

Conceptual Artwork Proposal – Tomie Arai Revised May, 2015

Conceptual theme: Gate/Way (working title)

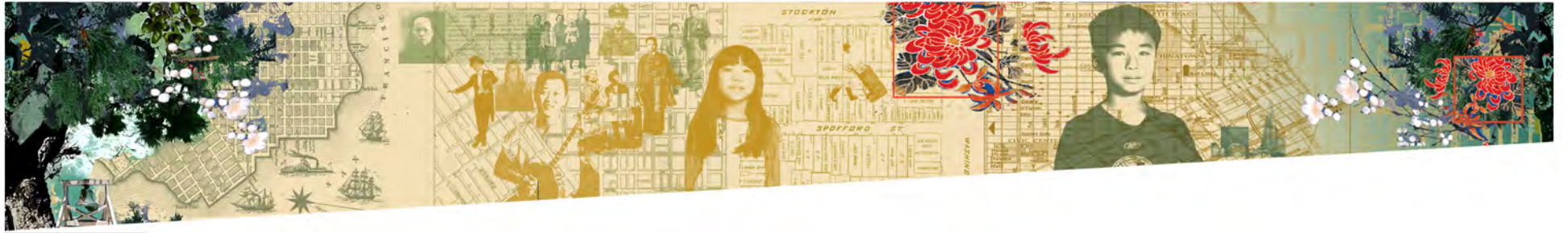
The artist proposes to tell a story about San Francisco Chinatown through a continuing visual timeline that begins on the platform level and winds across three sides of the parapet wall above the subway entrance. The working title of this artwork will be 'Gate/Way'; a double reference to the Central 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 moon gate, (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 and sustainability. 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 a composite photographs of trees in Portsmouth square, indigenous California live oak and eucalyptus trees are an example of this hybrid mix.

Maps are used to reinforce the significance of the station as a portal and a transportation hub, as the design moves across the wall from an early 19th century map of San Francisco harbor to maps of Chinatown, downtown San Francisco, a California State map and a map of the world. On the Stockton Street wall, early maps of Chinatown streets and the business establishments that were once the economic engine of Chinatown can be seen through the transparent portraits of community members, as a way to suggest that the history of the neighborhoods we live and work in become embedded in who we are. Moving across to the Washington Street side, a map of the city expands into a map of the United States and the world. Through this design, I've tried to depict the neighborhood as a place of transition; a place that is moving rapidly towards a more global future. The portraits of diverse young students from the Gordon Lau Elementary school (situated only a block from the station), are framed within in the red symbol of earth placed at the wall's end.

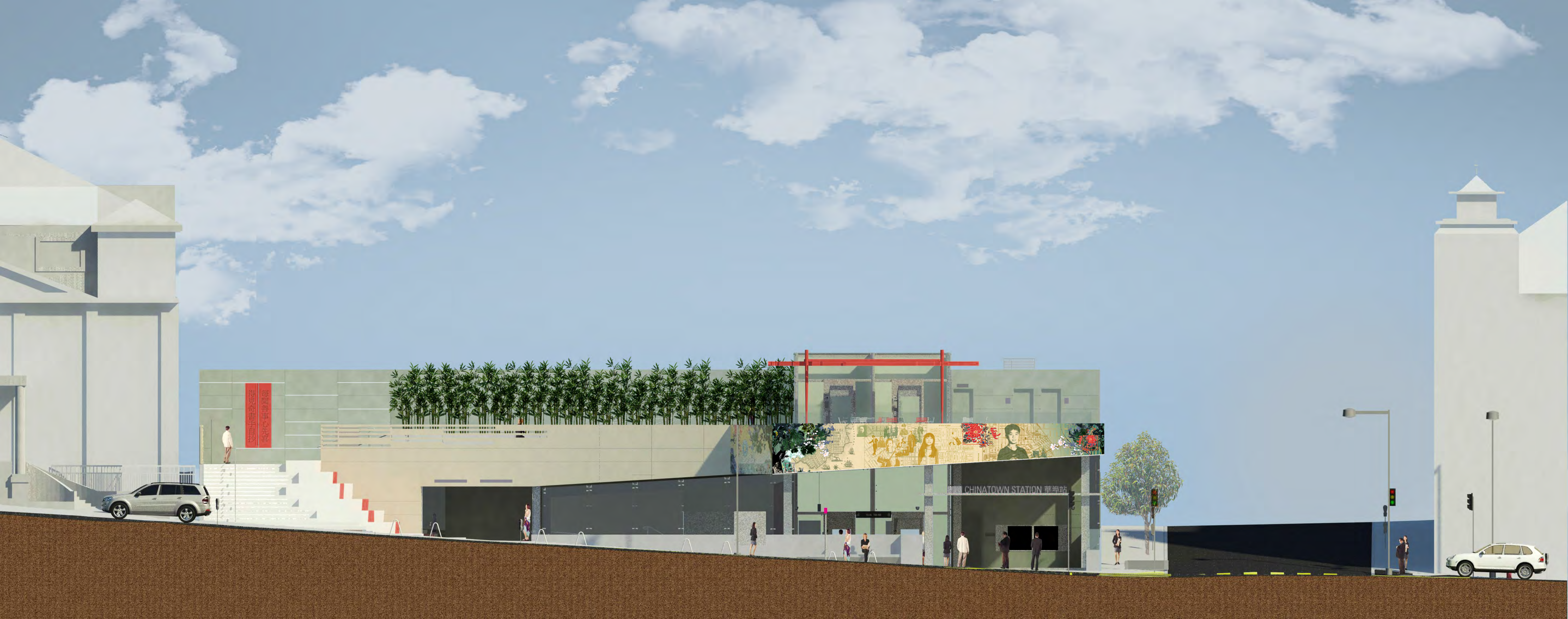




CHINATOWN STATION 華埠站

華埠站

metro



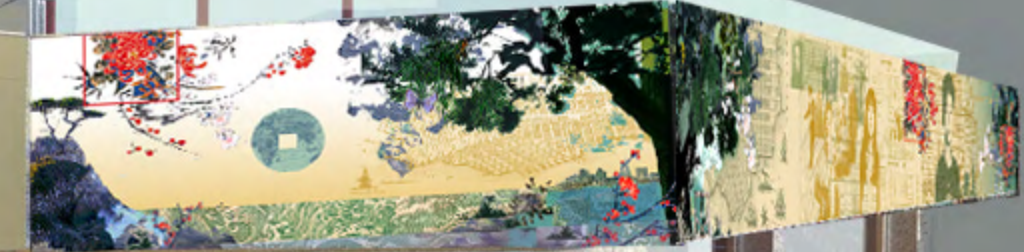
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CHINATOWN STATION 華埠站



公園名
PLAZA NAME

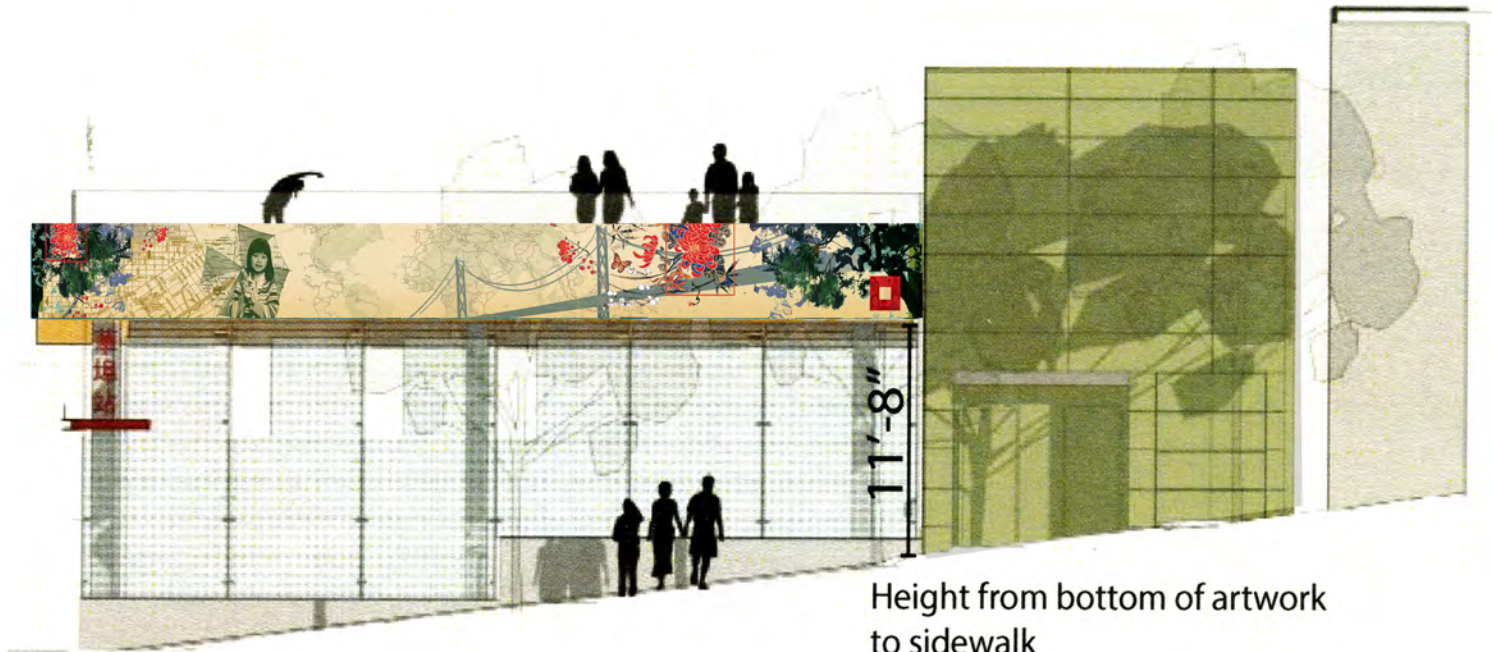
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Height from bottom of artwork to sidewalk

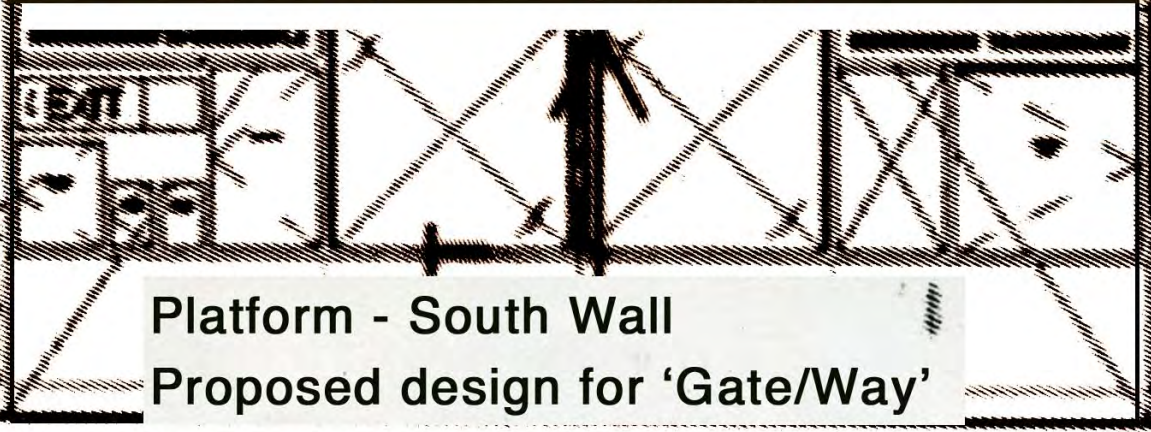
Stockton Elevation



Height from bottom of artwork to sidewalk

Washington Elevation

18 FT



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

18 FT



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