

Date Palm Manor Art in Private Development Fact Sheet



City of Tempe
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Artwork

I am (on Broadway Road)

Location

Date Palm Manor on Mill Avenue

Artist

John Nelson

Completion

2001

Material

Steel and Ceramic Tile

Photo by John Nelson

Description: Each of the two entrances into the historic Date Palm Manor neighborhood works as a visual marker that mirrors the other. *Chasing Zoe*, was funded by the neighborhood. The second marker, *I am (on Broadway Road)* was created to extend the neighborhood's gateway project. This piece consists of attached steel cutouts that run along the wall, like a series of stills from a film clip. As the figure progresses down the wall, it "morphs" into a bird, turns the corner into the alley, and flies away—a metaphor that implies that shifting nature of the self (identity) and touches on the transitory nature of life (individually and communally). Stories are also printed on colored ceramic tile with a ceramic slip. Rather than putting the tiles up in their entirety, they are broken into fragments so that the viewer can catch a glimpse of the residents' lives.

Funding: A Tempe Municipal Arts Commission grant as well as a neighborhood grant funded this project. The neighborhood raised money by holding a huge neighborhood garage sale. The artist who designed the wall lives in the neighborhood and worked for the cost of materials.

Artist biography: John Nelson lives and works in Tempe and received his Master of Fine Arts from Arizona State University. As an illustrator, painter and sculptor, Nelson has seen his mixed media illustrations appear frequently in publications like *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*. His paintings and sculptures have been featured in numerous solo and group shows including Gallery Materia in Scottsdale, the Carter Center at Emory University and the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. In addition, his work is collected by both public and corporate entities, including Intel and the Perrier Corporation. He has completed commissions for the National Endowment for the Arts, the United States Postal Service and Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, and has many other public pieces in the Phoenix Metropolitan area.

Artist statement: In capturing the many and varied identities of the residents to the area, we are looking to address and honor the issues of personal and cultural identity and to engage the neighborhood in a dialogue of self discovery, personal involvement and community pride.