



BACKGROUNDER – HALF K

Title of Work: HALF K
Medium: Welded steel, paint
Date: 2009

ARTIST STATEMENT by Micah Lexier

HALF K is a 500-metre-long metal line drawing that swirls around and over the Bungalow School building on the 12th Avenue side of the arriVa site. The sculpture touches down a half-dozen times, but the majority of the sculpture exists in the space around and above the Bungalow School.

Much of my work is about equivalences, and this sculpture is no exception. I have taken a measure – in this case one half of a kilometre (hence the title) – and twisted it to make a sculpture that is both a distance and a gesture. I want the sculpture to be many things to many people: 1) I want the work to be able to be read at many distances – approachable at street level, engaging when viewed from the residential towers above, and intriguing when glimpsed from down the street; 2) I want the sculpture to be monumental, surprising and impressive – to create a signature element for the complex that sets arriVa apart; 3) it is important that the work not just be read as an image, but also as something that one can interact with – I imagine kids (and kids at heart) walking around the Bungalow School trying to follow the continuous line from beginning to end; and 4) I want the sculpture to be mysterious enough to engage the residents over a long period of time but still be dramatic on first viewing.

Formally, the sculpture is designed to appear thin in order to separate it from the other elements on the site. The sculpture will not be lit but will respond to the various changing light conditions – almost invisible at times and then very graphic at others. The sculpture will also create wonderful shadows, and these shadows will interact with the Bungalow School and the surrounding landscaping in surprising ways.

One of the ways the sculpture works is as a contrast to the buildings on the site. Although each of the buildings is different, each is basically a substantial rectangular volume. The sculpture, in contrast, is a thin line drawing, and although it defines a volume, that volume is transparent. The line drawing and the Bungalow School share a portion of the site and are intrinsically linked. The piece would not work as well if it were not seen in relation to a building.

When choosing where to make a work for arriVa, I gravitated to the 12th Avenue side for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that the Bungalow School was the most human-scaled building on the site. The size of the sculpture is only really made evident when seen in scale to another object, and the Bungalow School was the obvious choice as it was the only building that the sculpture could be realistically paired with. The sculpture needs to be seen in relation to a more substantial object, and it is very appropriate that the sculpture – which is the simplest and least conventional object on the site – relies on the Bungalow School – which is one of the most traditional objects on the site. They are a natural pair, and the play between the qualities of each is where some of the work's power comes from. There is no conceptual link between the building and the sculpture, although I am sure some people will read the sculptures as one very large scribble – manifesting every doodle and scribble ever made in the school.

