

# Sirens of the Superstition Public Art Project Fact Sheet



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Photo: Craig Smith

**Title:** Sirens of the Superstition

**Location:** On the sound walls and ramps facing the neighborhoods at the College Avenue and the U.S. Route 60 bicycle and pedestrian bridge

**Artist:** Michael Maglich

**Completion:** 2004

**Medium:** Cast stone

**Description:** The city of Tempe is named after the valley (or vale) of Tempe in Greek mythology, an idyllic place where the gods went for rest and relaxation. This significance, as well as the Arizona Department of Transportation's Greek labyrinth patterning along the walls of the U.S. 60, inspired the artist's design. The *Sirens of the Superstition* project consists of a flock of birds (or Greek sirens, referencing *The Odyssey*, by Homer) which appear to descend the ramps on both sides of the bridge and fly across the patterned walls. Approximately 180 birds, the size of pigeons, are attached to the walls.

**Funding:** The project was funded through city of Tempe Capital Improvement Project Percent for Art funds made available through the Tempe Transit tax.

**Artist biography:** Michael Maglich was born in Buffalo, N.Y., and moved to Arizona 1946. In 1964 he moved to Los Angeles and attended Chouinard Art Institute where he studied with Emerson Woelffer, Mike Kanemitsu, Frederick Hammersley and Stephan Von Huene. He has also studied independently in France, India, Hungary, Czech Republic, Tahiti and the Yucatan, and in North, East, South and West Mexico.

Maglich has experience as a studio and public artist. His collections and commissions include Bank of America, Bank One, Del Webb Corporation, Streich Lang, Morrison Forester, Los Angeles Gas Company, Salt River Project, Tucson Museum of Art, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, city of Phoenix, city of Tempe, Armstrong-Prior and city of Glendale.

**Artist statement:** The sirens, from Greek mythology, were half-woman, half-bird creatures that lured unsuspecting sailors to their shores by singing to them. The 180 Sirens of Highway 60 are modeled after Tempe residents that were involved in some way with the project. If one listens close enough, the song of the sirens can actually be heard, even though some think this is only the sound of the traffic along Highway 60.