

VIEWPOINT

FROM THE EDITOR

Arts fill Phoenix, but no one seems to notice



Ilana Lowery

There are a lot of gems in the Valley, but our community's arts and cultural opportunities are diamonds in the rough. I say this because the creative venues, projects and efforts taking shape in Phoenix aren't getting the attention they deserve.

Just last week I went to the Creative City Trolley Tour sponsored by the Phoenix Community Alliance's Arts, Culture and Public Life committee. It opened my eyes to just a fraction of what the city has to offer.

It also gave me a glimpse into what groups such as Phoenix Phabulous Experience, Valley Leadership, Artlink Phoenix, the city of Phoenix and others are doing to promote arts and culture.

Our first stop after the Bentley Gallery was the City Gallery @ Phoenix City Hall. Raise your hands if you knew there was a privately funded art gallery in City Hall. No? That's what I thought.

The current exhibit, "Art Under Foot: Handmade Floors at the Phx Sky Train," offers an extraordinary look at the terrazzo pedestrian walkways of the Phoenix Sky Train where artisans, fabricators and tradespeople invested more than 40,000 hours to create the latest in terrazzo design, layout and fabrication.

Next up was the Phoenix Phabulous History Mural exhibit, also inside City Hall. The exhibit is a collection of iconic indoor murals depicting the city's past, present and future. The display travels to different locations and was produced by local civic organization Phoenix Phabulous Experience, founded by Carol Poore.

Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, a strong arts supporter, stopped by to talk to tour participants.

"In Phoenix, we recognize the importance of arts and culture to our economy and to our quality of life," the mayor said. Stanton touted several cultural developments downtown, including tripling funding for arts and culture grants.

As the tour continued, we learned the area along Grand Avenue between Van Buren Street and Roosevelt Road, as well as the Roosevelt Road Arts District, is bustling with new art galleries and opportunities. (If you get the chance, make sure to stop by {9} The Gallery to see the "We Are Phx" paintings on display by Aileen Frick.)

We also got to meet members of Valley Leadership's Class 35, who gave us an overview of their Arts4All mobile program for underserved children in first through sixth grades.

Whether you are an art aficionado or you enjoy the occasional symphony performance, one thing is for sure: Arizona's arts and culture sector is a \$581.3 million annual business that we all are responsible to help sustain.

Connect with Ilana Lowery at ilowery@bizjournals.com or on Twitter at [@PhxBizEditor](https://twitter.com/PhxBizEditor).