



Betty Stewart and her husband, Lee, look out over the art installation "Voyage" at Canal Convergence, an interactive Scottsdale Waterfront celebration of energy, art and community. The festivities continue through Sunday. PHOTOS BY PATRICK BREEN/THE REPUBLIC

Celebration of art lights up Scottsdale canal waterfront

Canal Convergence poised to showcase large-scale pieces

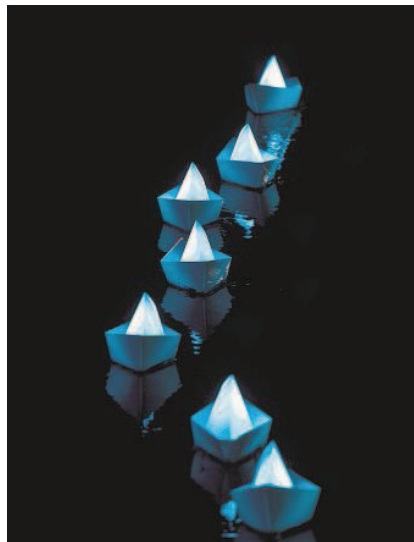
By Sonja Haller
The Republic | azcentral.com

Art can be viewed, appreciated and experienced.

Scottsdale Public Art hopes this weekend's Canal Convergence festivities offer all those things but with the added quality of also being interactive.

The Scottsdale Waterfront is featuring several large-scale art installations alongside or in its downtown canal, many that invite visitors to participate.

"Canal Convergence is very much about building community and engagement," said Donna Isaac, director of Scottsdale Public Art.



"Voyage" is a mobile interactive exhibit made up of 300 LED "paper" boats.

Among the most anticipated exhibits is "Voyage," by the London art team Aether & Hemera. Three hundred floating "paper" boats will illuminate the canal with LED technology. Visitors can change the color and pattern with their mobile phones. The installation was exhibited this year at London's Canary Wharf.

Project co-creator Gloria Ronchi said she initially didn't know how a flotilla of childlike boats would be received in the financial district of London.

"There were a lot of very busy people there, but having them stop and look at the wharf and enjoy the boats like a child was very, very rewarding," Ronchi said. "We had e-mails from people saying they enjoyed coming to work and seeing the paper boats."

"Voyage," which actually is com-

See ART, Page B4

Art

Continued from Page B1

posed of recycled plastic boats, rather than paper, is designed to connect people with childhood memories and imagination.

“The title comes from the idea that you are always free to travel through your imagination,” said Ronchi’s partner, Claudio Benghi.

Salt River Project co-hosts and sponsors the twice-yearly Canal Convergence that began in 2012.

SRP senior analyst in water engineering Jim Duncan, who recently became an advisory board member for Scottsdale Public Art, said the event gives SRP a chance to educate the public on the canals, which have “become part of the landscape” for many Valley residents.

“You could look at ‘Voyage,’ and say that people are attracted because something is floating in the canal,” Duncan said. “But at a minimum it attracts attention to the canal and people start asking questions.”

Water experts are on site to answer questions during the event, held at the Arizona Canal southwest of Scottsdale and Camelback roads. Lit kiosks will include texts and photos about the canal’s history and use.

Other installations include projected art being drawn in real time on the walls of the nearby Olive & Ivy restaurant; dancers moving along the banks of the canal while being hand painted by a Valley artist; and painted images of Arizona’s wildlife and water stretched onto a transparent surface of cellophane.

There will also be live music, food trucks and Artisan Market’s urban-marketplace experience.

Developer Fred Unger, who has an office at the Scottsdale Waterfront and is landlord to several businesses there, called Canal Convergence “a jewel in the crown” of an arts city.



“Voyage,” which is composed of 300 lighted vessels, is designed to evoke childhood memories and imagination. PATRICK BREEN/THE REPUBLIC

CANAL CONVERGENCE INSTALLATIONS

Aquatic Energy: Valley artist Gabe Pecina stretches cellophane between posts or trees and then paints images of Arizona’s wildlife and water onto the transparent surface. Using back-lighting, his images are reflected onto the landscape — making them appear as though they are flowing over a watery surface. Viewing: Noon to 10 p.m. today and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Everything Flows: Dancers from Liliana Gomez & Dance Company dance between tall flowing human forms painted by local artist Ashley Macias to reflect the movement of the water. Viewing: 6-7 p.m. Saturday on the Soleri Bridge and Plaza.

Paisajes de Luz | Landscapes of Light: Ryan Griffin uses digital-projection mapping and a graphic pen tablet to create visual artwork and a performance piece projected onto the architectural facades lining the Scottsdale Waterfront. Viewing: Noon to 10 p.m. today and Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Message in a Boat: Erin Sotak invites visitors to write a message that will later be placed in a vessel and sailed across a lake, river or ocean. Viewing: Noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Voyage: A mobile-interactive piece by Aether & Hemera, featuring 300 illuminated “paper” boats in the canal. Viewing: In the evening through Nov. 18.

More information: canalconvergence.com.

“When there’s things going on, it activates the area,” Unger said. “It draws people to the shops and fills up the restaurants and brings people who have never visited.”

The cost of staging the event is \$84,350, paid for by Scottsdale Public Art, which is overseen by the Scottsdale Cultural Council. The council’s funding comes primarily from fundrais-

ing and an annual allocation from the city.

Public Art officials expect at least 5,000 people to attend, although previous Canal Convergences have attracted up to 12,000 visitors.

Canal Convergence kicks into high gear tonight, with the bulk of the activities taking place on Saturday. The celebration continues through Sunday.