

Tilted Landscape Public Art Project Fact Sheet



City of Tempe
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Photo: Craig Smith

Title: Tilted Landscape

Location: Around the east and southeast sides of the Tempe Public Library (located on the southwest corner of Rural Road and Southern Avenue)

Artist: Carl Cheng

Completion: Phase I, 1994; Phase II, 1999

Medium: River-bottom rocks, flagstone, concrete, wood, stone and water

Description: The first phase of Cheng's work is located on a 40 square-foot section of land encircled by the passenger drop-off driveway in front of the library. The design features a gently up-sloping water-filled trough, whose surface gradually tips up and out of the water, emerging as an up-thrusting topographic map of the city of Tempe. A natural barrier of trees and bushes borders the reflecting pool portion. In 2001, the artwork suffered a major leak and no longer contains water. The artwork now contains rocks and cacti where the water once flowed.

The second part of Cheng's design scheme features several art walls, artifact rocks and imbedded pavers in the courtyard. It originates at the existing fountain west of the Edna Vihel Center for the Arts and meanders south toward the parking lot through a loosely landscaped streambed strewn with rocks and boulders. It is bordered by colorful cross-sections of laminated cut concrete. Similar walls are located south of the Tempe Historical Museum at the east and west ends of the sidewalk.

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

Artist biography: Carl Cheng was born in San Francisco and raised in Los Angeles. He received his BA and MA degrees from UCLA and currently lives and works in Santa Monica, Calif. His artworks, which attempt to demystify the human/nature relationship, have been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad. Cheng's numerous other public commissions include Santa Monica Art Tool, which imprints the map of L.A. on the sand along Santa Monica Beach, a sheriff's facility in San Francisco, as well as projects in New York City, Tempe and Seattle.

Artist statement: Upon reading the Tempe 2000 General Plan and visiting the Municipal Complex underground garden, I began thinking of the possibility of Tempe as a city of Subterranean Gardens . . . What if the city of Tempe could link up its many water ponds, gardens, streams and rivers into one continuous system that meandered in and out of municipal buildings and parks? With these ideas swimming in my head, I decided to contribute to this concept by proposing (this) comprehensive project for the library site.