

# Title: Mare Undarum – Sea of Waves

## Public Art Project Fact Sheet



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



Photo by Craig Smith

**Title:** Mare Undarum – Sea of Waves

**Location:** Tempe Center of the Arts pavilion

**Artist:** Ned Kahn

**Completion:** 2007

**Medium:** Aluminum, mirrors and wave generators

**Description:** This art piece is made up of aluminum, mirrors and a series of wave generators in the bottom of the shallow reflecting pool that borders the north end of the Tempe Center for the Arts. These generators create a random series of circular ripples, like huge raindrops falling on a lake that will spread out through the pool in ever-changing patterns. An array of three-inch aluminum mirrors are installed in the space between the glass layers of the west facade of the Lakeside Room. Each of the tiny mirrors is aimed down to reflect a small “snapshot” of the water surface below. As the circular waves move across the pool, the mirror array digitizes the flow patterns.

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

**Artist biography:** Ned Kahn's creative impetus began in the San Francisco Bay Area, where soon after graduating from the University of Connecticut he became an apprentice to the late Frank Oppenheimer, legendary founder of the San Francisco Exploratorium. Kahn continued working at the Exploratorium as an exhibit designer for 10 years, where numerous works of his are still on display. Other art installations by Kahn can be found around the Bay Area, including 14 exhibits at the Chabot Space and Science and "Wind Portal" at the San Francisco International Airport BART station.

**Artist statement:** I was inspired by the image of rain in the desert or the discovery of a pool, hidden in the rocks of a seemingly dry stream with ripples of light reflecting onto the stone above...the incongruity of water in the desert. The title was inspired by the recent discovery that there are vast amounts of water on the Moon in the form of ice buried under the surface. In recent years, I have complete a series of artworks that reveal forces in the environment by converting natural flow patterns, such as wind, into the pixilated motion of thousands of small metal parts. I have been calling these artworks “detectors” for they are analogous to the detectors on telescopes and other scientific devices that reveal the effects of the invisible.