



Tempe Public Art

The Sirens of Highway 60

Michael Maglich

Latex reinforced concrete casts

2004

Location: College Avenue
Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge
College Avenue and U.S. Route 60

Artist website: www.maglich.com



Description: The city of Tempe is named after the 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 U.S. Route 60, inspired the artist's design. *The Sirens of Highway 60* project consists of a flock of birds (or Greek sirens, referencing *The Odyssey*, by Homer) whose forms are based on a bronze from the Getty Museum collection. They appear to descend the ramps on both sides of the bridge and fly across the patterned walls. Approximately 180 birds, slightly larger than pigeons, are attached to the walls.

Sirens, from Greek mythology, were half-woman, half-bird creatures that lured unsuspecting sailors to their shores by singing to them. Maglich modeled the faces of the 180 *Sirens* after Tempe residents who were involved in some way with the project. If one listens close enough, the song of the sirens can be heard, although some believe this is the sound of the traffic along Highway 60.

Artist biography: 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 also studied independently in France, India, Hungary, Czech Republic, Tahiti and the Yucatan, and in North, East, South and West Mexico. Maglich is experienced 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.

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