

The University of Houston Campus Art Committee and the Public Art Collection  
Nathan Carter Proposal for an Outdoor Sculpture for the  
New University of Houston Central Campus Village Student Housing  
March 28, 2012

I would like to thank the University of Houston Campus Art Committee and the Public Art Collection for considering my proposal for an outdoor sculpture for the new University of Houston Central Campus Village Student Housing.

I am proposing a single installation made up of a collection of six free standing outdoor sculptures fixed to the top of a sitting wall that surrounds the a patio in front of the Commons building. Depending on the budget it's possible that I may be able to add two to three additional "roaming" sculptures that would be placed on the grass in front of the wall of sculptures.

When viewed from the front and from within the building, I want the piece to appear as a very colorful and visually engaging sculptural mural. The piece uses color, shape and line to communicate to people of all ages a playful sense of discovery. The installation will provide the pleasure of letting your eyes drift with no fixed purpose around a sculptural representation of dynamic synthesis of abstract visual language, fragments of non-verbal signals and calligraphic forms.

I first started making these groups of pieces in 2008 response to a grouping of small Alexander Calder sculptures exhibited on a stage-like structure at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. I felt as if I was looking at a group of characters acting out a scene in a theatrical setting. I started making groupings of sculptures knowing I wanted them to be viewed as a single piece. I always built a small stage to place them on where they could only be seen from the front and both sides. Recently I've been making double-sided dioramas that are meant to be a 360° viewing experience. While working on the sketches for this project I have incorporated another reference point, David Smith's Voltri Series, a series of 27 sculptures made in only 30 days at an abandoned steel mill in Italy. The Smith sculptures were first displayed on the terraces of an ancient Roman amphitheater in 1962. Once again I view these pieces as curious characters acting as a group or a gang of odd characters.

The forms in my initial sketches for the sculptures seem similar to typographic or calligraphic forms assembled to form a word or a sentence. After making them I had a realization that the assembled shapes and lines took on an almost Dr. Seussian energy as if balancing an impossible number of objects all at once. Each piece has a composition made up of round shapes, lines and J slide shapes that seem as if a typographic letter forms were juggling many round shapes of varied size.

My choice of color for this series of pieces is based on a strong memories of looking at a visually active spread depicting a busy airport in Richard Scarry's *Busiest People Ever* book. The airport control tower had noticeable red and white graphic stripes painted on the sides presumably to been seen from a distance. The blades of a helicopter painted are to look like a French flag or the contrasting colors used by the United States Post Office. I am also referencing the colors of sport team uniforms that are designed to be seen from a distance and have similar high visibility color patterns possibly adapted from the appearance of animals such as skunks and bees to project a sense of danger and warning.

The proposed sculptures are made out of aluminum plate and rods that are primed, painted and covered with a clear coat to protect against weather and repeated power washer cleaning. Each piece is to be bolted securely to pre-installed bolts embedded on the top of the "sitting wall" that surrounds the patio area. Additional pieces on the grass in front of the wall they would be fixed via base plates that are bolted to pre-installed buried concrete forms.

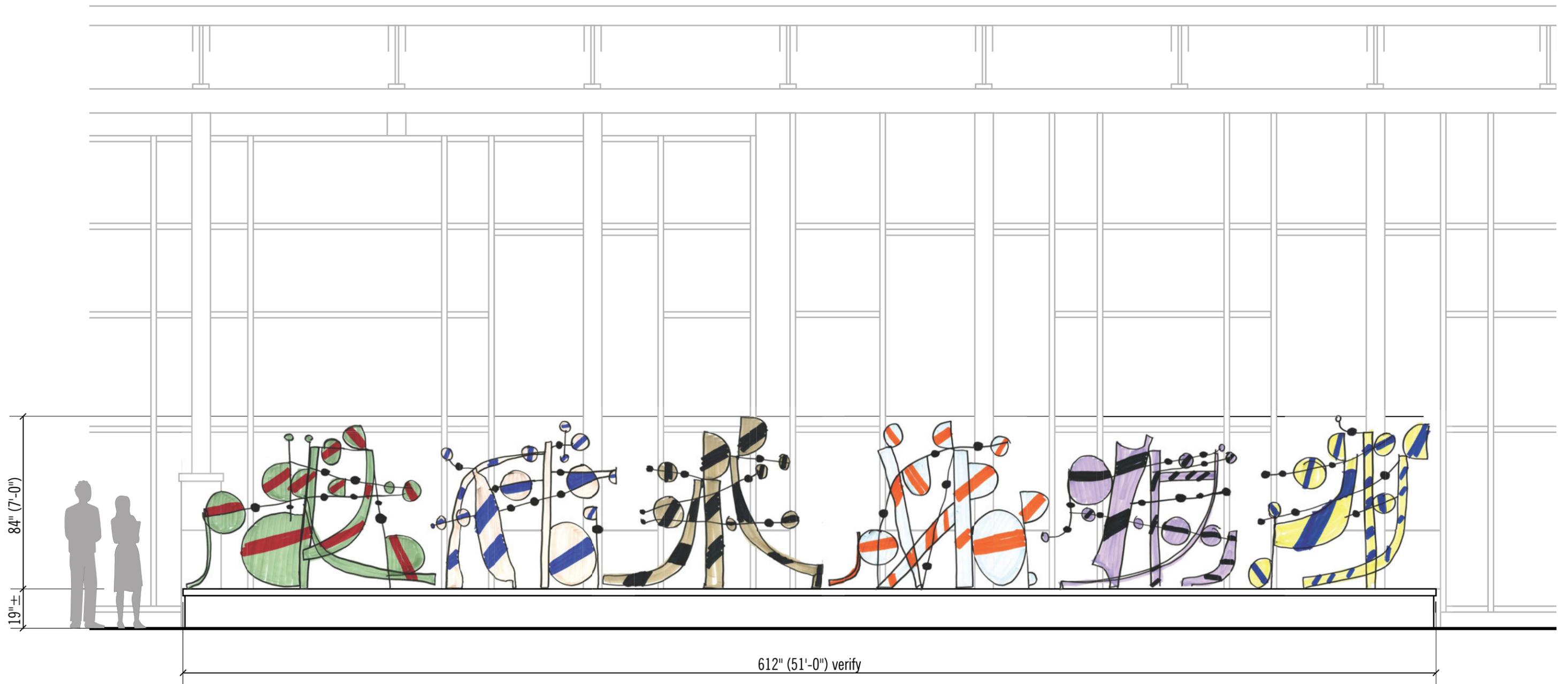
To create this preliminary proposal I collaborated with the architecture and environmental graphics firm McGINTY Inc., based in Boulder Colorado, to help draft the schematic diagrams. Engraphix, the St. Louis based outdoor signage fabricator, will produce, transport and install the pieces at the University of Houston.

Thank you again for your consideration.

## Proposal Description

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Concept Design 3.28.12 p.1



## Exterior View of Patio Wall

Nathan Carter Proposal for an Outdoor Sculpture for the  
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 Concept Design 3.28.12 p.2

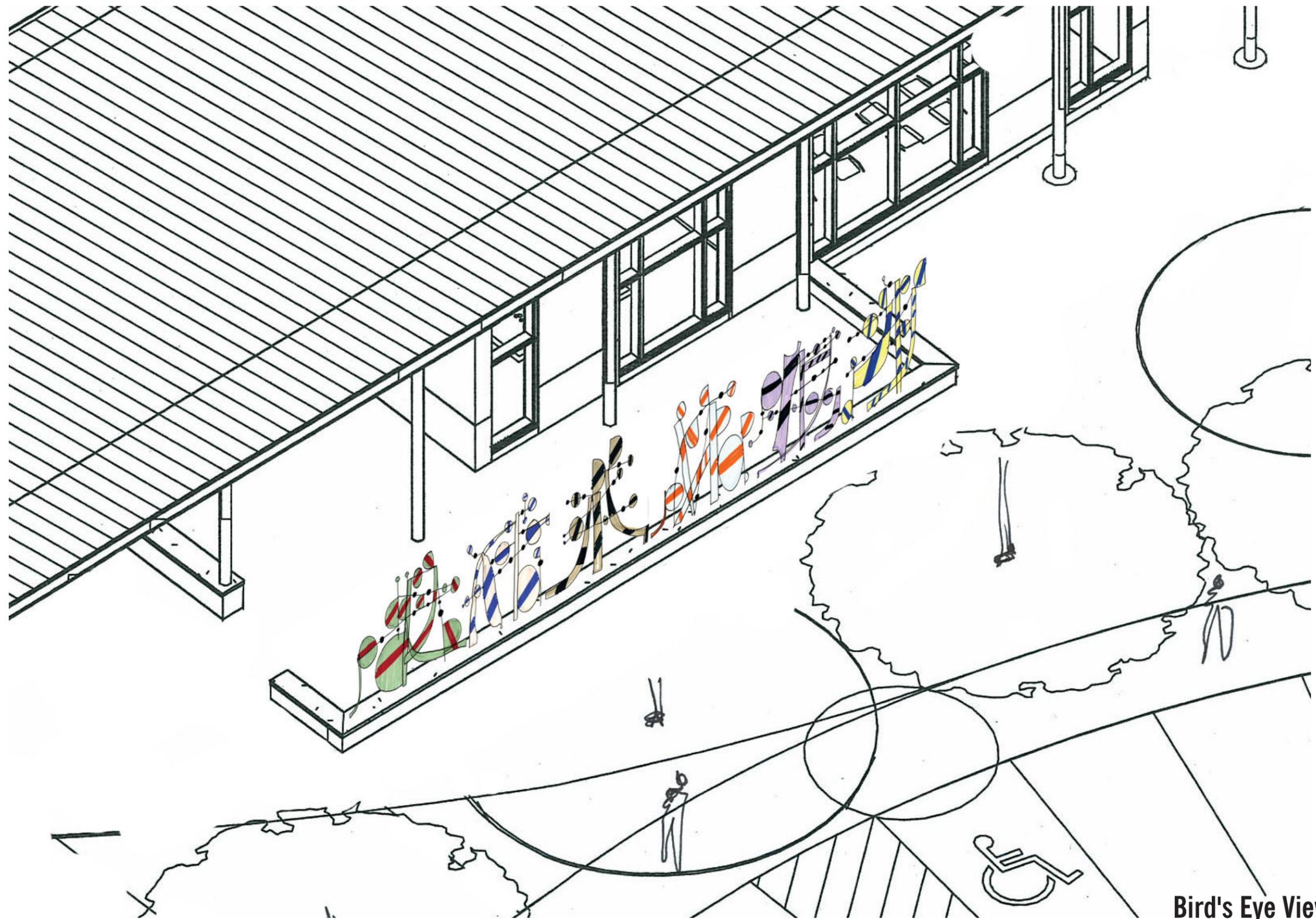
1 Elevation: Commons Building Entrance  
 Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



### Interior View of Patio Wall

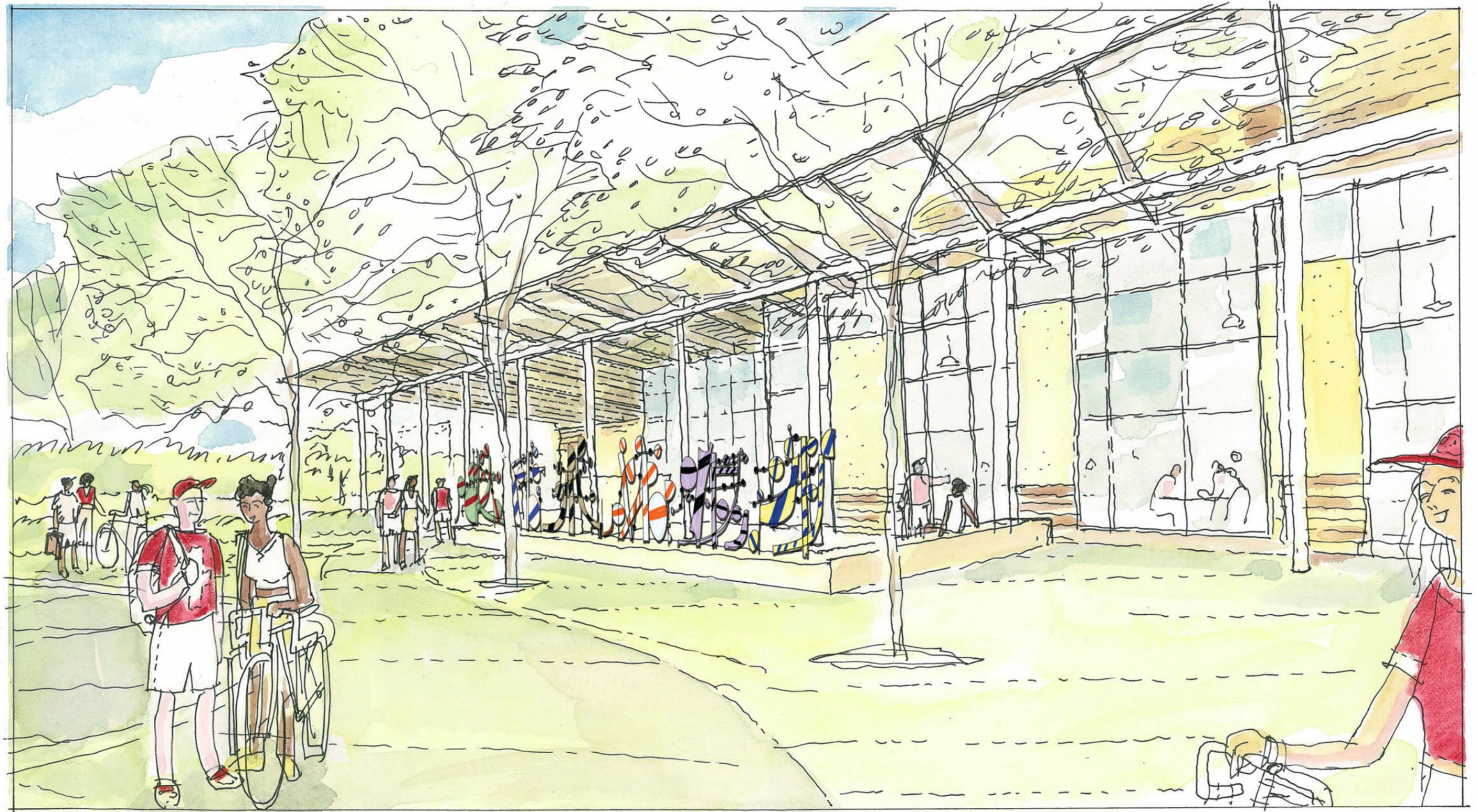
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1 Elevation: Commons Building Entrance  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



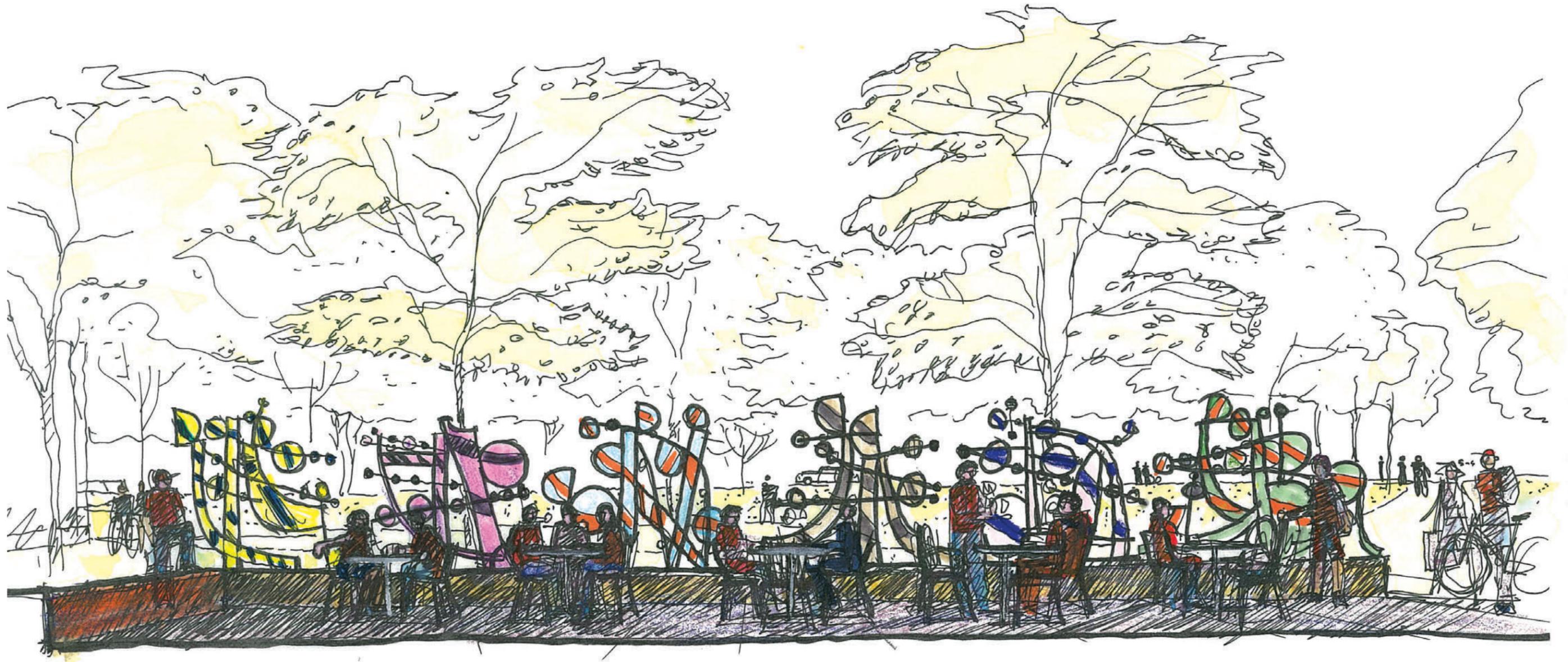
1 Bird's Eye View  
Scale: NTS

**Bird's Eye View of Patio Wall**  
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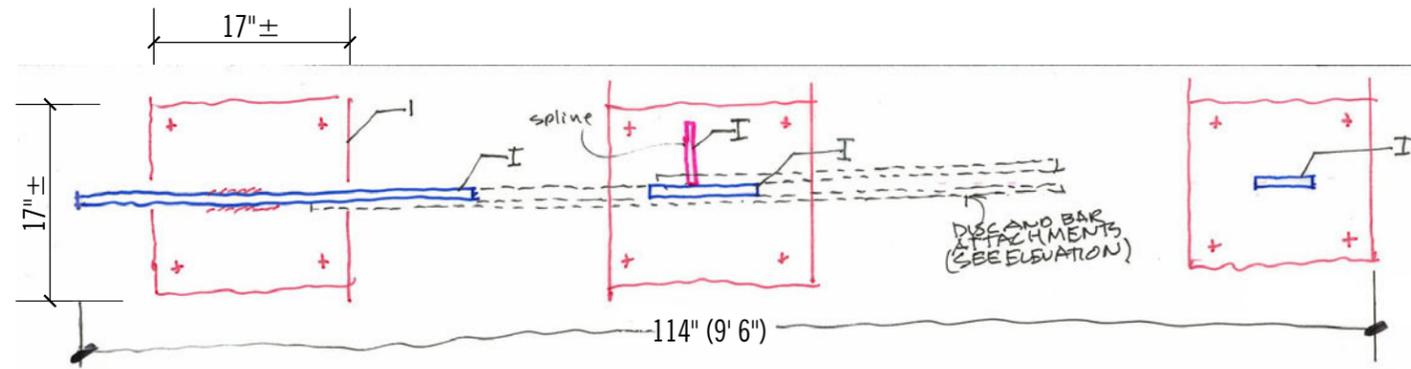
## Perspective View from Outside Patio Wall

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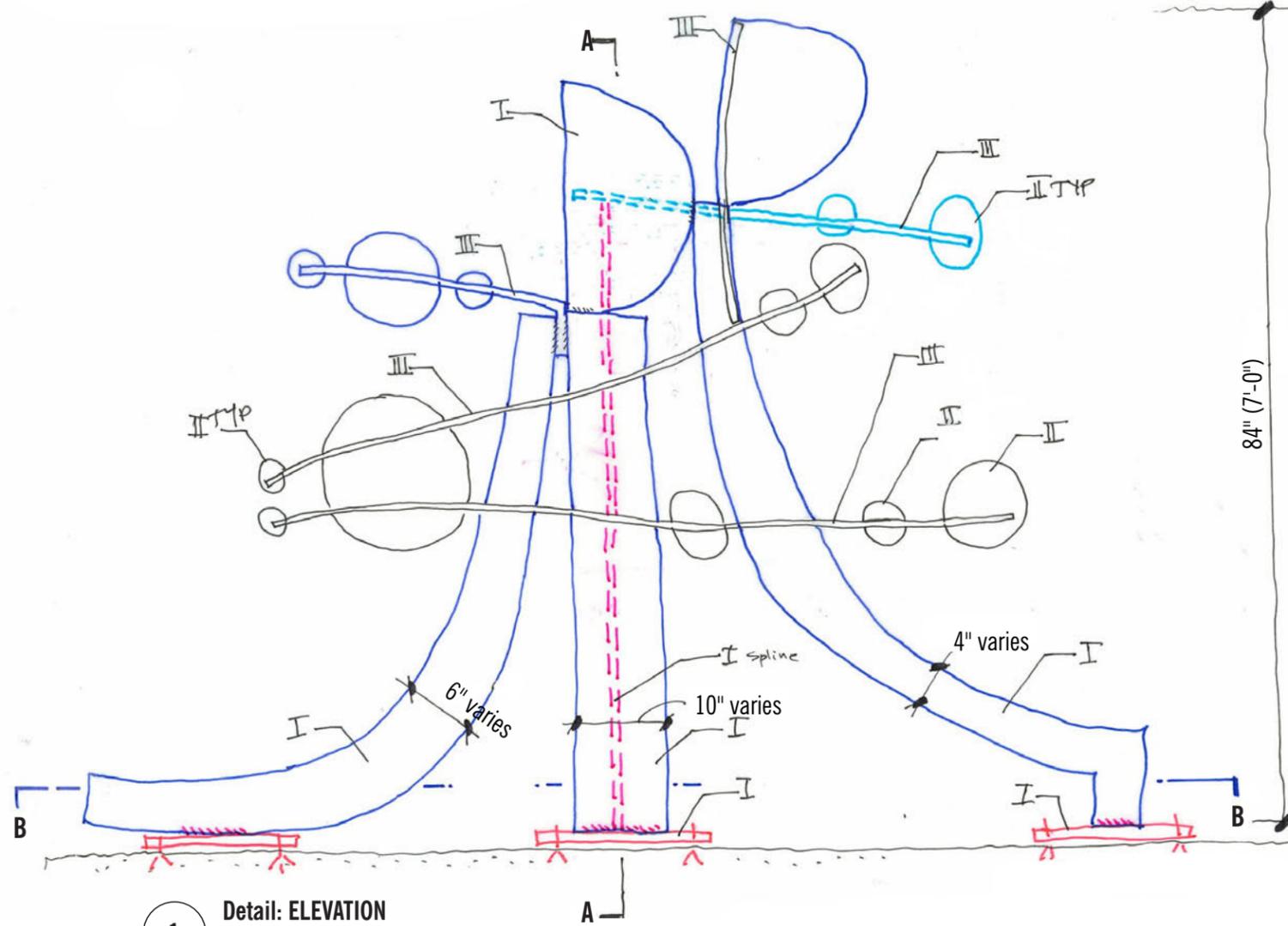


## Perspective View from Inside Patio Wall

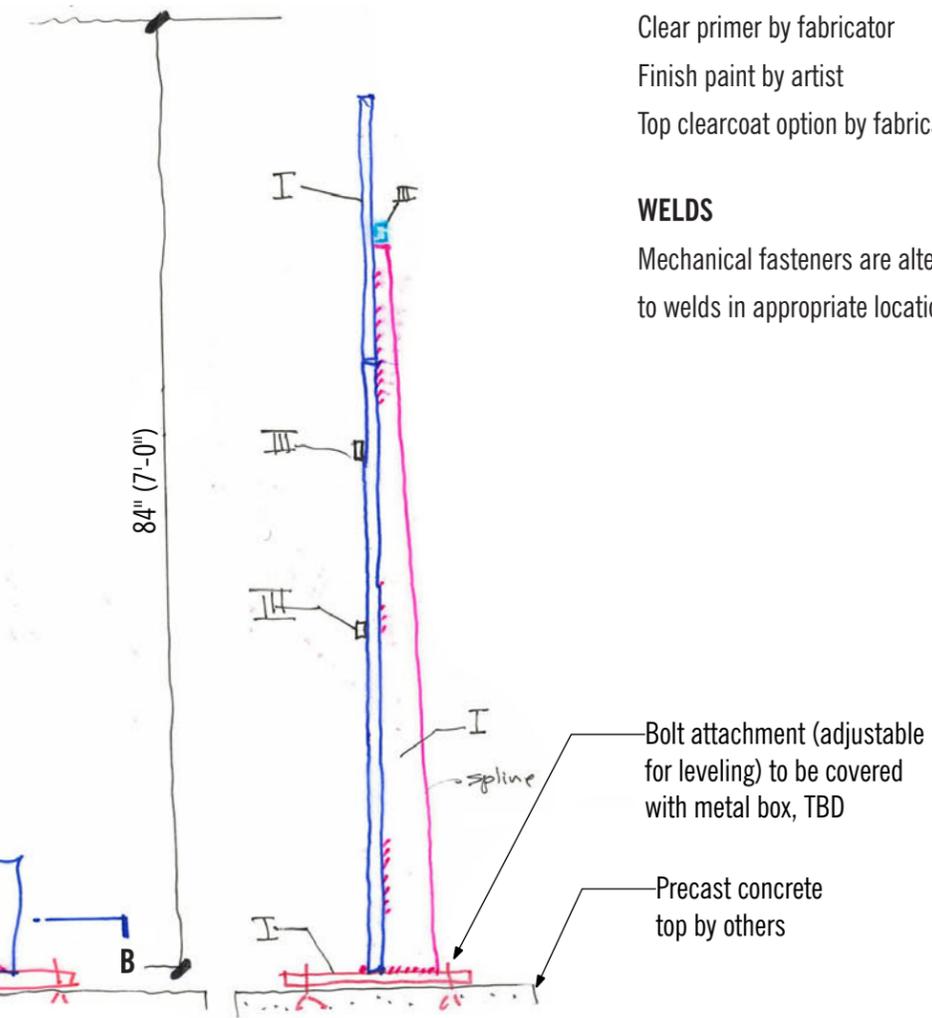
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**B** Detail: PLAN SECTION  
Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"



**1** Detail: ELEVATION  
Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"



**A** Detail: SECTION  
Scale: 3/4" = 1'-0"

**MATERIALS**

- I** 5/8" or 3/4" Aluminum plate, laser cut
- II** 1/4" Aluminum sheet, laser cut
- III** 5/8" or 3/4" Aluminum plate, laser cut OR 5/8" Steel rod

- (9) Type **I** pieces (including bases, sculptural shapes, vertical spline)
- (12) Type **II** pieces (including bases, sculptural shapes, vertical splines)
- (5) Type **III** pieces

**FINISH**

- Clear primer by fabricator
- Finish paint by artist
- Top clearcoat option by fabricator

**WELDS**

- Mechanical fasteners are alternate to welds in appropriate locations

**Details**

