

Dancing Sky, a permanent art installation in downtown Phoenix, Ariz., offers visitors an ever-changing experience, creating new perspectives as the layers of net and fabric dance with the wind. Photo: Guildworks.

Art aloft: dancing with the breeze

Downtown Phoenix's **Arizona Center** is undergoing a major transformation. One of the objectives was to open up the inward-looking space to connect it to the surrounding neighborhood, creating a more interactive and spontaneous experience for the public. The one-million-square-foot multi-use project includes shopping, restaurants, entertainment, office space and residential units. Creating space within the center where people can wander and relax was an important consideration.

The developers wanted a large-scale art piece that would fill the void in the long courtyard spaces—something dynamic and one-of-a-kind that makes a lasting impression. So they turned to **Guildworks**, a Portland, Ore., firm specializing in tension structures and fabric architecture.

The design was limited by installation requirements, and had to be anchored to an existing building without requiring major structural work. Because a fabric structure of this size could generate considerable wind loads, Guildworks designed **Dancing Sky**, a tensioned net structure that allows the wind to blow through. Guildworks built a scale model of Dancing Sky to understand how the net system would work, as well as multiple full-scale mockups to make needed adjustments and fabricate the art piece accurately.

The installation consists of three interconnected tension net structures that measure more than 300 feet long, with some individual pieces measuring 115 feet. The two primary structures are supported by 70-foot tilted steel masts, and a smaller piece is suspended between them. Smaller fabric pieces are suspended between the nets as accents. For more information, visit www.guildworks.com.