

Rethink Culver, LLC on behalf of Brooks + Scarpa
9814 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90230

Architecture as Art Proposal Statement

The sculptural stair enclosures at the Culver Theater Apartments were conceived as a work of art, integral to the architecture. Their underlying concept derives from the image of a dynamic curtain: a diaphanous, cinematic veil whose visual qualities shift with movement, light, and time. While the stairs themselves are materially static functional elements, the shaped aluminum louvers are arranged to produce a sense of flowing drapery that modulates density, rhythm, and shadow. This interplay transforms the vertical circulation cores into expressive sculptural objects anchoring the public paseo, designed to “*express ideas, meaning, and conceptual complexity*,” consistent with the criteria for Architecture as Art established in Ordinance No. 2013-003.

Rooted in Culver City’s cultural and cinematic heritage, the piece draws on the language of film strips, sequential framing, and performance. As pedestrians move around the building or as occupants ascend within the stair, the louvers create a constantly shifting series of views and vignettes, revealing and reframing the city beyond. In daylight, the fins cast animated shadows that create a waterfall-like visual cascade; at night, internal illumination transforms the enclosure into an urban lantern, extending the performative qualities of the historic Kirk Douglas Theatre into the contemporary streetscape. This experiential richness allows the architecture to operate simultaneously as infrastructure and cultural artifact, contributing visual identity and symbolism to Washington Boulevard and the broader public realm.

Fabricated from corrosion-resistant aluminum with a durable PVDF finish, the louvers reflect a high level of craft and permanence. Their profiles were refined through iterative sketching, full-scale prototyping, and collaboration with specialty fabricators, ensuring the final work embodies both artistic precision and long-term civic durability. As an integrated sculptural system that elevates a required building element into something culturally resonant, the stair enclosures fulfill the ordinance’s intent that Architecture as Art be “*a significant and unique representation of architectural artwork*.” They stand as a contribution to Culver City’s ongoing legacy of innovation in art, design, and storytelling.