or photographic art, or a piece of furniture, no line therein exists in vain. Moreover, the piece must contribute to the environment in which it lives, both by borrowing elements from its surroundings to create cohesion and by reflecting a component of the "story" of the space to synthesize its purpose with its environs. His palette, therefore, exists only of those materials that are appropriate to the surrounding environment, and is, thus, ever changing. "The art is the place and the place is the art," he said.

Tempe's Art in Private Development program is managed by city of Tempe Cultural Services staff with input from the Tempe Municipal Arts Commission, a 15-member, mayor-appointed advisory board.