

Desert Landscape

Tempe, Arizona



When artist Bill Tonnesen was hired to transform a local Arizona residence, he couldn't help but notice the current aesthetics of the desert landscape displayed in front of the home.

Bill noted the current state of the yard as "What looked to me like silly metal cacti sprinkled around the client's yard. I saw them as outdoor versions of silk flowers inside." The average lifespan of a saguaro cactus can be as much as 150-200 years – much unlike the current state of the rusted cacti the residence exhibited in the yard.

With a desire to recreate and also expand the life expectancy of his art, Bill, who is not known for run-of-the-mill art, took the mundane and clichéd southwest art pieces and transformed them into anything but ordinary.

The saguaro cactus, cholla, pancake prickly pear, senita, hedgehog, and aloe plants spread throughout Arizona's common desert landscape were duplicated and then fabricated to resemble what one may encounter on a common hike throughout Camelback's foothills.

The new intricate pieces were sent to a local galvanizer, where they were cleaned and coated with zinc – ensuring the integrity of the designs were intact. To add intrigue, instead of just placing the desert landscape back in the yard, Tonnesen literally flipped the landscape on its head. The otherwise common desert landscape is now displayed on the ceiling of the client's entry way to their home.

Tonnesen is an advocate of making his art displayed around the community sustainable so it can be cherished for years to come, and therefore, prefers to use hot-dip galvanizing when possible. Thanks to the long-lasting protection of hot-dip galvanizing, the cactus landscape will more closely mirror the lifespan of the species it captures. ■

Galvanizer

AZZ Galvanizing - Arizona

Artist

Bill Tonnesen