blink!LAB architecture

Design

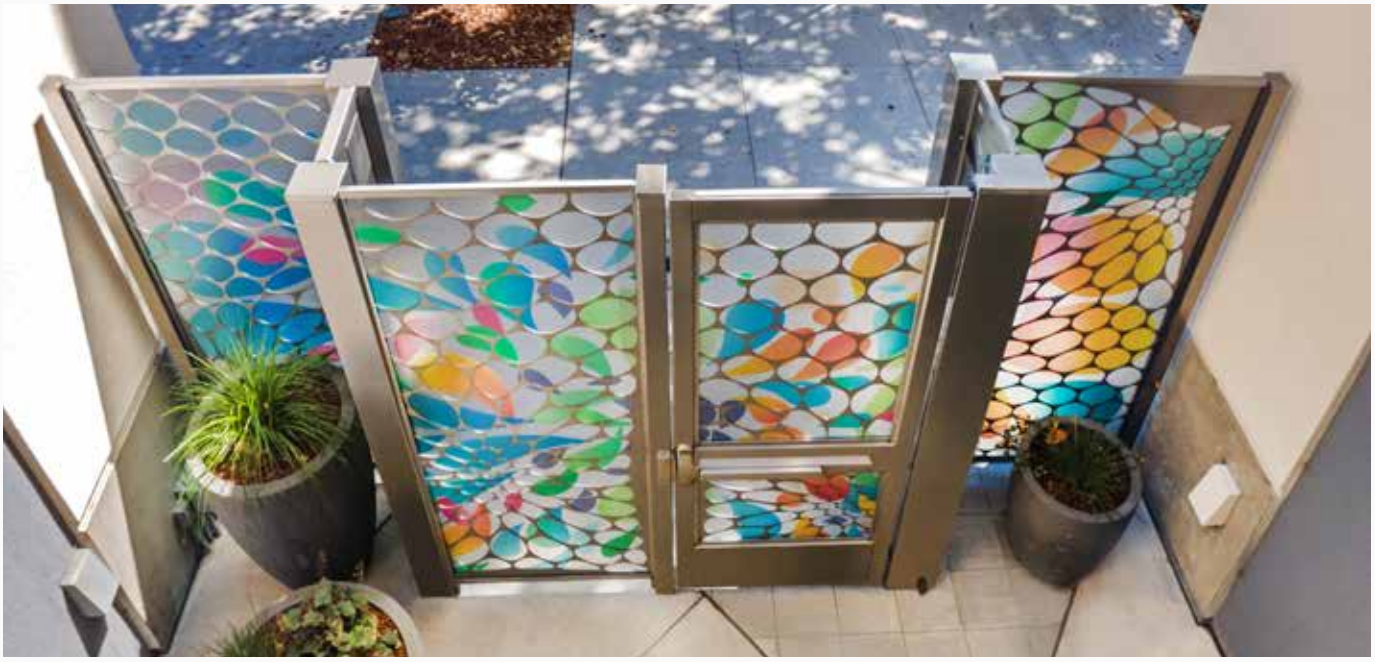
Technology

Fabrication

Completed: 2023

Cherry Hill Apartments
Oakland, California

Chrysanthemum - A Refined Entry Composition



Design is not dependent on available funds, only. Design is the resultant consideration of multiple factors, the investigation of several directions and the development of the preferred solution. A clear understanding of cost and long-term durability are critical when designing for under-represented and under-invested communities. However, the answer must be more than all the factors combined.



When asked to design an entry to a new multi-unit affordable housing development in an African-American community, we wanted to create an experience that varied from day to night.

We were also interested in investigating the ritual of entering and leaving home.

Chrysanthemum fulfills a basic human desire from the dawn of civilization - *how to mark one's home, how to mark one's presence in the vastness of an expanding physical and digital society, and how to claim personal privacy in an over-exposing world.*

HI-TECH METAL FABRICATION
CUSTOMIZED COLOR RESIN
MULTI-PHASED DELIVERY

Project Name: Acts Cherry Hill Apartments
Client: Related California
Project size: N/A

Design & Prototype Team: blinkLAB architecture, Automatic Arts (stainless steel), 3Form (Koda-XT resin)
Technology: Gh codes
Fabrication & Installation: Deka Fabrication

Made in Oakland: Design, Fabrication & Installation
Photo Credit: Malcolm Wallace Images

A Black Cultural Zone Project

blink!LAB
architecture

CHROMA-THERAPY

SIX LASER-CUT STAINLESS STEEL SHEETS

DEMOUNTABLE PANELS

THE SHIELDED COURTYARD

Ovoid shapes and colors flow melodiously across the surface, signaling to passersby, “private courtyard”.

Transformation of 14th Street/International Boulevard - a historic African-American commercial corridor which had experienced several decades of dis-investment - into a pedestrian-friendly, residential corridor required that we apply keen sensitivity to the impact of rapid urban densification.

Chrysanthemum, a composition of six panels, is a small high-impact strategy to insert new meaning and design attention to the farthest regions of Oakland, California. These chromatic panels offer sound attenuation and privacy screening from the 24-hour steady traffic. While dancing petals declare vibrancy and color is for everyone, regardless of income level.

The design solution is the result of several factors under-pinning cost and long-term performance; including resistance to rust, water-repellency, resist buckling and color-endurance. Other site realities considered were:

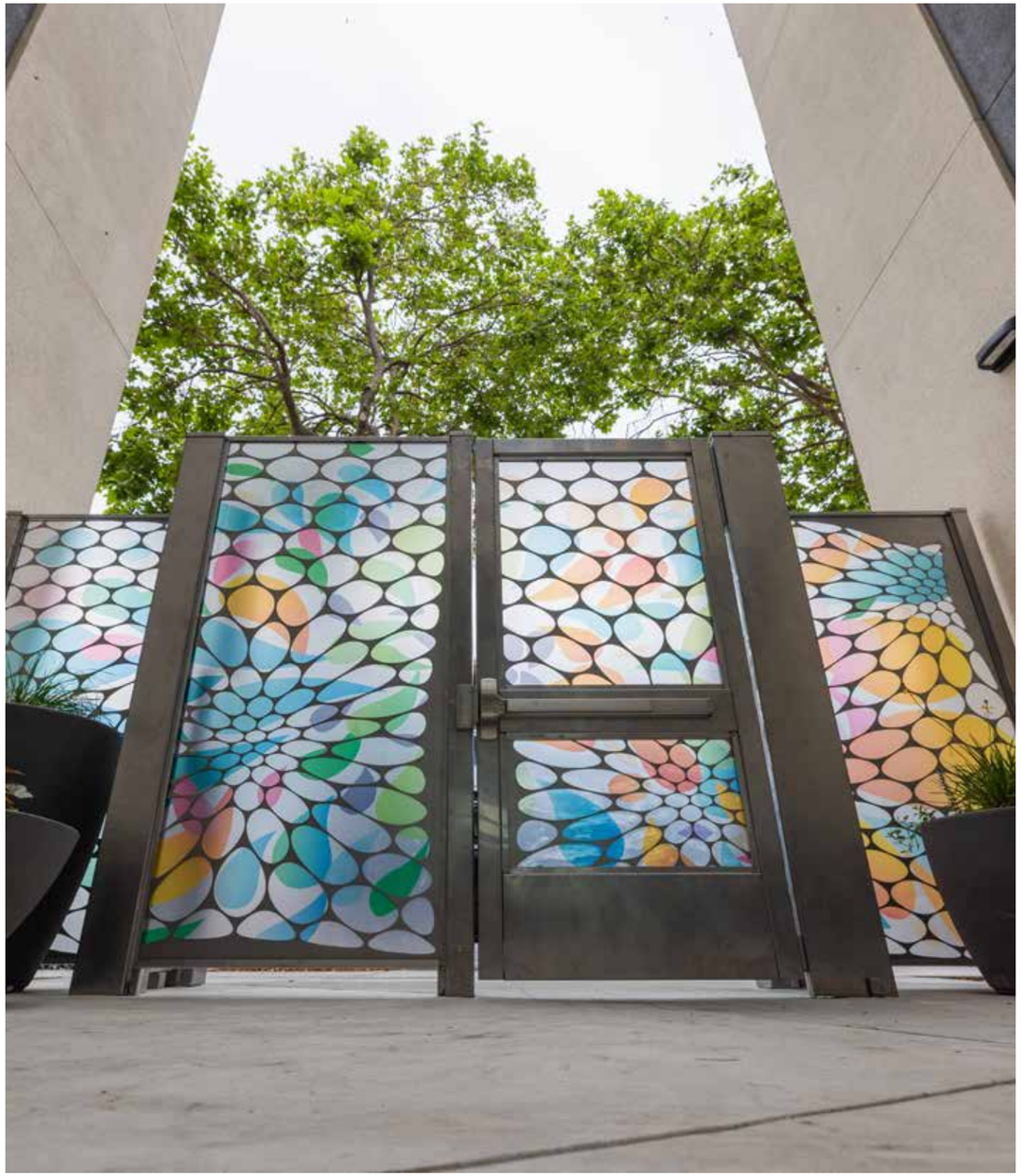
- Limit the likely use as a climbing structure,
- Avoid jail-like defensive solutions
- Operation Access
- Anti-graffiti
- Work within the existing construction permit.

By approaching the design as a system of layered components, we were able to arrive at a cost effective solution with high local-production values.

Chrysanthemum continues blinkLAB’s interest in uplifting the lived experiences of un-represented communities.



Photo Credit: Deka Fabrication



Born and raised on the island of Jamaica, June Grant, Design Principal, noticed that surrounding residents were of African, African-American and Latin American descent. Chrysanthemum takes inspiration from the aesthetic memory of blinkLAB's Caribbean roots.

Photo Credit: Malcolm Wallace Images

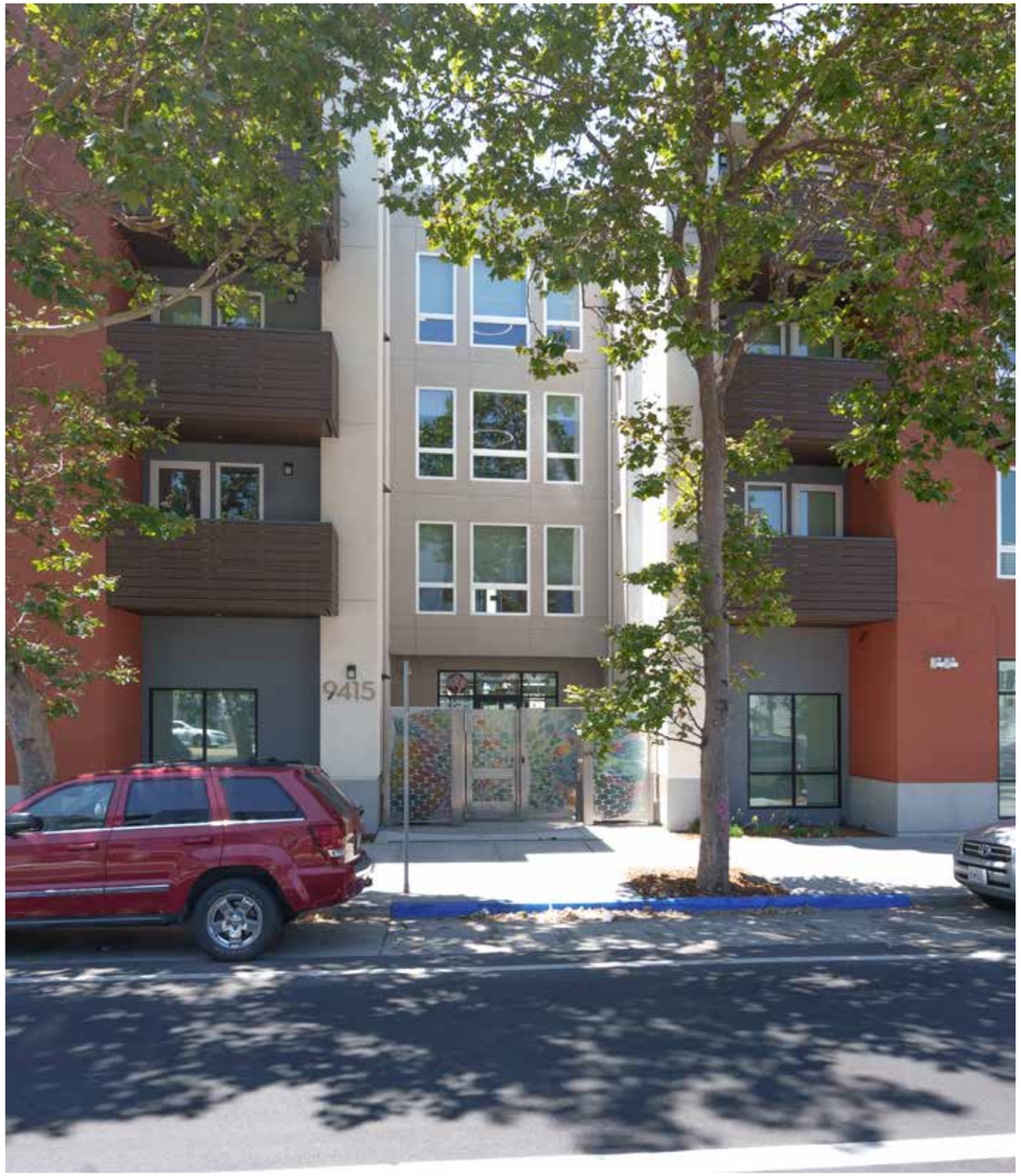


Photo Credit: Malcolm Wallace Images

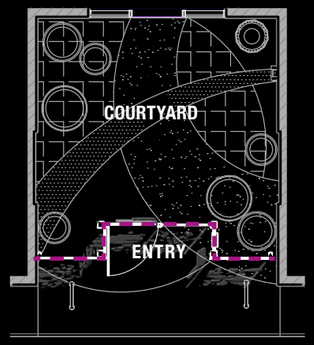


Fig 1.
Entry Site Plan

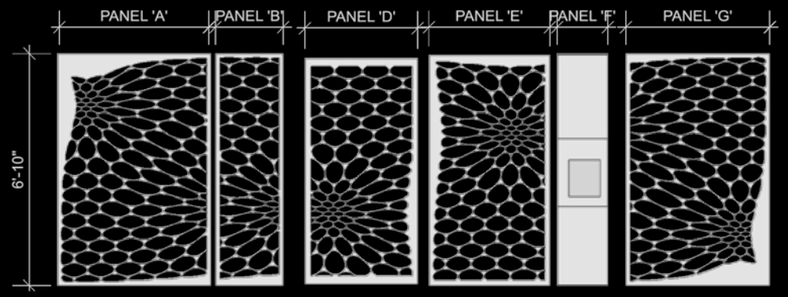


Fig 2.
Panel Sequencing

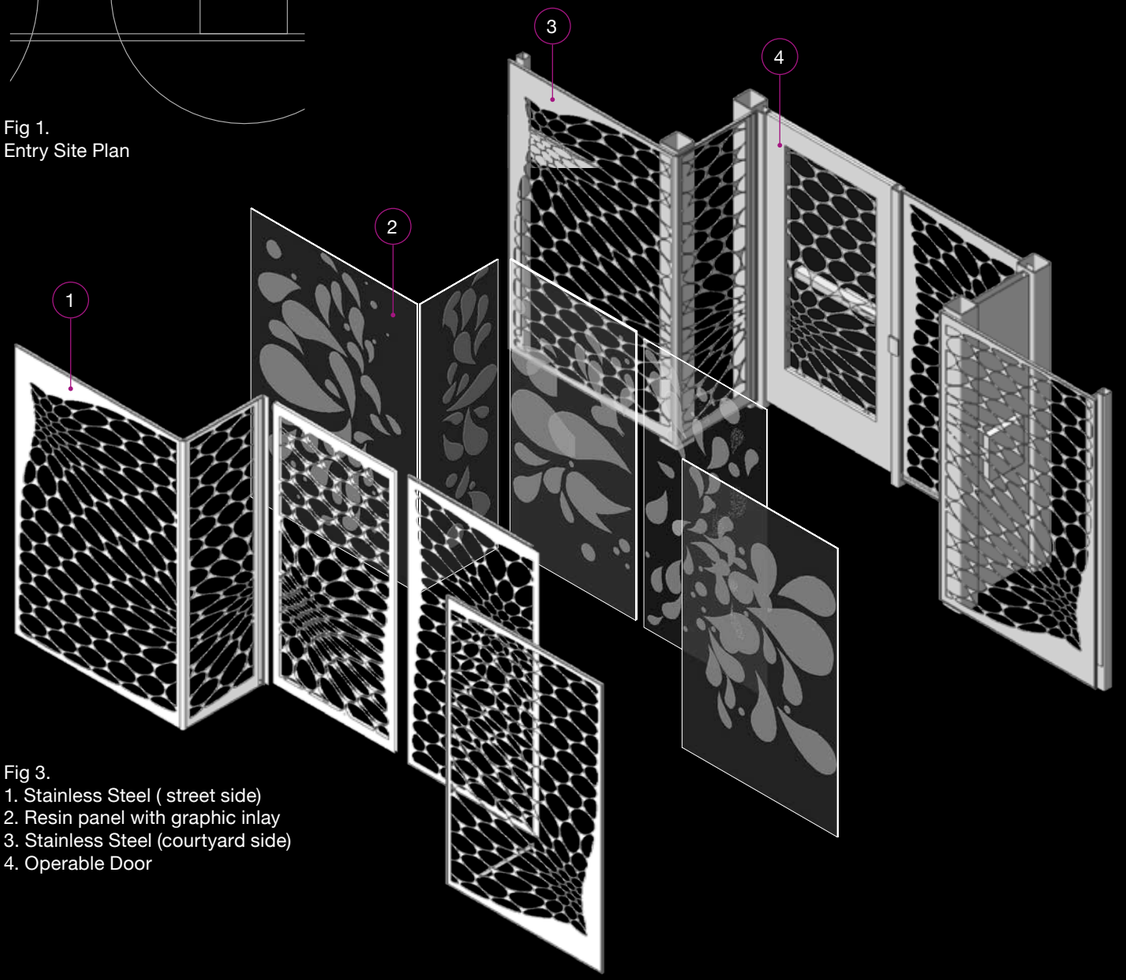


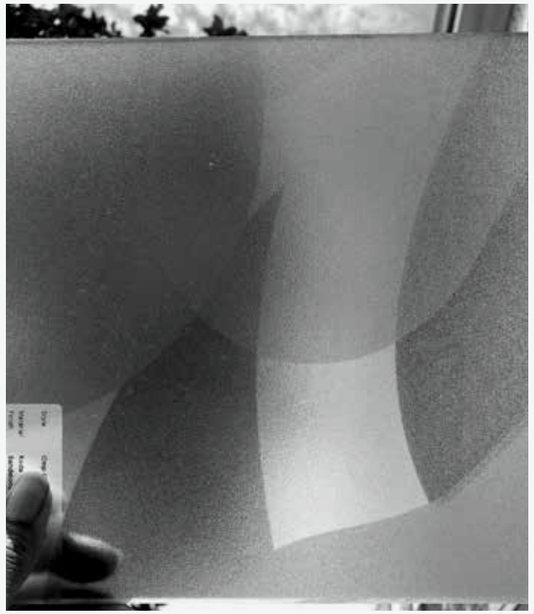
Fig 3.
1. Stainless Steel (street side)
2. Resin panel with graphic inlay
3. Stainless Steel (courtyard side)
4. Operable Door



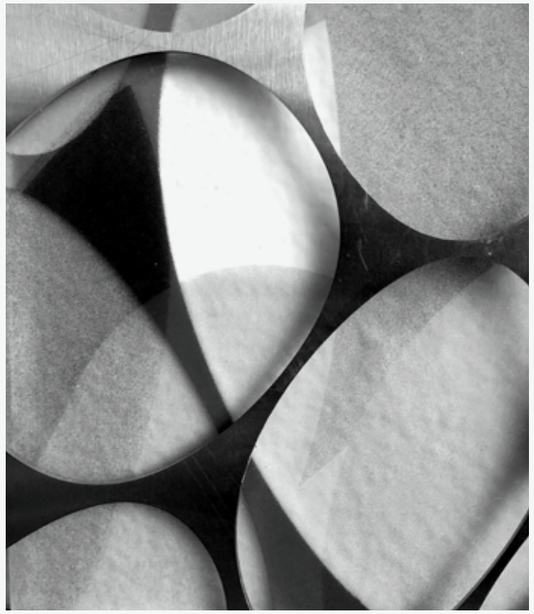
Photo Credit: Malcolm Wallace Images



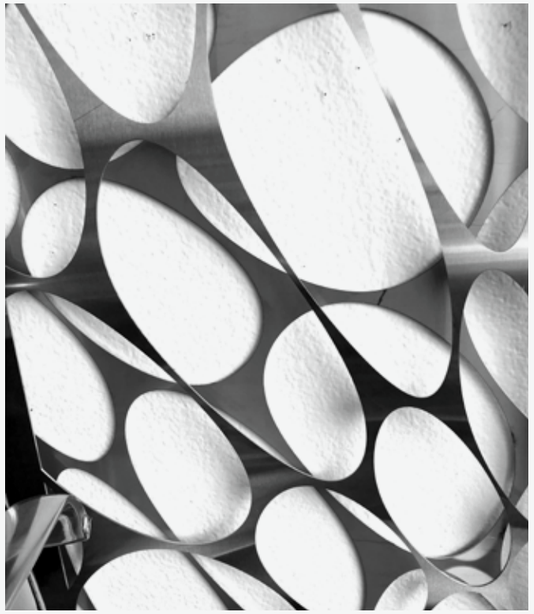
A full-scale mock-up provided by Automatic Arts allowed us to test pattern legibility and material stiffness.



3Form, resin and color supplier assisted with product selection, frit pattern selection that allowed for greatest privacy while providing transparency up close.



Testing cut and color pattern overlays.



Testing ideas - What happens when the resin is removed?



Deka Fabrication provided a hinge adequate to provide a smooth swing.



Stainless steel slip coverings measured to fit over the client-provided aluminum posts.



The transparency of the residential lobby indicates a screened entry is the right solution.



Capped corners and tops add a finished edge to the picture-framed panels.


blink!LAB
architecture