

The Folsom Street Hands A Folsom Gateway Concept

Here's my suggestion for the "Gateway to Folsom" sculpture. It is basically just two hands.

Start by imagining a person about 50 feet tall buried deep beneath Folsom Street, reaching up to announce a touchdown, so that we just see their forearms breaking through the pavement and reaching up toward us and to the sky... At 12:1 scale, they might reach 14 feet high. But they are *not* signaling a touchdown.

As we approach from outside the District, we see, on our right, a left hand, clasping a bundle of sticks. Think of the arrows or olive branches on the U.S. seal. Each of the sticks is unique: different lengths, thicknesses, apparently different materials: some painted to look like ordinary wood (willow or rattan perhaps) others just a thin rod of color -- and not just the six colors of gay tradition, but also brown and black, pink and blue, all the colors of the hankie code: lavender and gold lame, and crisp linen white. Each stick alone looks thin and fragile. (They are not fragile, see material notes, below.) But as the fist holds them, firmly but not tightly, it is obvious that they are, together, unbreakable.

The arm and hand on our left is even simpler: it is just a human right hand, without gender or jewelry, nails short and unpainted, the palm towards us, but the fingertips brought together, smoothly curling the hand into the shape of a torch, the middle finger stretching slightly above the others, taut, reaching upwards, touching space, feeling the air.

The logo of the LEATHER & LGBTQ Cultural District, along with names of creators and funders, dates of dedication, etc. should appear (in Proxima Nova Font) near the base, on the back of the forearm of each sculpture.

As to the materials, my first choice would be that both hands be made of high-density transparent plastic (like lucite or perspex). If that is impractical, then the surface should be smooth metal, probably stainless steel or polished aluminum. The "sticks" may be cast as one piece of metal, carefully painted to look like separate sticks, or they may actually be individual rods of strong material: bronze or steel or dense plastic. The angle at which the sticks point will be dictated by environmental and architectural concerns, but the effect should be of them held aloft in triumph, not brandished as a weapon.

If illumination is provided at night, the lights on the fist should be pure white, giving equal brightness to each of the sticks. For the upraised hand my ideal would be a pure white light reflected off a diffraction grating, producing, at any given angle of inspection, a single monochromatic hue (so that as you walk by you may catch a brief glimpse of light at 515 nanometers, a hauntingly pure blue-green never seen on a video screen.) If the hand is clear, the lighting would be from within. Getting the same results with external light on stainless steel might not be possible; if not, use plain white light, perhaps slowly and randomly varying in brightness.

As for the significance or symbolism of the sculpture, I don't think any explanation is called for.

I am sorry not to be able to include an illustration. See below for reference photographs.

Submitted by David Hyman, 7/5/2020

Images for reference:



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