Tempe Public Art

Unity/Diversity

John Randall Nelson

Steel, concrete, ceramic tile and knitted polyethylene canopy

2003

Location: Marcos de Niza High School
6000 S. Lakeshore Drive

Artist Website: www.whonelson.com

Description: Four ethnically and gender-diverse figures sit atop steel poles and work together to provide shade and shelter by stretching a high tension, structural canopy over a semi-circular seating area. The canopy is lit at night creating a dynamic, illuminated nighttime presence. The bench and concrete floor of the seating area incorporate handmade ceramic tiles that relate conceptually to unity and diversity. The design process included the collaboration of Marcos de Niza High School students. *Unity/Diversity* is a visual and verbal narrative that captures the positive expressions and identities of this particular group of young Tempe residents, as well as providing a functional, durable shade oasis for those in transit.

Artist biography: Nelson lives and works in Tempe and received his Master of Fine Arts degree 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.

Funding: This project was funded through the city of Tempe Municipal Arts Fund and administered through the Tempe Municipal Arts Commission.