

WESTERN
ART & Architecture
From Cowboy to Contemporary

Dan Young, An Artist's Point of View
Painting America's Industrial Landscapes
From the East and of the West: Huihan Liu
Architecture in the West: Texas Hill Country to the Coachella Valley



plus:

In the Studio with Gordon Huether

Unsettled: Artists' Depictions of Western Issues Throughout History

Functionality and the Ephemeral, Robert Hutchison Architecture

Perspective: The Father of Canadian Art, Paul Kane [1810–1871]



ART IN THE OPEN

The legacy of U.S. public art programs endures, reflecting communities and inviting conversations about place

WRITTEN BY Marla Cimini



Works of public art often become iconic landmarks in cities across the United States. Think of Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* (aka "The Bean") in Chicago, the *Statue of Liberty* in New York City or *Mount Rushmore* in South Dakota. And at least one of your friends probably has a photo taken in front of Elmgreen & Dragset's *Prada Marfa*, the abandoned Prada store that appears as a mirage 26 miles outside of Marfa, Texas.

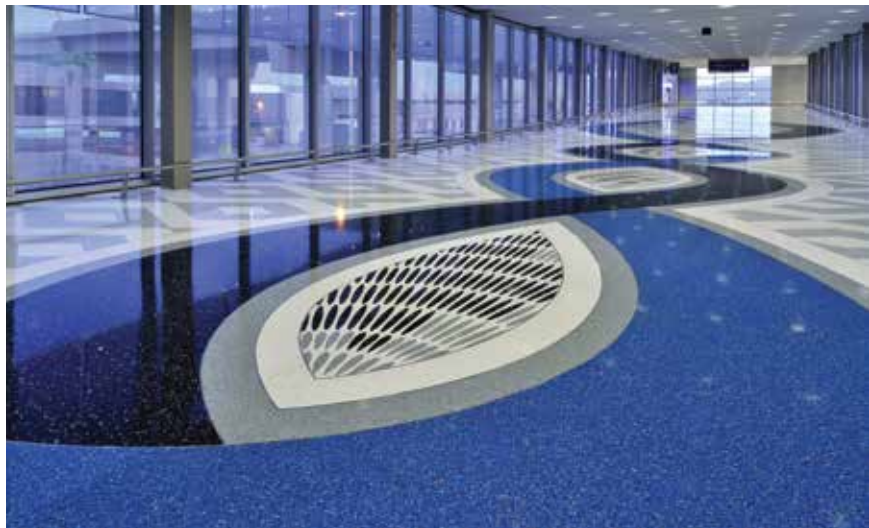
From sea to shinning sea, the U.S. is filled with fine art in plain sight. Sculptures or murals highlight street corners and courtyards, museum-quality pieces are displayed in public view and site-specific works break the monotony of the everyday hustle. Such creative efforts prove that art is meaningful as a collective experience.

Her Secret is Patience is a 145-foot-tall aerial sculpture by artist Janet Echelman that lights up downtown Phoenix, Arizona, and moves with the patterns of the desert wind. Photo: PoAc **Opposite page, clockwise from top left:** Three Sioux Falls, South Dakota, SculptureWalk pieces include: *Eclipse*, by Bruce Stillman of Minnesota, *Clean Water Brings Life* by Minnesota artist Lynette Power and *Graystone Grasses* by artist Dale Lamphere from South Dakota. Photos: Sioux Falls SculptureWalk | *The Sky Train Platform*, a cobalt blue, black-and-white floor mosaic by Janelle Stanley, greets visitors at the Phoenix Sky Harbor airport. Photo: PoAc | *Book Peddler's* is a whimsical sculpture by artist Jack Morford that is displayed at the SculptureWalk exhibit. Photo: Sioux Falls SculptureWalk

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established a legacy of public art with the Works Progress Administration, which employed hundreds of artists and resulted in more than 100,000 paintings and murals and more than 18,000 sculptures, as part of a Great Depression relief program. Participants included the best minds of Abstract Expressionism: Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko. Today, more than half of the states in the U.S. participate in “percent for art” programs, allocating a percentage of infrastructure costs (typically about 1 percent) for public artworks. And over the last 40 years, the number of cities in the U.S. that have adopted public art ordinances has grown to more than 300, writes Jack Becker in his introduction to *Public Art/Public Space, the Sculptural Environments of Barbara Grygutis*.

Public art also generates exposure for artists, offering collectors a fresh opportunity to view their work. In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for example, the SculptureWalk program features a selection of mixed-media statues displayed along the city’s uptown, downtown and East Bank neighborhoods. The statues are displayed for 12 months and replaced each May. In 2017, the program introduced 56 new statues with an estimated value of \$1.2 million. Of the 750 sculptures on exhibit, 200 have been sold, leased or commissioned and others remain as part of the permanent collection.

The quality of art at SculptureWalk has played a significant role in building art collections, says Jeff Hanson, marketing director. “We have seen



— PUBLIC WORKS —

Famous artistic landmarks across the West

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA:

The Mission District has the highest concentration of murals in the city, and the non-profit Precita Eyes provides tours and oversees commissions, sfmission.com; precitaeyes.org.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

VENICE:

The Binoculars Building is a commercial office building designed by architect Frank Gehry. The massive sculpture of binoculars, that functions as both a car and a pedestrian entrance, was created by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, oldenburgvanbruggen.com.

WATTS:

Sabato "Simon" Rodia, an Italian immigrant, built the "Watts Towers" or *Nuestro Pueblo*, in the Simon Rodia State Historic Park. Seventeen interconnected sculptures are decorated with found objects and the tallest reaches 99 feet. They were built over 33 years, beginning in 1921, wattstowers.us.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART:

Artist Chris Burden used 202 restored, cast-iron, antique lamp posts to make *Urban Light*. Completed in 2008, most of the 17 styles of street lamps came from the streets of Southern California, collections.lacma.org.

AUSTIN, TEXAS:

Open Room Austin, by Rosario Marquardt and Roberto Behar, is located in Sand Beach Park and features a long table with a metal-lace tablecloth, aluminum benches and four red standing chandeliers, a perfect setting for an evening dinner party, publicartarchive.org.

CATRON COUNTY, NEW MEXICO:

Walter De Maria's 1977 land art installation, *The Lightning Field*, features 400 stainless-steel poles arranged in a grid that attracts lightning strikes. Though the artwork is not open to the general public, the Dia Art Foundation offers overnight trips from May to October, diaart.org.

DENVER, COLORADO:

Lawrence Argent's *I See What You Mean* is a 40-foot-tall blue bear that peers into the Colorado Convention Center. In part, the artist wanted to bring the "mountains down to Denver" and prompt visitors' awareness of their unique location, denverconvention.com.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON:

Created by Douglas Hollis, *A Sound Garden* is a group of 12 steel structures. At the top of each hangs an organ pipe attached to a weathervane that produces soft tones when rotated or passed through by the wind. The towers are 21 feet tall and located on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's campus, noaa.gov.

45 MILES NORTH OF WENDOVER, UTAH:

Nancy Holt created *Sun Tunnels* on 40 acres of land. A series of four, 18-by-9-foot concrete tunnels appear in an X shape in the desert. Each is drilled with holes mimicking constellations, inviting conversations about art, earth and astronomy. The installation is only accessible by driving into a remote area of Utah, and the journey and navigation are part of the discovery, umfa.utah.edu/suntunnels_selfguide.

CARP ELGIN ROAD, NEVADA:

Composed of two long trenches measuring 30 feet by 50 feet in Nevada's Mormon Mesa, Michael Heizer's 1970 work, *Double Negative*, is a commentary on what has been removed from the site. Currently owned by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, it's open to the public and can be accessed by four-wheel drive, doublenegative.tarasen.net.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA:

Her Secret is Patience by artist Janet Echelman is a 145-foot-tall aerial creation, suspended nearly 40 feet in the air. It glows by nightfall, changing colors throughout the seasons and capturing undulating desert wind patterns. Located in a Civic Space Park in downtown Phoenix, she named it after a Ralph Waldo Emerson quote, echelman.com/project/her-secret-is-patience.

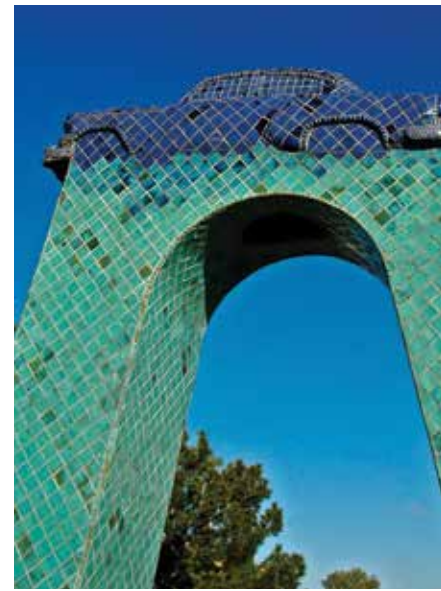


individuals from all over the country purchase exhibited art and that has expanded to private business and communities securing sculptures from our renowned artists.”

Phoenix, Arizona, also integrates a multitude of intriguing creative works throughout its neighborhoods. Since 1986, the city has maintained a collection of more than 1,000 portable works (with many more in progress), including sculpture, paintings and photographs representing millions of dollars.

The program also manages the development of public art associated with capital improvement projects throughout the city. These permanent works are often integrated into the infrastructure, such as terrazzo floors and bridges.

“The Public Art Program has helped a wide range of artists make the leap from creating studio work to building major infrastructure,” says Edward Lebow, program director in Phoenix. “The benefits extend far beyond our art community. By raising the bar for the design of public buildings and spaces, public artists — and the fabricators and construction workers who build their



works — are helping to create a more beautiful, vibrant and livable city.”

Located a few hours east, the art scene in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has become a significant part of the city’s fabric since 1978. In nearly 40 years, the program has invested almost \$2 million in supporting 650 individual artists, purchasing and placing more than 900 individual works on display in a permanent

Opposite: On display at SculptureWalk, *Salmon Runner*, by artist Heather Wall from British Columbia, is made of aluminum. **This page, from left:** Robert Wilson’s *Flyway* is situated at the entrance of the Open Space Visitor Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It’s made of repurposed steel beams and was inspired by visual forms of sandhill cranes. **Crusing San Mateo** was created by Barbara Grygutis of Arizona. This tall, turquoise ceramic-tile pedestal features a 1965 Chevy perched on top and is in Albuquerque. Photos: Albuquerque Public Art Program

— Continued on page 74

NWR ARTISTS:	Lorenzo Chavez	Jim Lamb	John Potter	Greg Scheibel	GUEST ARTISTS:
Carolyn Anderson	Barry Eisenach	Joan M. Larue	Don Prechtel	Sandy Scott	William Alther
Greg Beecham	Josh Elliott	Huihan Liu	Grant Redden	W. Steve Seltzer	George Bumann
Bye Bitney	Gerald Fritzler	Tom Lockhart	Laura Robb	Matt Smith	Joel Ostlind
Joseph Bohler	Veryl Goodnight	Jim Morgan	Rosetta	George Strickland	Gregory Packard
John Budicin	Tony Hochstetler	Ned Mueller	Tom Saubert	Jim Wilcox	Spike Ress
Blair Buswell	Gary Kapp	Ralph Oberg			

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Gordon Huether, *Aluminum Yucca*
 Recycled materials | 22 x 15 x 15 feet | 2003
 Photos: Albuquerque Public Art Program

collection, with the majority of them located outdoors.

A few of the program's more iconic pieces include *Cruising San Mateo*, a large ceramic tile monument by artist Barbara Grygutis that features a 1954 Chevy perched atop a pedestal, and *Flyaway* by artist Robert Wilson, consisting of 100 reclaimed steel posts. Another piece, *Aluminum Yucca* by Gordon Huether is considered a large abstraction made from a military aircraft.

"When artists' works are accepted into a municipal collection, their works carry additional caché because the public has participated in their acquisition," says Sherri Brueggemann, Albuquerque's public art and urban enhancement manager. "Collectors often look at an artist's credentials, and listing their works in public collections adds to the value of their *oeuvre*." ■

Marla Cimini is a writer with a passion for art, design and travel (combining all three whenever possible). Her articles appear in *USA Today*, among many other publications.

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