

North Phoenix

New River

Sunnyslope

Moon Valley

Deer Valley

COMMUNITY EDITION

3

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*Collection
blends in at
ASU West*

By Connie Cone Sexton
The Arizona Republic

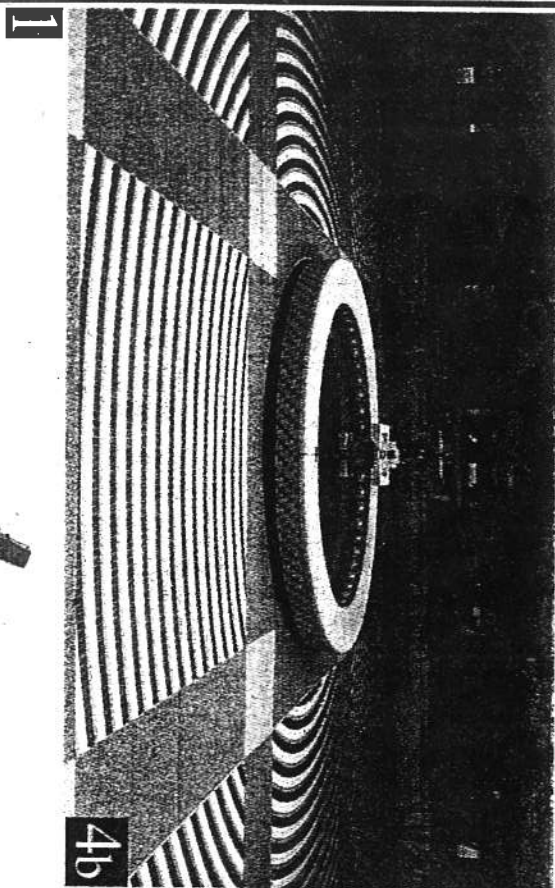
PHOENIX — Some days they're open, other days they're closed.

Since being planted in front of Arizona State University West, the green patina steel gates have been on the move, depending on the whim of those who pass by.

Not that the gates need to stay open. They stand only about 7 feet wide, an easy obstacle to skirt. And on any typical day, everyone does. But for those who hesitate before moving on, the gates provide an artistic look at the campus and give a viewer pause.

It's a good place for anyone to begin a tour of the seven pieces of public art on campus, 4701 W. Thunderbird Road. And despite their sometimes anonymity, the gates and the rest of the collection serve as a steadfast reminder that having art on

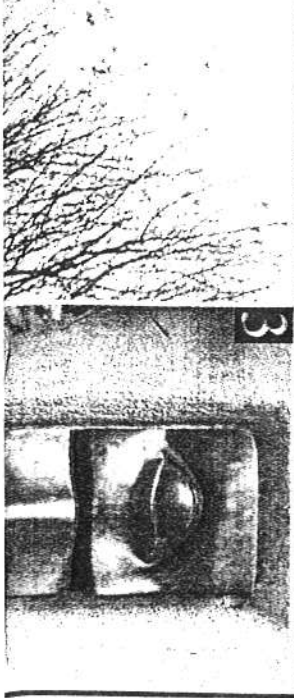
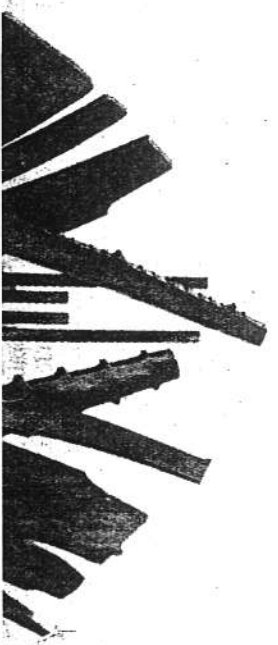
Part of the Landscape



4b



3



the collection serve as a steady reminder that having art on campus is very important. Provost Elaine Maimon said.

"Public art becomes a part of the education process," she said. "I see students making notes about the pieces. The art adds to this beautiful architecture. I enjoy the whole artistic motif. These pieces send an appropriate message to the students: You deserve a beautiful place."

The art is something that student Amanda Brennan appreciates.

"But we need a lot more," she said. "Art is wonderful for our campus, but I'd like to see bigger pieces. Some of these seem so decorative."

But even Brennan said she needs a review of what ASU West offers. She laughed when asked about the huge limestone urns that grace the grass lawn in front of the Fletcher Library.

"I didn't realize those were included in the public art," she said. "And I'm an art major."

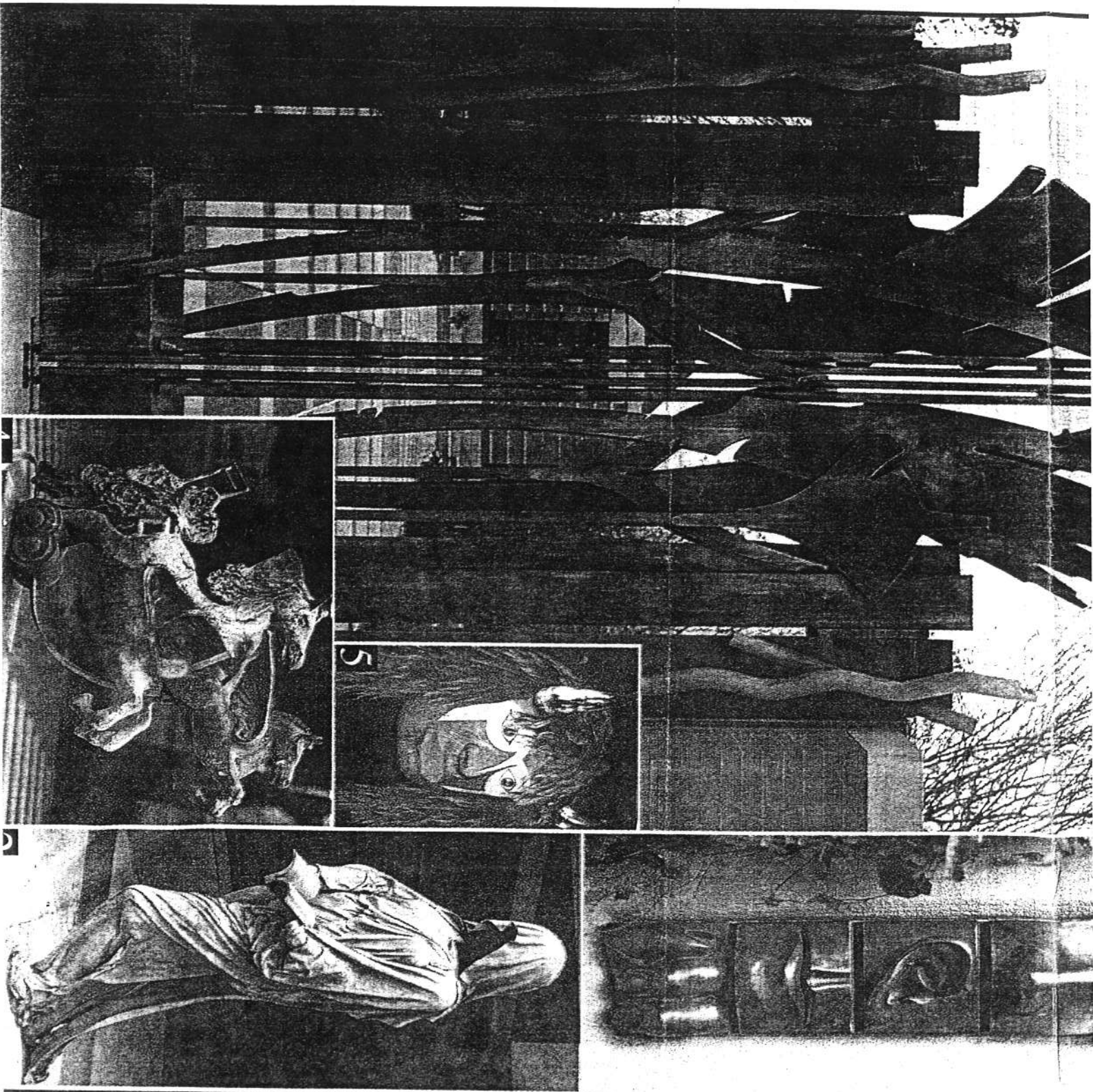
For many students and even campus employees, the public art is camouflaged in everyday life. And then suddenly there is discovery of what's been there all along.

The art began showing up on campus about eight years ago, purchased with money from campus construction projects. Construction was booming in those early days of ASU West, and a committee was given \$390,000 to spend. It commissioned pieces from artists across the country.

The committee had enough

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A collage of some of the works making up ASU West's public art collection. The numbers correspond with those in the article on Page 3 explaining the pieces.



Photos by
Charles Krjefst

Tour reveals variety, significance of artwork

Interested in taking a walking tour of Arizona State University West's public art? Here's a guide:

■ **1.** Begin your journey on the north end of campus by the parking meters. It's where you'll find the Paley Gates by metalsmith artist Albert Paley. The tall, heavy gates invite you to enter this academic world. If you peer through the gates looking south, you'll see the Fletcher Library, the first building that opened on campus. Walk around the gates and view them from both sides.

Paley, a New Yorker, began his career as a jeweler and blacksmith, and shifted into metalwork in the 1970s, taking him from functional architecture ornamentation to sculpture designed for specific uses.

The pair of gates he designed for ASU West represent his fondness for using plant designs in his work. If you look closely, you can see what appear to be bamboo stalks and large palm leaves. Look at the varying heights for places where you can place your hand to pull the gate open. Some observers have said this could symbolize the different academic levels that people are on when they come to ASU West. There is a notch for every level, whether a child or someone with a doctorate.

Paley has called his gates simply jewelry on a grand scale, elements

cloaked woman. But Castanis has said that the void was on purpose. She wanted to show the humanity of women, not just their physical form.

Castanis calls her pieces "goddesses," descendents of mythology. Now, go through the doors and head for the courtyard.

■ **3.** Notice the pillars that frame the courtyard. Attached to the south side of one of the pillars in front of you is *The Five Senses* plaque by artist Susan Pfeiffer. An identical plaque is found on a pillar on the west side of the courtyard.

Don't be afraid to touch these bronze pieces. Feel the coolness of the plaque and explore the surface. You'll notice that Pfeiffer has created a totem pole of the senses. Move back and study the work. Notice from a distance how the fingers look like legs? Observe how the light reflects off each piece.

Pfeiffer was a graduate student in the art department on the ASU Main campus when she was selected to create artwork for ASU West. In addition to her technical skill, she was chosen because of her philosophy about the environment. The artist has said that she is concerned with man's destruction of nature, that in destroying nature we are destroying ourselves.

■ **4a.** Walk over to the fountain in

spiral of tile, created by ceramicist Jun Kaneko.

Notice the symmetry of the tile and how the individual pieces echo an art element prevalent throughout the campus — rectangular blocks of space. The design is found in the architecture of the building around you — cutouts in the railings and in windows.

Kaneko's designs are eclectic, functional and decorative. The design is fluid and inviting. It gives the courtyard a cozy feeling. The swirl draws in the eye, bringing people together. It also has the feeling of activity, purpose.

Now go back down the stairs and walk through the courtyard to the south side. Enter the University Center Building to your right, heading into the west side of the U-shaped building.

■ **5.** Here in the lobby of the ballroom, you'll see two wooden masks in glass cases by Valley artist Zarco Guerrero.

The artist, whose first name means "clear eyes," grew up in a family of artists. His father painted portraits, his grandfather was a sign painter. In his young life, Guerrero became interested in masks and studied them in Mexico. To him, the masks represent tangible art. As he developed his style, he became inter-

shifted into metalwork in the 1970s, taking him from functional architecture ornamentation to sculpture designed for specific uses.

The pair of gates he designed for ASU West represent his fondness for using plant designs in his work. If you look closely, you can see what appear to be bamboo stalks and large palm leaves. Look at the varying heights for places where you can place your hand to pull the gate open. Some observers have said this could symbolize the different academic levels that people are on when they come to ASU West. There is a notch for every level, whether a child or someone with a doctorate.

Paley has called his gates simply jewelry on a grand scale, elements that complement the surrounding architecture.

Looking at the gates, there is a sense of formality, that opening and passing through the gates bring you into a new world. Parting through the palm leaves can give you a sense of exploration.

Move now through the gates and go to your right. You'll see the large University Center Building.

■ **2.** Marking the entrance to the building is the Reading bronze sculpture by Muriel Castanis, another New Yorker. This, like many of her pieces, pays homage to Greek and Roman statues. Before you is a female figure holding a book and stepping into the unknown.

Castanis creates this design by shrouding a mechanical form and metal model with epoxy-soaked cloth. Because the material dries quickly, she had to create her design within 20 minutes. Her goal was for spontaneity. She allowed the material to hang and drape, but pinched and tucked as needed.

You will notice that the piece is hollow. This aspect drew some controversy on campus. Some people objected to the lack of identity for the

bronze pieces. Feel the coolness of the plaque and explore the surface. You'll notice that Pfeiffer has created a totem pole of the senses. Move back and study the work. Notice from a distance how the fingers look like legs? Observe how the light reflects off each piece.

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■ **4a.** Walk over to the fountain in the courtyard and you'll see the piece *Hippokrene*, a bronze sculpture by German artist W.P. Eberhard Eggers. This Trojan horse sculpture rises out of a fountain. Notice how the horse has wheels in place of hind legs, representing the chariot warriors of the Hippodrome.

Emerging from its stomach is a winged horse. This pairing may indicate the birth of ASU West from the main campus in Tempe — the offspring fledgling campus getting its start from the mature university. By giving the younger horse wings, the artist might be saying that the west campus is able to fly on its own.

The name Hippokrene was taken from the myth of Pegasus. A spring called Hippokrene was created after Pegasus hit his hoof on a mountain. The water that flowed down formed a spring with the power to inspire.

Thus, the water in the fountain at ASU West points to the power and inspiration that students and others may find.

Now go to the stairs on the north side of the courtyard and climb a few steps. Turn around.

■ **4b.** From where you are on the steps, you'll see a blue-and-white

pose.

Now go back down the stairs and walk through the courtyard to the south side. Enter the University Center Building to your right, heading into the west side of the U-shaped building.

■ **5.** Here in the lobby of the ballroom, you'll see two wooden masks in glass cases by Valley artist Zarco Guerrero.

The artist, whose first name means "clear eyes," grew up in a family of artists. His father painted portraits, his grandfather was a sign painter. In his young life, Guerrero became interested in masks and studied them in Mexico. To him, the masks represent tangible art. As he developed his style, he became interested in the masks of death. To those in Mexico, death is just another step in life. With his masks, Guerrero says he wants to teach people not to fear death but embrace it.

Look at the masks here in the cases. Even in this state, Guerrero believes the masks have life. You can see from the expressions that there is a vitality.

The two masks were carved out of 500-year-old cedar wood that was found in Hawaii. The naturally dark surface offers a striking background to the bright paint that Guerrero uses.

Now, step out the south doors and walk a few steps east.

■ **6a.** Look closely through the vegetation about eye level and you'll spot *Man and Rabbit*, a metal plate by Bob Haouzous.

Haouzous is a major voice in Native American art. His work touches on ecological, political and sociological issues. How can nature cope with man taking over the environment?

Examine the piece carefully and you can see miniature cars traveling along the bottom edge. Here, the jackrabbit is forced to keep moving, pushed out of its habitat by progress.

Public artworks blend in at ASU West

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money for eight original pieces. The first piece, *Usurohi*, was a \$100,000 steel sculpture by Japanese artist Aiko Miyawaki. The piece was installed in June 1991, with the others in place by the next year.

The collection included the steel Paley gates; *Reading*, a bronze sculpture by Muriel Castanis; *The Five Senses*, bronze plaques by Susan Pfeiffer; *Hippokrene*, a fountain sculpture by W.P. Eberhard Eggers; a blue-and-white spiral tile design by Jun Kaneko; *Man and Rabbi* and *Man and Coyote*, both metal plates by Bob Haozous; and two limestone urns by Giovanni

Milani.

Betsy Fahlman, a professor of art history on ASU's main campus, is impressed with the art on the west campus, especially the Paley gates.

"They're just really, really handsome," she said. "They just make you know that you've arrived someplace."

Fahlman, who will teach a public art class on the main campus this fall, said this type of art is often less intimidating for people.

"It's out in the environment, not in some museum where you're coming with all that baggage. When it's outside, it's something that doesn't even register that it's art. It becomes part of the place."

The ASU West public art has not been without controversy.

Three years ago, the first piece installed was unearthed, in part, because of wear and tear. But for some, Miyawaki's steel sculpture of long slender tubes feeding directly into the ground had become a joke.

Concern over safety and questions about its aesthetics earned it the nickname "Sticky Wickets." *Usurohi* — which stands for "the moment of movement" — eventually lived up to its name. The tubes were yanked out of the ground because campus officials said they had become an attractive nuisance.

A few years before, when the *Reading* sculpture by Castanis was

put in place, there was an outcry from some people on campus who objected that the larger-than-life figure had no face or body. The figure is of a person reading, draped in a long, monklike robe.

"I remember that controversy," Fahlman said. "But this is a wonderful, evocative shape. Her (Castanis') work is rather ghostly. This is how her other pieces look."

That just shows how any kind of art is taken, she said.

"Sometimes it's what happens because of timing or sometimes because of context."

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