

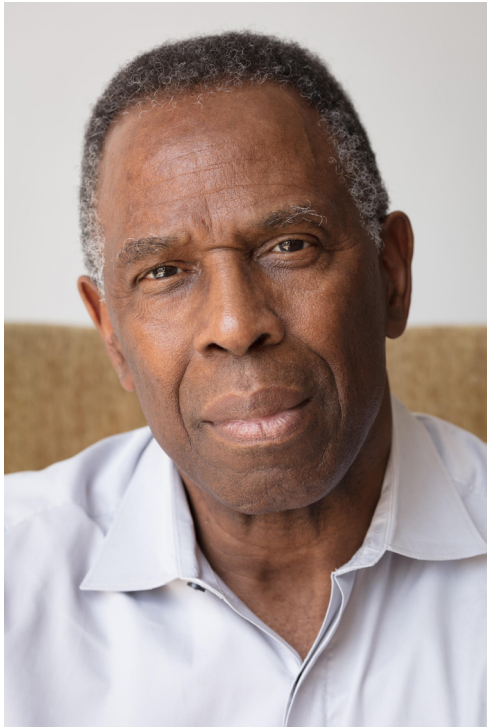


# A FRAME FOR A TREE

Charles Gaines

Proposal prepared for the City of Culver City  
Washington & National Gateway





**CHARLES GAINES** is a pivotal figure in the field of Conceptual Art. Charles Gaines' body of work engages formulas and systems that interrogate relationships between the objective and the subjective realms. Using a generative approach, he creates artworks in series and various mediums. Gaines has built a bridge between the early conceptual artists of the 1960s and 1970s and subsequent generations of artists pushing the limits of conceptualism today.

The proposed artwork, **A Frame for a Tree**, continues Charles Gaines's critically acclaimed system-based works and his use of trees as the subject. Images of trees have figured prominently in Gaines's practice since the mid-1970s when he first began plotting their forms through a system of numbered grids in his series Walnut Tree Orchard (1975 - 2014).

Beginning with Walnut Tree Orchard, Gaines started creating and implementing logical systems. In these and other works from the ongoing series Numbers and Trees (1986 - now), the tree-object is collapsed within a gridded numerical. The resulting work creates a tension between the organic outline of the tree and the numeric logic that manifests their image.



Charles Gaines, Walnut Tree Orchard series (1975–2014), installation view of Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989 at Hammer Museum. Photo: Brian Forrest.



Charles Gaines, Numbers and Trees series (1986–89), installation view of Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989 at Hammer Museum. Photo: Brian Forrest.

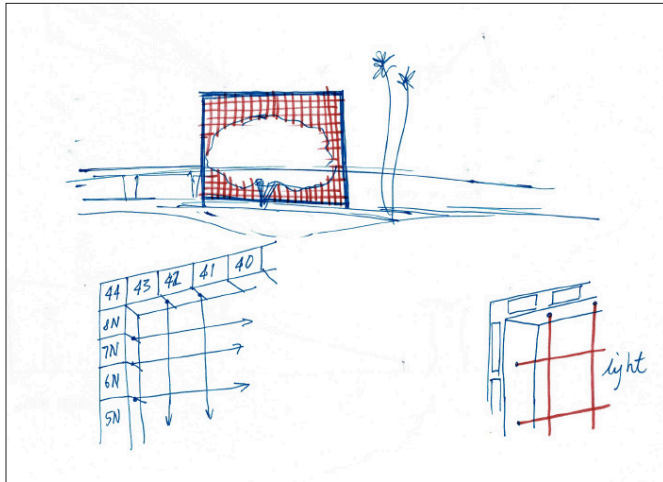
For the Washington & National gateway project, Charles Gaines proposes an iconic new artwork. The artwork is an approximately 78-by-100-foot rectangular metal structure framing the mature ficus tree at the site. The ficus tree sits in the center of the proposal site, an overlooked corner of a busy intersection. Gaines' proposed artwork would transform the corner with a monumental and elegant sculpture that breathes new life into the historic tree.

The artwork is a screen, a frame, and a reference point. Its economy in form draws connections with the immediate environment evoking transit and urban planning, culturally relevant icons such as billboards and projection screens, and even an artist's viewfinder. The artwork poetically frames the ficus tree but also Culver City itself as it creates organized vantage points from the ground plane, metro line, and adjacent multi-story buildings.



Charles Gaines, A Frame for a Tree, proposal rendering by TOLO Architecture, 2022





Charles Gaines, proposal sketch, 2021



Charles Gaines, proposal sketch, 2021



Charles Gaines, A Frame for a Tree, initial concept rendering by Dyson & Womack, 2021

Charles Gaines Studio is located in Los Angeles. In addition to his work as an artist, Gaines is a CalArts School of Art faculty member and is the subject of numerous exhibitions in the United States and internationally. The impact of his practice and presence in Southern California is visible in the generations of students he has taught, the art spaces he has supported, and the breadth of work he has created.

“A Frame For A Tree” is a critical continuation of his impact in a monumental public artwork that is both elegant and direct. The artist’s initial design for this proposal was a jumping-off point for collaborator Tolo Architecture. After the proposal was selected, Gaines and his team developed the artwork further, incorporating feedback from the selection committee and panel. The following pages show the design in its current state of development.

Lighting is essential to the artwork as it transforms from day to night. At the current design development stage, the artist intends for the lighting component to exist across three distinct yet integrated spheres.

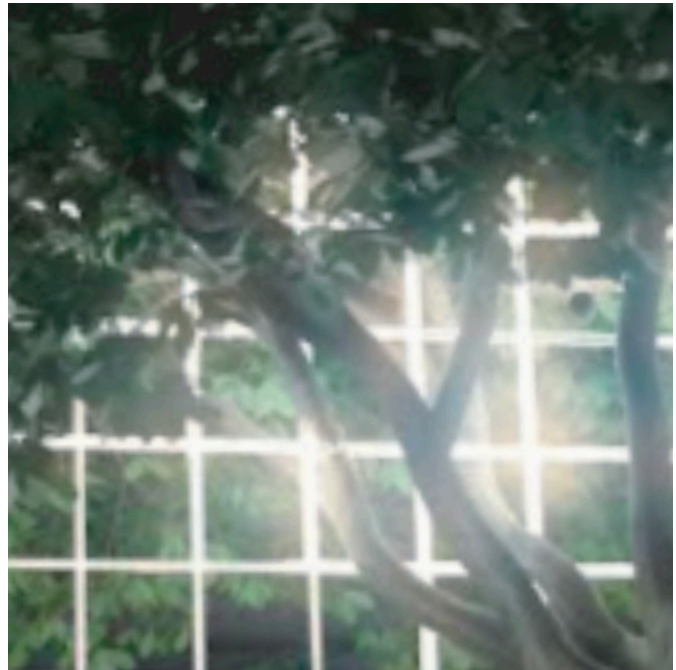
**LANDSCAPE:** the landscape lighting will address as-needed wayfinding, signage lighting, and accent lighting.

**TREE:** low voltage lighting will be used to enhance the tree’s natural beauty, allowing it to be visible to the public day and night. However, accent lighting will not emit outwards from the tree’s crown.

ARTWORK: the artwork lighting will be a form of architectural accent lighting that will not emit outwards but instead be used to accent the shape of the grid, creating ambiance and enabling nighttime visibility. CGS intends to work with a lighting designer to design a supportive environment for the artwork and the public.

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Once approved by the Commission and City Council, Gaines will work with the city to refine and define the scale and scope of the artwork. However, the essential essence of the artwork will remain the same, the tree as subject and the artist's critical engagement with the deterministic relationship between object and implementation.

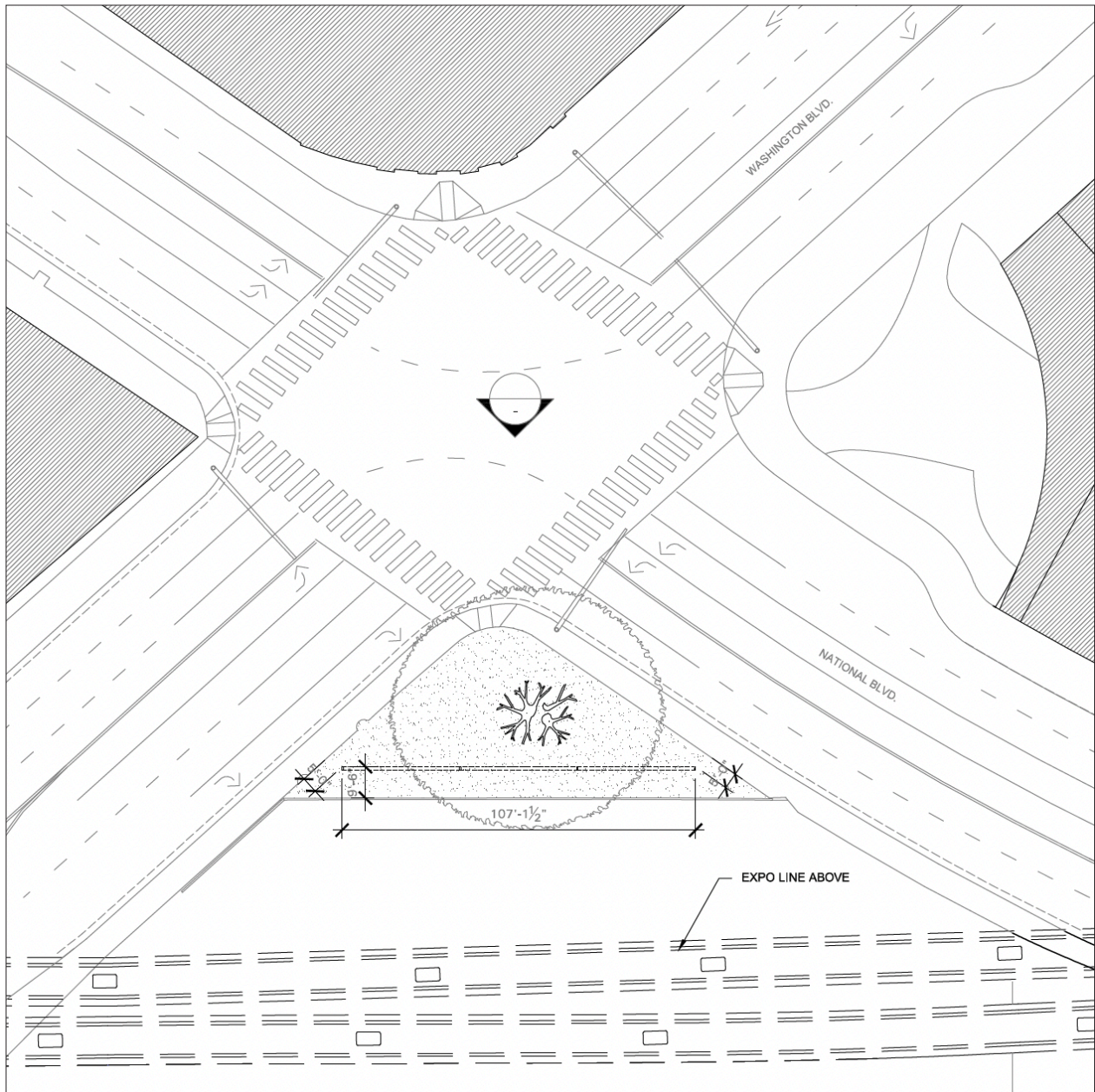


Charles Gaines, A Frame for a Tree, lighting concept rendering by Dyson & Womack, 2021

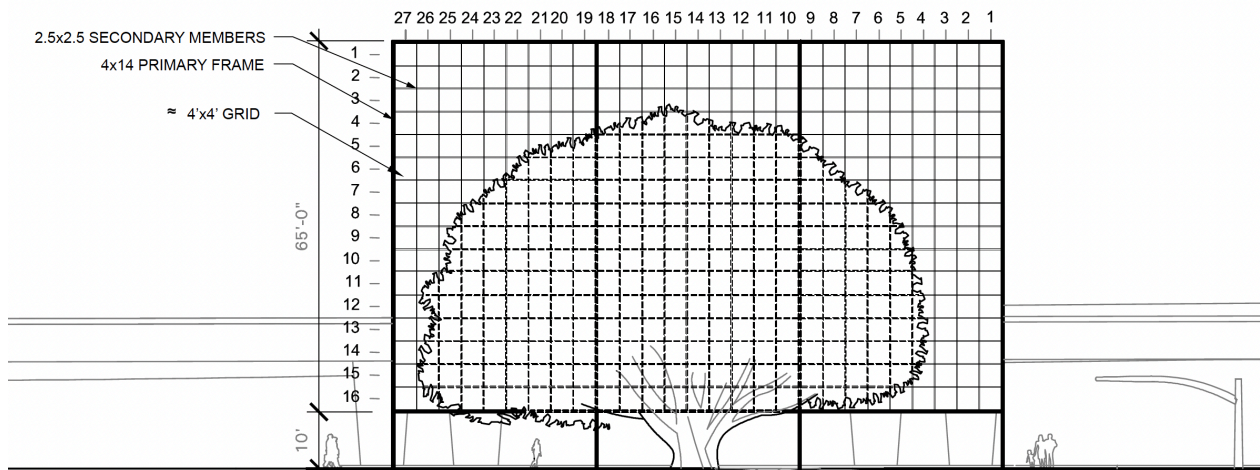


Charles Gaines, A Frame for a Tree, proposal rendering by TOLO Architecture, 2022

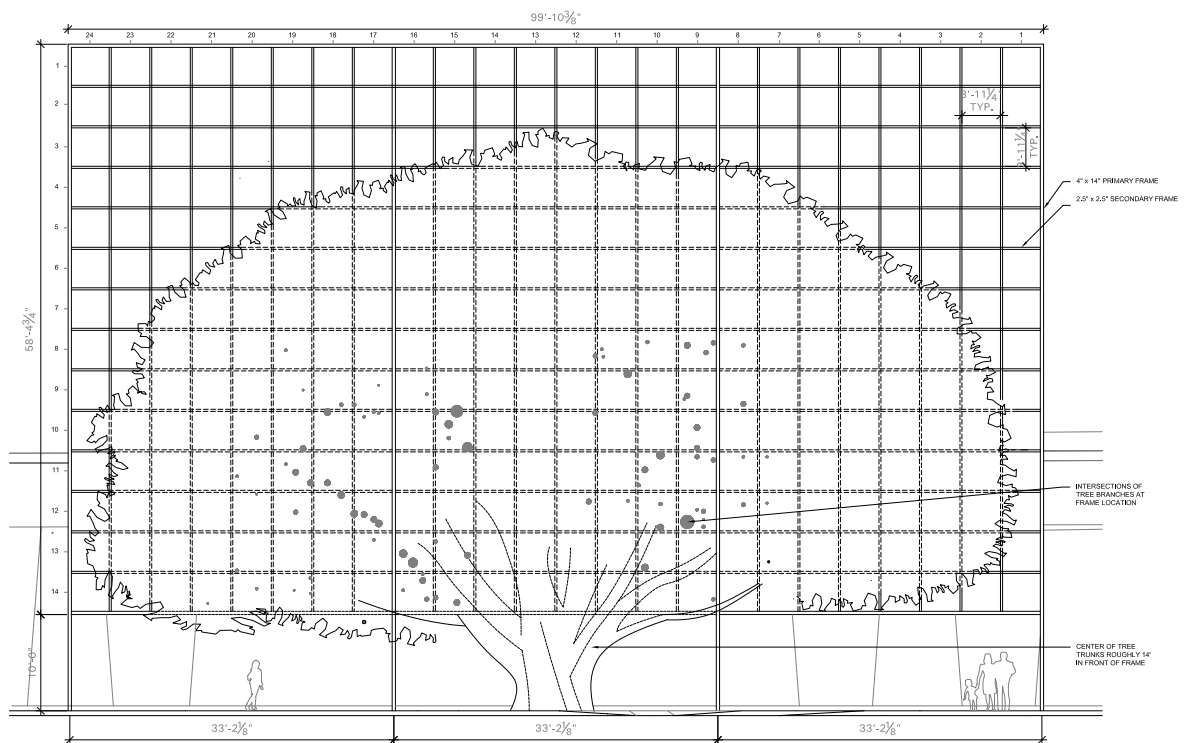




This aerial view of “A Frame for a Tree” shows the artwork as it sits in relation to the metro line and the ficus tree. Metro representatives participated in the artwork proposal review and selection and have reviewed the initial design proposals, providing comments that have informed its development to date.



The current design calls for a 4x4 foot grid with 2½x2½ inch members supported by 4x14 inch structural members. This minimal profile is intentional, creating a light and open sculpture that emphasizes the 3D element of the artwork, the tree itself.



EXACT LOCATION OF EXISTING TREE INTERSECTIONS TO BE CONFIRMED IN FIELD

2 ENLARGED ELEVATION Platform Park, Colma, CA 94015	TOLLO Architecture 1024 18th St. San Francisco, CA 94114	TOLLO Architecture 1024 18th St. San Francisco, CA 94114 SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0" DATE: 01/20/2011 PROJECT: 20110201
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To support the final design development, Gaines will continue to work with Tolo Architecture and has expanded the support team to include an arborist, engineer, project manager, and landscape architect. The following pages highlight the selected firms and specific project personnel. In addition, the team will grow to include geotechnical and lighting professionals.



## DYSON & WOMACK

Dyson & Womack is a leading public art consulting firm developing opportunities centered on equity, accessibility, and a progressive approach to public art management. Our team works to advance artist engagement, generate civic dialogue, and provide a platform for the arts across communities. Our clients are part of our team, generating value through timely and impactful cultural connections. We believe responsible public art planning results in positive community engagement that actively supports the clients, staff, and public who encounter each work. We are dedicated to developing methodologies and strategies that increase equity, support our environment, and enrich the quality of people's lives.



PROJECT MANAGER  
Chris Dyson, Co-founder &  
Managing Partner

## TOLO ARCHITECTURE

Peter Tolkin + Sarah Lorenzen Architecture (working under the moniker TOLO) design projects that are meaningful to the people that use them, and that are reflective of the time and place in which they are built. TOLO has designed and built project types at various scales, including single and multi-family housing, mixed-use and retail, restaurants and hotels, and arts-based projects. In our Arts-based projects we are highly collaborative and serve as a bridge between the art world and the building world, with all its economic, technical, and bureaucratic complexities. Principals, Peter and Sarah, both have educational backgrounds in the arts in addition to being architects. This background and an ongoing interest in the visual arts, has led to a robust architectural practice working on large-scale installations with a variety of artists, designing houses for artists and art collectors, designing galleries, and most recently the design of a large arts studio complex for the artist Charles Gaines.



ARCHITECT  
Peter Tolkin, AIA, Managing  
Principal

## TERREMOTO

Terremoto is a landscape architecture office based in California, owned by David Godshall and Alain Peauroi. Their work explores the nature of the relationship between built and natural forms and is always underpinned with a strong conceptual and intellectual foundation. They believe physical form should be the manifestation of ideas and conversations, not trends and styles.



LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT  
David Godshall

## TREECARELA

TreeCareLA is a Los Angeles-based tree care company. We are known for our high quality arborist consultation and tree care services. We pride ourselves in the ethical treatment of the urban forest by doing what's best for each tree whenever possible. TreeCareLA was officially launched in June of 2011. It has become a fun little tree care company where the team can be proud of doing great work in a city that desperately needs it. Owner Nick Araya is one of only a handful of Board Certified Master Arborists (BCMAs) in southern California – the highest level of certification offered by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Fewer than 2% of all ISA certified arborists have the BCMA distinction.



ARBORIST  
Nick Araya, ISA #WE-7751B,  
Owner

## NOUS ENGINEERING

Nous Engineering is an experienced Structural Engineering firm based in Los Angeles. Our projects are diverse and dispersed across the globe, aligned in their need for innovative solutions to resolve complex requirements, formal, technical, or otherwise. Our talented core group of engineers, designers and modelers take great care when evaluating a project's design, constructability and value using the latest collaboration tools, BIM platforms and advanced analytical software, allowing us to develop and manage complex projects—large and small—design and execute sensible solutions that inspire.



ENGINEER  
Matthew Melnyk, S.E., Principle