

Conceptual Artwork Proposal – Tomie Arai
Revised March, 2015
Conceptual theme: Gate/Way (working title)

The artist proposes to tell a story about San Francisco Chinatown through a continuing visual timeline that begins on the platform level and winds across three sides of the parapet wall above the subway entrance. The working title of this artwork will be 'Gate/Way'; a double reference to the Central Subway station as a gateway to Chinatown, and the site of Chinatown as an historic gateway to America.

Incorporating traditional architectural elements such as the Chinese moongate, (the circular entranceway to Chinese gardens) and Chinese motifs and symbols, the artwork for the station will reflect a dynamic tension between the past and present, old and new, and the natural and built environment.

On the platform level, the circle and square, traditional symbols for heaven and earth in Chinese culture will frame views of the historic past.

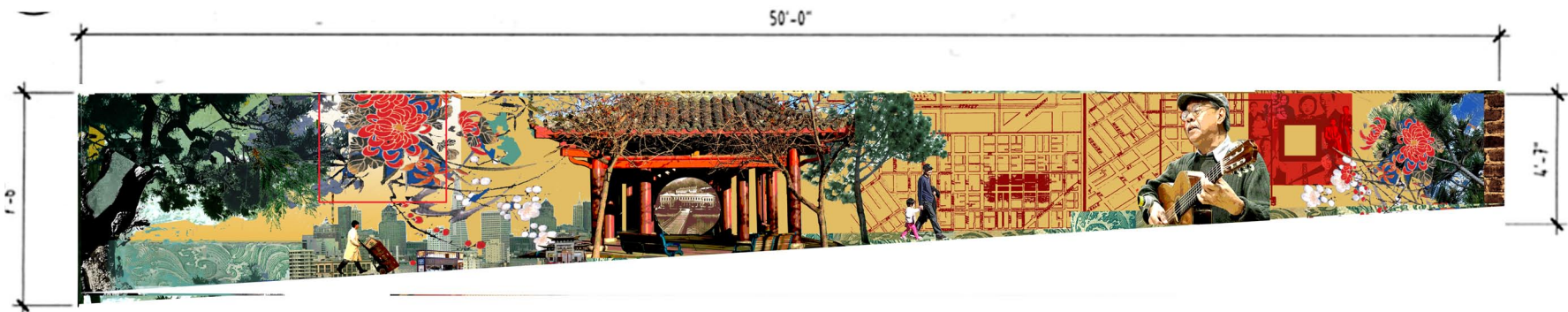
One wall will consist of images of the early settlement of San Francisco, the gold rush, immigration to the US through Angel Island and the great earthquake. On the opposite wall, the resilience of the community of Chinatown and greater San Francisco will be celebrated through a montage of images from 1906 to the present

Ascending to the surface level, images of present day Chinatown will unscroll across three walls of the parapet above the station entrance. In the first panel of this triptych, the design intentionally extends the landscaping elements of the plaza with a seascape and scenes from a garden. As a space of reflection, a garden is symbolic of beginnings, growth, sustainability and roots in the community. The garden opens up to the port of San Francisco and a map of the world embedded in the Chinese symbol for heaven. At the juncture where the sides of the artwork meet, trees and foliage representing indigenous and transplanted flora come together, suggesting that hybrid cultures are an inevitable part of the city in the 21st century. A pine tree based on photographs of trees in Portsmouth square, indigenous California live oak and imported eucalyptus trees are an example of this hybrid mix.

Traveling across Stockton Street and around to the Washington Street wall, the city of San Francisco is foregrounded by a view of Portsmouth Square, the symbolic core of SF Chinatown, and portal to both the past and present. Through this portal, the viewer is asked to telescope back to an image of Angel Island and forwards to an image of a father walking his child to school.

Across the wall, the viewer moves from the local specificity of home and neighborhood, to a broader vision for the city's global future, as both older and younger generations celebrate the community and the bridges built between diverse cultures, traditions and aspirations for Chinatown, the city and the nation.

Proposed Designs for 'Gate/Way'
Surface level artwork for parapet above subway entrance
Submitted February 25, 2015



Artwork - Stockton

2
XX-10

ELEVATION



Artwork - Washington

1
XX-10

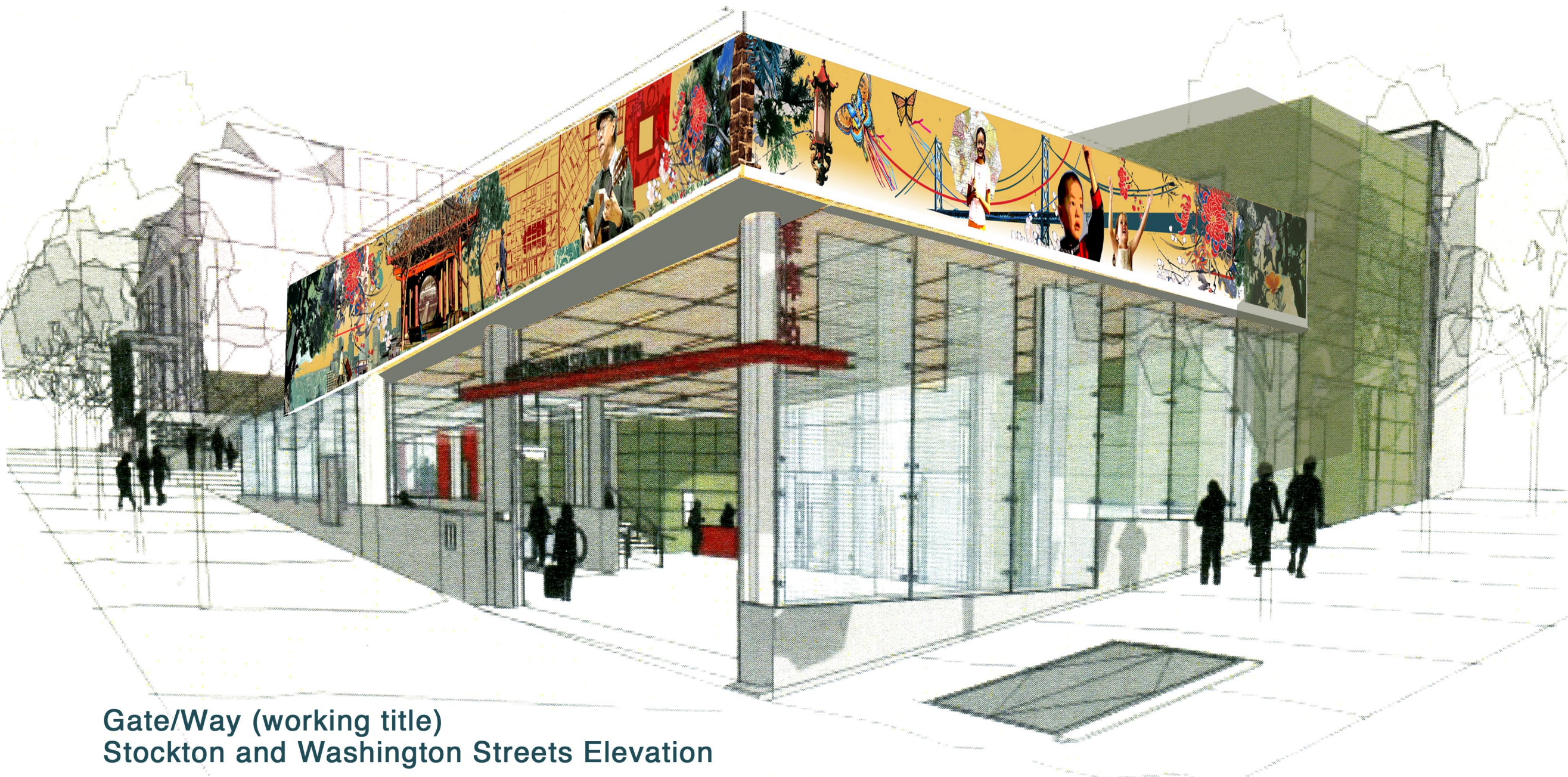
ELEVATION



Stockton Elevation

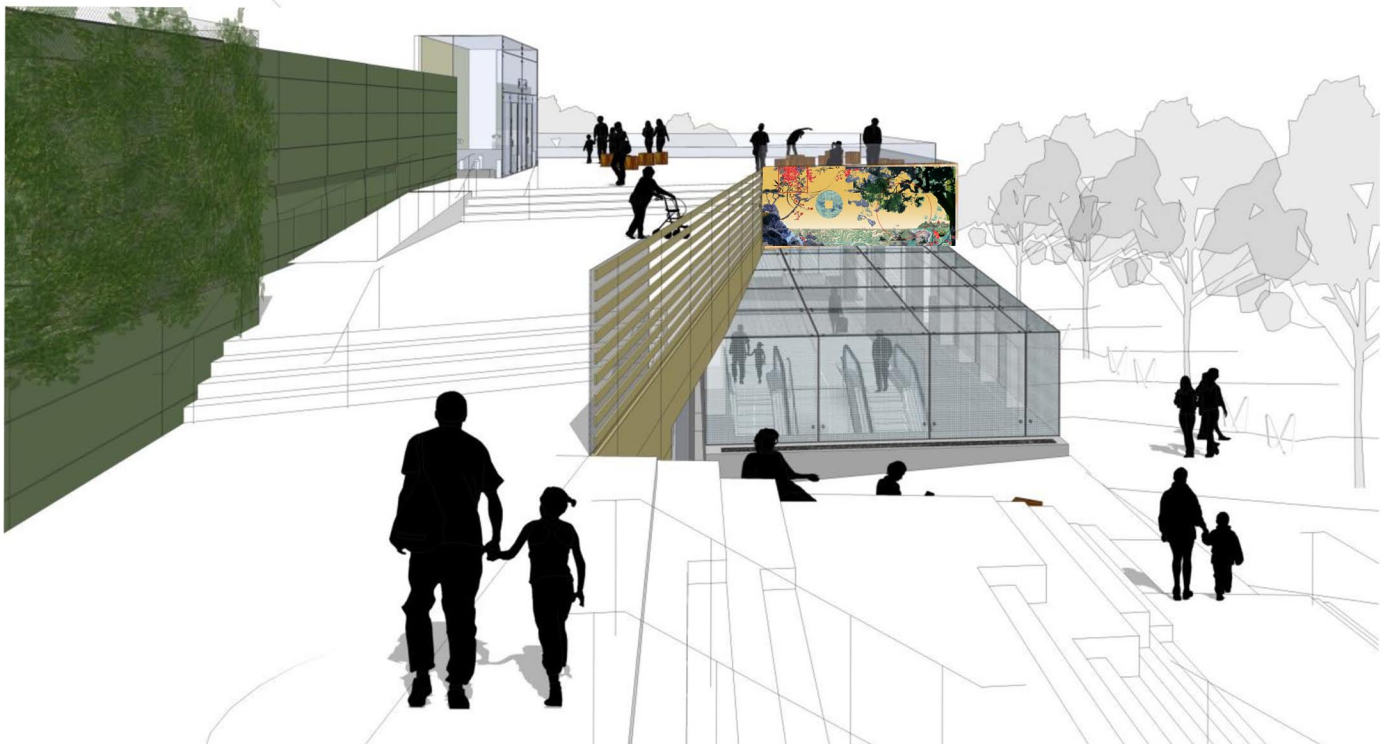


Washington Elevation



Gate/Way (working title)
Stockton and Washington Streets Elevation

Gate/Way (Working title)
Plaza elevation
March 2015



18 FT



Platform - South Wall
Proposed design for 'Gate/Way'

18 FT



Platform - North Wall
Proposed design for 'Gate/Way'