

Oliverio Balcells

Biography and Artist Statement

Oliverio Balcells is a multimedia artist whose practice includes painting, music, murals, mosaic art, films, photography, being a teaching artist and a scholar of the ancient Mesoamerican cultures.

"I'm interested in social themes like history, culture and symbolism. I'm inspired by color, nature and music. The essence of my artwork expresses the energy and personal passion that is reflected in a song, a painting or a public art project."

Oliverio has been selected in 2012, 2016, 2019, 2020 and 2021 by the City of Tempe for different Public Art Programs. Recently he was awarded with the Maryanne Corder grant to work with the Alegre community for a mosaic art standpipe. In 2020 he finished the Project PEACE with a mural design for the basketball courts at Escalante Park. In 2019 he completed a standpipe in Downtown Tempe made with the tile mosaic technique. In 2016 for the In Flux Cycle 6 he painted a mural on Apache Blvd. For the 2012 Public Art Program he painted a utility box on Mill Avenue; the image was then made into a library card for the Tempe Public Library.

In 2020 Oliverio was selected as an artist for various public art programs in the Valley. The City of Glendale chose him to design and paint a bench in downtown for the project "Take a Seat". For the City of Goodyear in celebration of their 75th anniversary he was asked to paint a large 3-D heart sculpture at Wildflower South Park for "The Heart of Goodyear Project". The City of Chandler awarded him a commission to design, with a student from ICAN, an artwork that was installed at a Cabinet Control box in Downtown. In 2017 he was a selected artist for Valley Metro's public art for the Northwest extension of the light rail with a design that will be made as mosaic art on the risers' stairs for one of the stations.

Oliverio presented a multimedia performance at Pueblo Grande Museum, entitled "The Unknown Symbols" with original music and film recorded in the Valley of the Sun. The Arizona Commission on the Arts granted him awards to work as an artist-in-residence with South Mountain High School, Chandler Gilbert Community College and Mercury Mine Elementary School in the Paradise Valley School District. He has also worked with Kyrene School District's Kyrene del Norte elementary school in creating seven murals with students from Kindergarten to 5th grade that were painted in the school hallways. He has done several workshops for CALA's Community Arts Program, Childsplay, Free Arts of Arizona, Xico Inc, Cultural Coalition, Calaca Cultural Center, City of Chandler's Vision Gallery, and the Heard Museum. He is constantly composing music, taking photographs, making field recordings, exhibiting new paintings and traveling for inspiration.

His work has been featured as a cover for a book from the author Ruth Gomber-Munoz, Ph.D., titled Labor and Legality: An Ethnography of a Mexican Immigrant Worker, published by the Oxford University Press, Inc. in New York City.

Oliverio Balcells received his Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from the Univa University in Guadalajara, Mexico.

He currently lives and works in Tempe, Arizona, USA with his wife and two children. His native language is Spanish and English is his second language.

You can find out more about him at www.oliveriobalcells.com