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LANDSCAPE

GREEN ALLEY PROJECT

# TRANSFORM ALLEY

CALGARY DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY'S SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE, IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A THREE-YEAR PILOT RESEARCH PROJECT: THE **#GREENALLEYPROJECT**



# GREEN ALLEY PROJECT

The Calgary Downtown Association in partnership with the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape is proud to announce a three-year pilot research project.

**The Green Alley Project (GAP) demonstrates how to transform Calgary's downtown alleyways from forgotten and gritty into places of connectivity, productivity and value.**

Since April 2019, the Calgary Downtown Association and the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape have partnered to invest in the research for an innovative prototype of green alleyway.

The goal of the three-year research project is to show how downtown alleyways could transform and enrich downtown Calgary's urban experience — by becoming part of the city's green infrastructure while also being a dynamic people-centered place for hanging out 24/7, year-round.

MEDIA RELEASE  
SEP 20, 2019

September 20, 2019

## Pilot project takes step toward realizing value of alleyways

**Three-year research partnership proposes transformational pathway to revitalizing Calgary's downtown**

Calgary, AB – Alleyways have the potential to be the backbone for a dynamic, multi-layered city experience and a new pilot project aims to realize that potential by revitalizing the back alleys of Calgary's downtown.

The Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) has partnered with the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL) on a mission to change Calgary's downtown fabric. The partnership has embarked on the Green Alley Project (GAP), a pilot research project that looks at otherwise forgotten and gritty downtown alleyways — transforming them to places of beauty, creativity and value.

The first alley to be activated is located between Le Germaine on 9th Avenue SW and the 100-west block of Stephen Ave – entering off Centre Street or 1st Street SW. This transformation will include a painted mural, a laneway painting, prefabricated wood furniture and a proposed stormwater strategy. The urban installation will be unveiled during the [TransformAlley](#) launch event being held at the site today.

"We believe in the power and potential of growing a downtown post-secondary presence to support Calgary's downtown recovery and resilience – so we're thrilled to partner with UCalgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. Secondly, we're committed to challenging the status quo in testing new concepts that can stimulate economic development or diversity. Enhancing the downtown experience for the attraction of Calgarians, visitors and private investment is a top priority; the Green Alley Project is an innovative and progressive initiative that we're excited to invest in," said Marco De Iaco, Executive Director, Calgary Downtown Association.

Since April 2019, the CDA and SAPL have been working together to generate new knowledge, demonstrate long-term benefits of green alleys, and build momentum amongst stakeholders, policy-makers and the public, with a three-year goal of adding a new dimension to downtown Calgary's urban experience.

"Urban alleys have the potential to be transformed from derelict service corridors into sustainable places that are amenities for the public," says Dr. John L. Brown, SAPL Dean. "Our collaborative research teams are taking a multi-pronged approach to investigate how focused and informed design can facilitate placemaking and economic value. This pilot initiative presents ideas for enhanced stormwater infrastructure, urban furniture which includes shelter and comfortable seating, and playful cues for navigation. This intersection of research, design and public engagement is aimed squarely at developing scalable high-quality urban experiences in Calgary's downtown core."

The TransformALLEY GAP launch event will be held in conjunction with the Art and the City exhibition Kickoff party. The Art and the City exhibit will include the work from the sketch crawl, a walking tour of downtown Calgary art where participants sketch various points along the route. The sketch crawl was led by visiting landscape architecture professors Chip Sullivan (UC Berkeley) and Elizabeth Boults (UC Davis). The Green Alley Project is one of the sites on the public sketch crawl. The launch event will be held both inside The Pioneer Gallery (117 8 Ave SW) and in the alleyway behind.

The Green Alley Project is a unique partnership for both the CDA and SAPL to open the conversation to change the view of how Downtown Calgary currently is and how it could be. For more information, please see: [calgarydowntown.com](http://calgarydowntown.com) and [sapl.ucalgary.ca/GAP](http://sapl.ucalgary.ca/GAP).

***Join the conversation:***

*#greenalleyproject, #transformALLEY*

**UCalgary and SAPL:** @ucalgary, @ucalgarysapl, #ucalgarysapl, #cbdlab, [sapl.ucalgary.ca](http://sapl.ucalgary.ca)

**Calgary Downtown Association:** @downtowncalgary, #iamdowntown, [downtowncalgary.com](http://downtowncalgary.com)

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**About the University of Calgary**

The University of Calgary is a global intellectual hub located in Canada's most enterprising city. In our spirited, high-quality learning environment, students thrive in programs made rich by research, hands-on experiences and entrepreneurial thinking. Our strategy drives us to be recognized as one of Canada's top five research universities, engaging the communities we both serve and lead. This strategy is called *Eyes High*, inspired by the university's Gaelic motto, which translates as 'I will lift up my eyes.' For more information, visit [ucalgary.ca/eyeshigh](http://ucalgary.ca/eyeshigh).

*For more information, visit [ucalgary.ca](http://ucalgary.ca). Stay up to date with University of Calgary news headlines on Twitter [@UCalgary](https://twitter.com/UCalgary). For details on faculties and how to reach experts go to our media centre at [ucalgary.ca/mediacentre](http://ucalgary.ca/mediacentre)*

**About the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape**

The School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL) offers undergraduate and professional graduate studies in architecture, planning and landscape architecture, as well as research degrees and post-professional programs. SAPL School delivers a distinctly different design school experience that combines a rich, interdisciplinary design-based philosophy with an entrepreneurial mindset and a deep commitment to working with industry stakeholders, community leaders, at local, national, and international levels to address some of society's biggest challenges in new, creative ways. SAPL recently opened a pilot satellite research hub in downtown Calgary called the City Building Design Lab.

Find out more at [sapl.ucalgary.ca](http://sapl.ucalgary.ca) and follow @ucalgarysapl on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

**About Calgary Downtown Association**

The Calgary Downtown Association (CDA) represents over 2,600 businesses in the Downtown core. Their vision is to, mindfully and meaningfully, shape the downtown core, being a catalyst for downtown vitality and vibrancy. The CDA continues to take steps to solidify its position as a champion for downtown businesses and a leader in urban placemaking. For more information on the CDA, please visit [www.downtowncalgary.com](http://www.downtowncalgary.com). Follow the Calgary Downtown Association at @downtowncalgary on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



# FIRST CBDLAB RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP **CALGARY DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION X SAPL**

GAP is the first research partnership out the City Building Design Lab (CBDLab), the new pilot storefront for the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape which opened to the public in May 2019.

**Researchers at SAPL have been operating at full tilt out of the new CBDLab — generating new knowledge that benefits the city and community.**

This project builds off other successful SAPL design-build innovations and community partnerships such as Furbaniture, CSpace, 4th Avenue Flyover and the Sukkah five-year project.

Assistant Professor Tawab Hlimi is leading green infrastructures. Assistant Professor Mauricio Soto-Rubio is leading the design for architectural interventions. Assistant Professor Kris Fox is leading tactical urban interventions, and expanded the concept to tie in the Art and the City route. Associate Professor Joshua Taron is overall research lead of the Green Alley Project.

Much of downtown Calgary developed in the post-war years as a “Modern City”.

Modeled on the metaphor of the city as a machine, efficiency through functional segregation characterizes the city’s movement systems — for example, the separation of pedestrian movement from the public realm of city streets via the Plus 15 network, and the separation of rainwater from natural hydrological processes via an extensive stormwater network.

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In today’s context of volatility, induced by the uncertainties of a changing global climate and changing global economy, the Green Alley Project (GAP) explores the potential of alleyways as an integrated urban strategy in activating the public realm of downtown Calgary — socially and ecologically.

# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURES

*The shared goals of green mobility and green stormwater infrastructure are synergistic. They can co-evolve to bolster the resilience and vitality of the city's downtown.*

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Research Lead:  
Assistant Professor Tawab Hlimi

Research Team:  
Christopher Green  
Christina Peace  
Jie Li  
Danielle Kim  
Daphne Yuk Yink T -sang



The Green Alley Project (GAP) is fundamentally a project on green infrastructure planning/design, broadly defined as an integrated spatial and functional framework for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The goals of the project are:

- 1/** To restore natural hydro-ecological processes to improve watershed health and reduce the risk of flooding
- 2/** To enhance the quality of the public realm through the promotion of pedestrian-oriented back-lane commercial and cultural functions
- 3/** To leverage integrated aesthetic and functional public realm and infrastructure improvements to attract investment and talent, and serve as a catalyst for revitalization.

The shared goals of green mobility (walking and cycling) and green stormwater infrastructure (natural systems) are

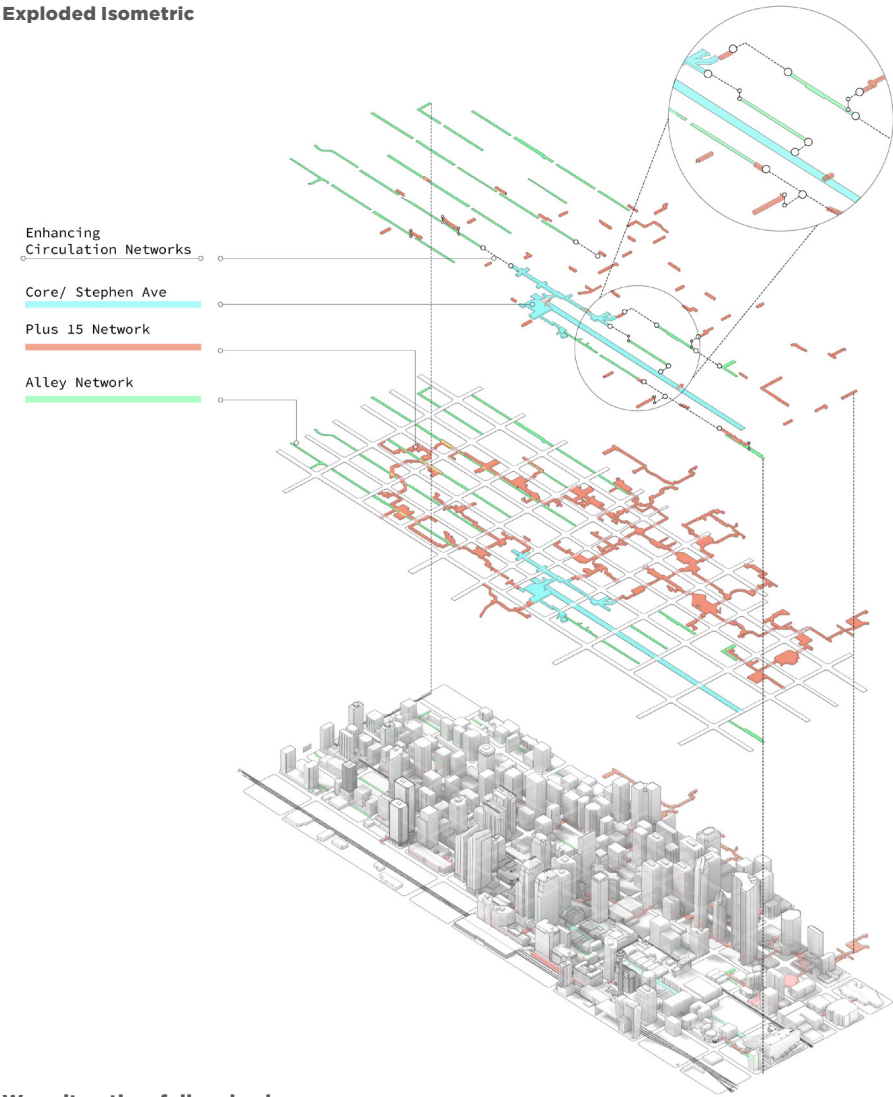
synergistic and can co-evolve to bolster the resilience and vitality of the city.

To realize these goals, the GAP has developed an alley classification methodology, and identified the back alleys off Stephen Avenue in the historic centre of downtown Calgary as prime opportunities by virtue of the following factors: scale and rhythm suited to a pedestrian's rate of movement, tactility and porosity of building facades at ground level contributing to visual interest, irregularity of edges characterized by alcoves suitable for 'spill-out' programming, and connectivity potential to Plus 15 networks, sources from which pedestrian flows can be diverted, as a strategy in pedestrian activation.

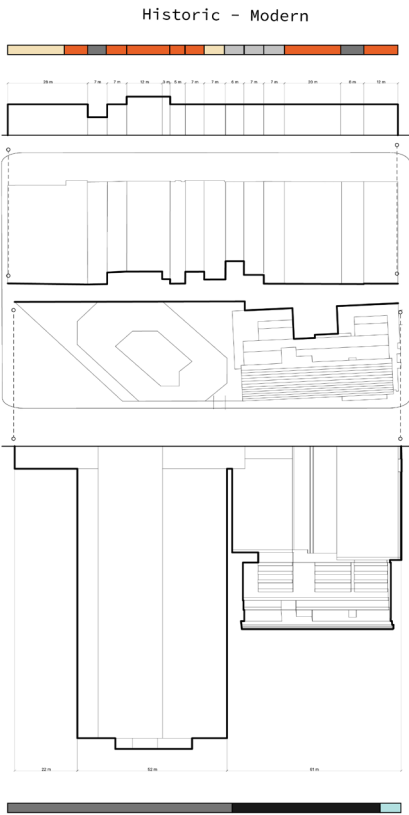
As a surface strategy, the Green Alley Project is advocating for patterned and porous surface materials to serve as integrated visual cues for shared pedestrian/vehicular movements and as porous living membrane or 'natural infrastructure', for rainwater infiltration.



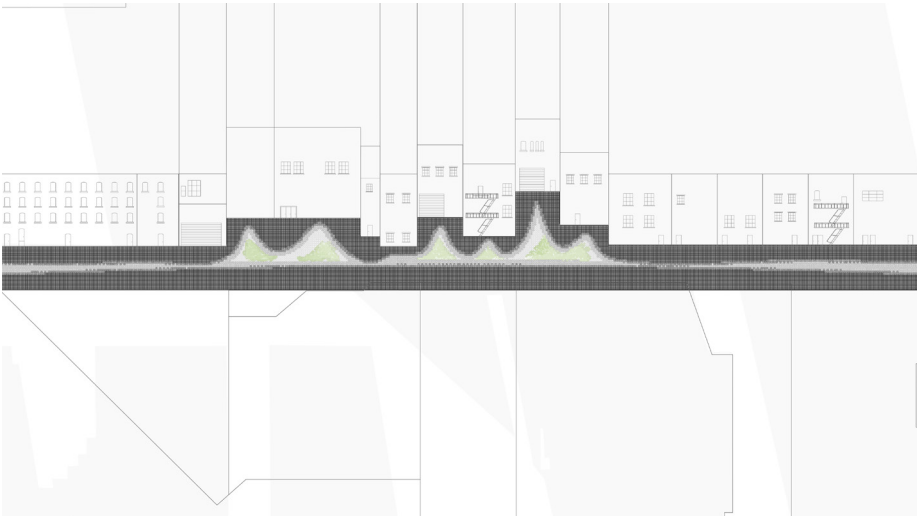
Exploded Isometric



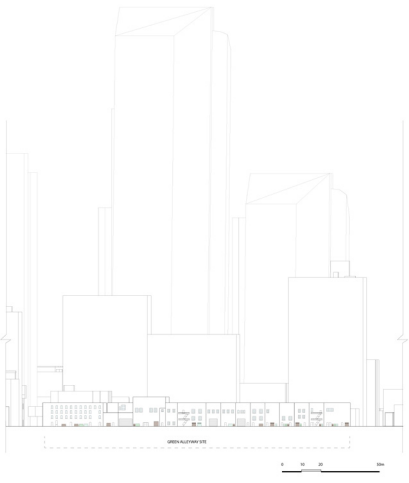
Ped Rhythm Diagrams



Wavy iteration: full scale plan



South Elevation



# ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

Research Lead:  
Assistant Professor  
Mauricio Soto-Rubio

Research Team:  
Madisen Killingsworth  
Daphne Yuk Ying Tsang

*Assistant Professor Mauricio Soto-Rubio is leading the design for architectural interventions that provide shelter, seating and visual identity.*

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The project proposes the activation of public alleys in downtown Calgary by implementing a series of naturally inspired pieces of infrastructure. These artifacts are specifically designed to improve the quality of “secondary” or “inactive” urban spaces, as well as providing amenities for visitors.

Designed as “tree structures”, the prefabricated modular furniture units are assembled to create places for people to meet, relax, and hang out in the alley. The units can also be integrated with features such as lighting fixtures, phone charging stations, and outdoor heaters. The tree structures also support a permeable canopy that reduces

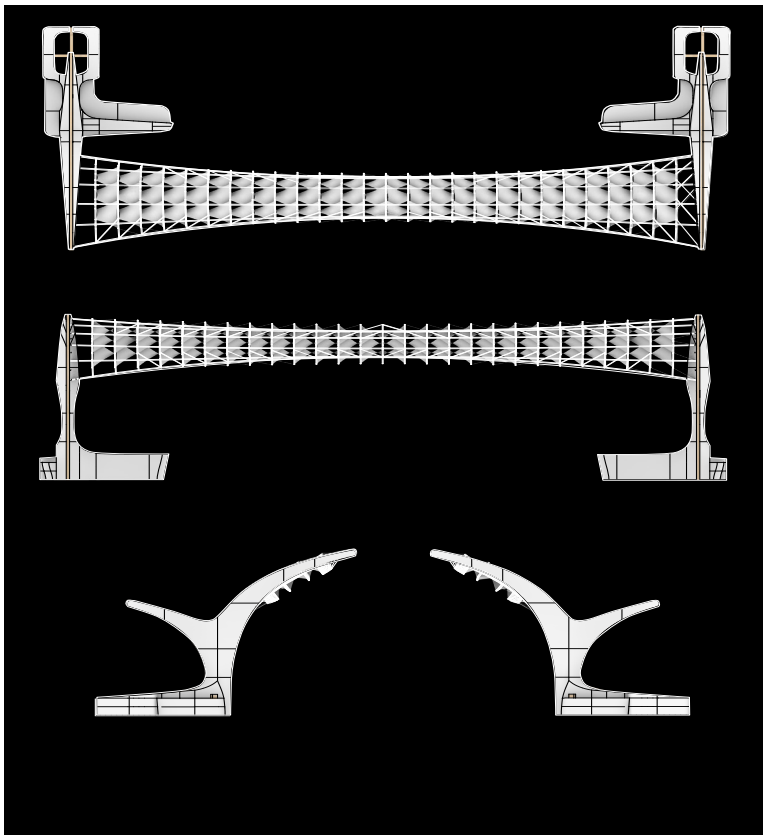
the scale of the alley — creating a “ceiling” to effect a more comfortable, human-scaled environment. The canopy is built using a cable-net structure and tensile fabric structures that provide a degree of weather protection while still allowing rain water and snow to reach the ground.

This project has been designed to work collaboratively with an innovative permeable paving system that allows rainwater to infiltrate into the ground and permits vegetation to thrive in an urban context.





Elevation + Plan



Tree Structure Poster Rendering



# TACTICAL INTERVENTIONS

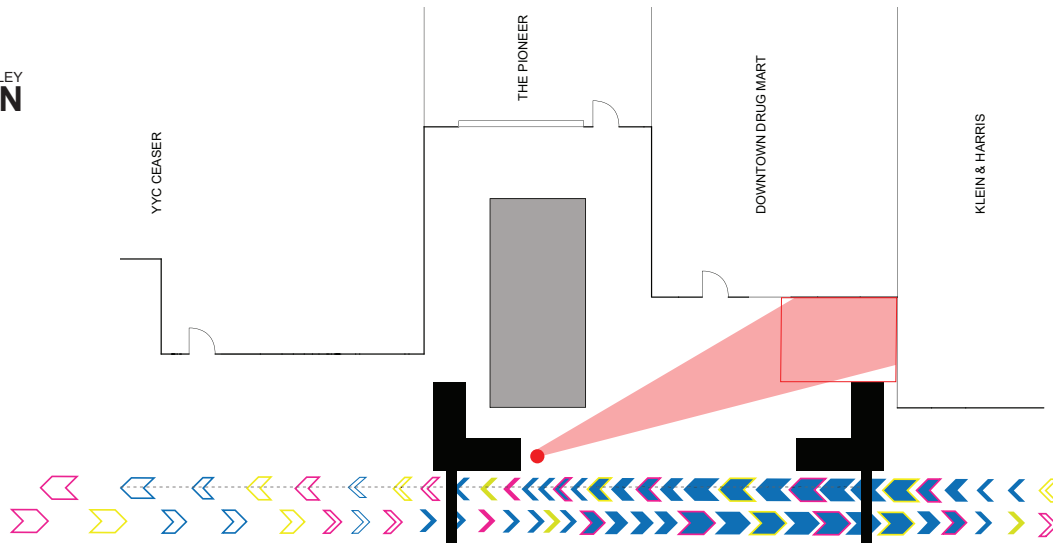
Research Lead:  
Assistant Professor Kris Fox

Research Assistant:  
Gord Skilling

Graphic Designers:  
Emma Brodie  
Darryl Pollock

*Assistant Professor Kris Fox is leading a tactical urban intervention for the alleyway — a ground plane “carpet” strategy to provide cues for congregation and movement.*

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Assistant Professor Kris Fox is leading a tactical urban intervention for the alleyway, and expanding the design concept to tie in the Art and the City route. This includes a ground plane “carpet” strategy to provide cues for congregation and movement.

This anamorphic mural installation is the culmination of research and development aimed at studying the efficacy of whether 2D painting can act as an interactive alternative to 3D structures. Using a limited colour palette and forced perspective, this mural introduces the interactive value of “gap jumping”. Jumping — especially across gaps — is considered a kinetic indicator of play. By incorporating not only elements on the wall, but on the ground plane as well, visitors and passersby are encouraged to interact with the perspective of the mural and “jump” across the floating blocks.

This installation is part of a larger project that aims to activate typically forgotten spaces within the urban context. Anamorphic art and murals represent a low impact visually stimulating attraction by creating viable amenity spaces for the public and downtown businesses using inexpensive and temporary materials.

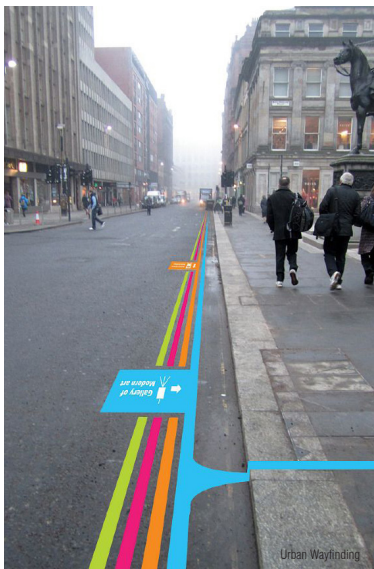
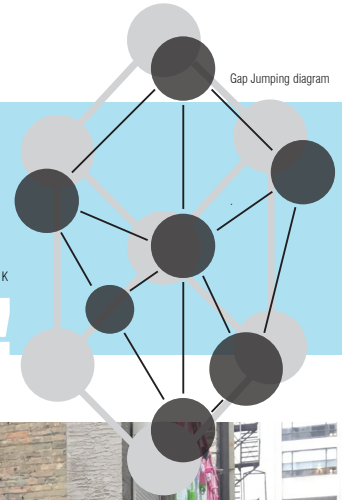
The project team encourages visitors to take photos as the effect of the forced perspective is best viewed through photographs.



RESEARCH LEAD: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE KRIS FOX  
 RESEARCH ASSISTANT: GORDON SKILLING RESEARCH ASSISTANT: EMMA BRODIE GRAPHIC DESIGNER: DARRYL POLLOCK

# G.A.P. JUMP!

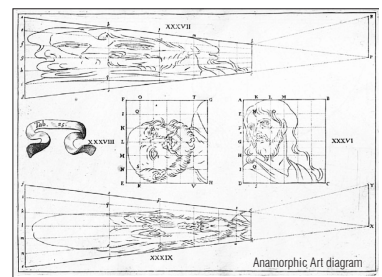
URBAN SPACE ACTIVATION THROUGH LOW COST MATERIALS DEPLOYMENT IN THE APPLICATION OF INTERACTIVE PLAY ELEMENTS



Jumping - especially across gaps - is considered a kinetic indicator of play, and by incorporating not only elements on the wall, but on the ground plane as well, users are encouraged to interact with the perspective of the mural and "jump" across the floating blocks. This installation is part of a larger project that aims to activate

**JUMP  
 ACROSS  
 FLOATING  
 BLOCKS**

Anamorphic art and murals represent a low impact visually stimulating attraction by creating viable amenity spaces for the public and downtown businesses using inexpensive and temporary materials. We encourage people to take photos as the result of the forced perspective is most effectively portrayed through photographs.



# ACTIVATING DOWNTOWN: SOCIALLY AND ECOLOGICALLY

*The Green Alley Project is fundamentally a project on green infrastructure planning and design, broadly defined as an integrated spatial and functional framework for environmental, social, and economic sustainability.*

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**#GREENALLEYPROJECT**

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