## Water Under the Bridge

March 29-July 24, 2013 Youth Library Gallery

Tempe Town Lake is one of the most recognizable landmarks in the city. Since its opening on Nov. 6, 1999, Tempe Town Lake has been a top destination in Arizona, protecting the region from flooding, providing recreation, creating jobs and stimulating investment.

This exhibition pairs works by local artists Gail Boyd and Jason Roehner, as well as photographs both past and present. These images showcase the beauty and history of the Town Lake and Salt River while highlighting some of the issues related to the local environment and surrounding community affected by the popular recreational destination in Tempe.

## The Artists

Gail Boyd, was born in Michigan, but has spent most of her life in the West. Although she always has loved art, she first pursued a career as an attorney. After retirement as the Assistant Attorney General for Arizona,



Tempe Bridge and Mill by Gail Boyd

she returned to art making and has been painting for more than 15 years. Boyd was the President of the Tempe Artist Guild from 2010-2012. Currently, she continues to paint and be active in the art community.

"In 2011, the Tempe Artists Guild was promoting a project called 'Images of Tempe.' Guild members like me were encouraged to render contemporary images of their town: Tempe. I was inspired by this effort and walked about Tempe photographing the amazing new waterfront of our town. From my photos, I painted the Tempe skyline, Town Lake and bridges from the north shore of the lake. Some of these photos reflected a nearly dry Town Lake after the dam broke. My inspiration for the three paintings on exhibit here was the modern magnificence of our town." www.gailboydart.com

Jason Roehner grew up on the East Coast until 1998 when he and his family moved to Arizona. His early fascination with the seemingly exponential growth of Phoenix led him to explore the relationship of the desert to its inhabitants. He studied photography under artist Mark Klett, a pioneer of rephotography, which is a process of locating the original vantage points of historic photographs and re-photographing them. Roehner graduated with his Bachelor of Arts degree from Arizona State University in 2008. He is currently Head Photographer at High Res Media, LLC., a company specializing in Southwest architectural photography. He also is involved with the Phoenix Transect Project, a visual research project involving ASU graduates and faculty, where he is interested in what growth may to come to areas along the path of the light rail.

"For me, photography helps foster discovery, and is most exciting when the camera helps me see and understand my environment. By revisiting the exact vantage point where a previous photograph was made, I'm not only interested in remaking the same photograph, but in taking part in history – making a new photograph that becomes part of the ongoing record of a place in time. Working within the relatively short history of Greater Phoenix, I am interested in how rephotography allows us to visualize and experience a place through time, the changes that accumulate every day in front of our eyes, beneath our feet." www.jasonroehner.com

## Other contributors

The Tempe History Museum has provided several photos dating back to Tempe in the early 1900s. These photos feature scenes that capture the activity that the Salt River provided the area, as well as many of the struggles that the river (pre-Town Lake) created. Crossing the river and flooding posed major problems for residents during times of high water levels. The dam was built to prevent flooding, while simultaneously providing a constant source of recreation.

The city of Tempe has provided several photos taken from the city archives. They feature images of several of the notable bridges across the lake, including the Mill Avenue bridges, the light rail and railroad bridges, and the newest pedestrian bridge. The southbound Mill Avenue bridge was built in 1931 and was the first automobile crossing of the Salt River. Today, it and the newer northbound bridge, built in 1994, are a center point for the lake. The light rail bridge, modeled after the adjacent railroad bridge from 1912, was built in 2006 with a LED light system that emits a colorful light show every time the light rail passes over. At the western end of the lake, lies the most recent pedestrian bridge. It opened in October 2011, after the replacement of the broken dam, and functions to shade the dam's bladders and cool them with a built-in sprinkler system under the deck, as well as to allow bikers, walkers, runners and skateboarders to cross without competing with traffic.