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VISUAL ARTS & ARCHITECTURE

## Totems to ancient days

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Tucked just off the road in a quiet Buckhead neighborhood, six colossal pipes make for a mysterious construction. By day, you might mistake them for smokestacks poking up behind a screen of trees. By night, you'll wonder what is giving off blue and rose light as you drive along meandering Peachtree Hills Avenue.

"South Music" is a striking outdoor sculpture created in 1985 by Spanish artist Angel Orensanz. Originally commissioned by architect-developer John Portman for installation at the Marriott Marquis, the soaring structure was relocated in March to its new home in front of the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center.



(ENLARGE)

The playful steel columns of 'South Music,' at the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center in Buckhead, fit into their surroundings, a signature trait of Spanish artist Angel Orensanz.

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Comprised of pieced Corten steel pipes mounted on concrete bases, the metal shafts range from 48 to 69 feet tall, towering above the roofline of ADAC, but blending with the tranquil, leafy surroundings. Tubular, totemic shapes are among the artist's favorites — monumental, elegant and rooted in ancient civilization.

Yet "South Music" is decidedly contemporary. Painted white, the grouping of vertical elements is simultaneously sophisticated and playful. Each pipe is cut with varying geometric shapes — rectangles, squares, slits, half-moons and portholes, some of which are opened like windows in an imaginary high-rise or a child's Advent calendar.

Peering inside, you see saturated blue, ochre and brick red. At night, interior lighting transforms these colors, casting both a soft glow and fascinating patterns of shadow on the smooth exterior.

Orensanz is known for seeking balance between his installations and their surroundings, harmonizing through materials and forms in often unexpected ways. A prolific artist for more than three decades, he has created large-scale public works, land art, ceramics, drawings and engravings that are exhibited and installed across the globe.

Finding new life in a less urban setting, "South Music" demonstrates that stunning art, like beautiful music, can adapt to changes in both time and context, continuing to engage and delight its audience.

"South Music," Atlanta Decorative Arts Center, 351 Peachtree Hills Ave., Atlanta.

— Debra Wolf



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