

# HOUSTON'S PUBLIC ART



## “Radiant Fountains”

(2010) light sculptures

**BY** Dennis Oppenheim

**LOCATION:** George Bush International Airport– John F Kennedy Blvd

**PERMANENT • COST:** \$1 Million

### DESCRIPTION/ARTIST'S THOUGHTS:

The dynamic pipe-assembly sculptures, by Oppenheim establish a vibrant and forceful presence for George Bush Intercontinental Airport, both on land and in the air. For those leaving the airport, this iconic display exudes the energy and vibrancy that awaits visitors as they enter the vast city of Houston. The work also offers an eye-catching brilliance for those

who are taking their first or last glimpse of Houston, from the air. A dramatic cascade of droplets of light, falling through the center of each column, while at the same time radiating powerful burst of light energy upward, on the outer walls, is achieved through the use of environmentally sensitive, programmed LED lights in all three towers.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

**SOURCE:** [www.haatax.info/civcart/commissions/completed-commissions/george-bush-intercontinental-airport-gateway-artwork](http://www.haatax.info/civcart/commissions/completed-commissions/george-bush-intercontinental-airport-gateway-artwork)

## “Butterflies”

(2010) glass mural

**BY** Dixie Friend Gay

**LOCATION:** METRO North Line, Boundary Station (Fulton/North Central stop)

**PERMANENT • COST:** \$131,000

### DESCRIPTION/ARTIST'S THOUGHTS:

*Butterflies* was designed for Houston's METRO

North Line, Boundary Station. It has 19 glass panels, each measuring 5'5" tall and 2'-9 5/8" wide. Dixie Friend Gay says she drew from the community visioning materials requesting natural imagery addressing the flora and fauna in the area. These split station windscreens have over sized images of butterflies flowing across the windscreens, creating a relationship between the panels. All the butterflies are native to the neighborhood. The paving is Lithocrete Glass of hand broadcast blend from orange to deep blue, echoing the variation of the background of the windscreens.

**SOURCE:** <http://dixiefriendgay.com/work/public-commissions/houston-metro/>



## “Take Off”

(2010) sculpture

**BY** Paul Kittelson and Carter Ernst

**LOCATION:** Outside entrance to William P. Hobby Airport

### PERMANENT

**COST:** Undisclosed (part of the \$250 Million remodeling budget for William P. Hobby Airport)

### DESCRIPTION / ARTIST'S THOUGHTS:

From the air, Houston appears a city nestled within a beautiful green lush landscape. Meandering bayous, nature preserves and wildlife sanctuaries are intermingled with neighborhoods, office buildings and industrial complexes. Both urban and wild, is Carter Ernst and Paul Kittelson's concept for *Take Off*, a tribute to this co-existence. Measuring approximately 30' in diameter and 20' in height, this stainless steel bird's nest appears to float above a natural garden of sub-tropical plantings. The inter-woven branches create a stylized, animated display of glimmering lines. This natural form of architecture, rendered in industrial materials, is reminiscent of our bustling, contemporary city set amid the coastal plains. Twenty-seven feet in diameter and twenty feet in height, *Take Off* serves as a welcoming beacon to the City of Houston and a reminder to visitors of our origins of flight.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

**SOURCE:** [www.fly2houston.com/0/3834441/0/82850D83249/](http://www.fly2houston.com/0/3834441/0/82850D83249/)



## “Memory Wall”

(2012) mural **BY** collaboration of 60+ artists (Smither Park was designed by visionary artist and builder Dan Phillips)

**LOCATION:** Smither Park

**PERMANENT • COST:** Funding Ongoing

### DESCRIPTION/ARTIST'S THOUGHTS:

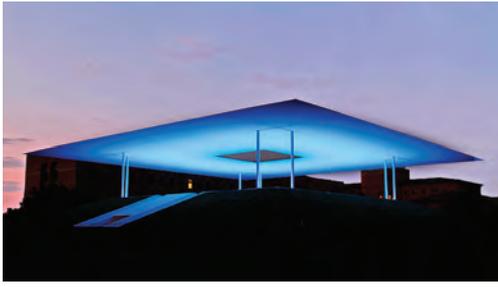
The 400-foot *Memory Wall* provides a unique and beautiful space for the memory of loved ones. It is the first installation that will eventually serve as the backdrop for the half-acre Smither Park, a whimsical and fanciful gathering place and piece of immersive folk art. When it's complete, the *Memory Wall* will feature 60 distinct three-dimensional panels designed by local artists and individuals, many featuring items that represent or once belonged to their loved ones or those of Smither Park donors. All materials have been recycled from their original use, starting with the tubing, chicken wire, tires and other goods which are repurposed to give new shape to the wall. The angel mosaic piece shown was created by Edie Wells.

“I find value in the discarded and overlooked, and care deeply about human suffering, social justice issues and sustainability. I believe the arts offer the power to reclaim what the world often wants to toss aside as useless or unimportant. Whether it is about a memory, a person, a culture, or an object, my life's work is a creative effort to reclaim hope and build community,” Wells says.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Smither Park

**SOURCE:** <http://weartists.org/artist/ediewells>





## “Twilight Epiphany”

(2012) installation  
**BY** James Turrell  
**LOCATION:** Rice University  
**PERMANENT • COST:** \$6 Million  
**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:**

The pyramidal structure accommodates 120 people between two levels. *Twilight Epiphany* is acoustically engineered to host musical performances and to act as a laboratory for music school students on select days after Sunset. Constructed of grass, concrete, stone and composite steel, the structure is equipped with an LED light sequence that projects onto the ceiling and through an aperture in the 72-foot square knife-edge roof just before sunrise and at sunset. Turrell’s composition of light compliments the natural light present at twilight, and transforms the skyspace into a locale for experiencing beauty and reflective interactions with the surrounding campus and the natural world.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Rice University

**SOURCE:** <http://skyspace.rice.edu/about-skyspace/>

## “The Blue Trees”

(2013) installation

**BY** Konstantin Dimopoulos



**LOCATION:** Crepe Myrtles between Allen Parkway and Memorial Drive at Waugh Dr **TEMPORARY • COST:** \$10,000

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** *The Blue Trees* came to Houston as part of the international conversation about deforestation and its global impact. Houston Arts Alliance invited Dimopoulos to re-create his project in the region as a response to the devastating loss of trees from Hurricane Ike and the 2011 drought. With the help of local volunteers, Dimopoulos colored the trunks of the trees with biologically-safe, water-based ultramarine mineral pigments bringing attention to our trees and the need to be prepared for the extreme weather conditions that can harm them. An ephemeral work, the trees gradually reverted back to their natural state over a six-month period. Striving to address global deforestation of old growth forests, Dimopoulos provides a visual platform to effect change. “So many universal concerns seem larger than an individual’s power of influence and I want to evoke in people the idea that we can all contribute to change in a positive way. You look at something that in theory shouldn’t be blue, and you think, “Why is it blue?” That’s the question I’m trying to raise. If you’re not careful sooner or later the surreal may become the real,” he said.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Thomasid Rolls, Houston

**SOURCE:** [www.artshound.com/event/detail/441747553/The\\_Blue\\_Trees](http://www.artshound.com/event/detail/441747553/The_Blue_Trees)



## “The Crab”

(1962) sculpture  
**BY** Alexander Calder  
**LOCATION:** Roy Cullen Sculpture Garden, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
**PERMANENT • COST:** Unknown  
**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** A painted steel

abstract, *The Crab* is smaller (120 x 240 x 120 inches) than many of the works created by Calder. His humor, his interest in motion, his experience sketching animals, and his fondness for color – are all evident in this piece. *The Crab* has been variously described by adults as “Lurking” or even “menacing,” while children typically find it fun. Whether *The Crab* seems friendly or on the verge of attacking is also affected by the time of day and weather conditions.

**SOURCE:** McDonald, Elvin. Texas Public Gardens. Gretna: Pelican, 2008. Print.

## “Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads”

(2011) sculptures

**BY** Ai Weiwei

**LOCATION:** Mc-Govern Lake at Hermann Park

**TEMPORARY**

**COST:** Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S**

**THOUGHTS:** The cast

bronze *Zodiac Heads* (a

rabbit, pig, ox, monkey,

sheep, dragon, snake,

horse, tiger, rooster, dog

and rat) each weigh

about 800 pounds and measure approximately four feet high and three feet

wide. They are inspired by those which once comprised a water clock-

fountain at the Yuanming Yuan, which is a complex of palaces and gardens

in Beijing that were constructed by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty.

In 1860, the Yuanming Yuan was ransacked by French and British troops,

and the heads were pillaged. In re-interpreting these objects on an oversized

scale, Ai Weiwei focuses attention on questions of looting and repatriation,

while extending his ongoing exploration of the ‘fake’ and the copy in relation

to the original.

**SOURCE:** [www.zodiacheads.com/about\\_exhibit\\_bronze.html](http://www.zodiacheads.com/about_exhibit_bronze.html)



## Yarn Bomb Installation

(2011)

installation

**BY** Urban

Yarnage

**LOCATION:**

Greenstreet

**TEMPORARY**

**COST:**

Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/**

**ARTIST’S**

**THOUGHTS:**

Approximately

135 bamboo canes incorporated into a yarn bomb composition of bare

cane, cane with cuffs and sleeves. Yarn bombing is intended to bring interest

and beauty to otherwise cold or sterile public spaces. It is a fun and unique

way to soften and call attention to the built environment.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Urban Yarnage

**SOURCE:** [www.urbanyarnage.com](http://www.urbanyarnage.com)



## “Fleming Park Bird Totem”

(1991) sculpture

**BY** Fletcher Mackey

**LOCATION:** Martha Fleming Park

(1901 Sunset Blvd)

**PERMANENT • COST:** Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S**

**THOUGHTS:** The Friends of Fleming Park donated this wooden sculpture to the City of Houston in 1991. It was inspired by

Native American totem poles from the Pacific Northwest, which the artist

encountered during a trip to Vancouver Island, and incorporates a birdhouse.

Made of Cypress and Cedar Wood, Glazed Ceramic, Copper, Painted

Steel, the totem measures 15 feet tall.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** City of Houston

**SOURCE:** [www.houstontx.gov/parks/artinparks/flemingparkbirdtotem.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/artinparks/flemingparkbirdtotem.html)

**THOUGHTS:**





## “From the Hood to the Heights”

(2014) sculpture **BY** Patrick Medrano

**LOCATION:** Corner of McKinney and Bagby St

**TEMPORARY • COST:** \$5,000

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** A small 10-ft wooden, green barn-like building supported by eight huge metal oars, a version of Noah’s ark. It resonates of a personal journey, navigating above the tide of society. Its combination of colors seems just right, and I’m sure its oars, though embedded now, will be able to pull free and propel it forward when the need arises. *From the Hood to the*

*Heights* represents art that is finished not by the artist, but by the elements of nature. Created 100% from scratch and made to change with time. “This is my proudest and largest public sculpture to date.” What a honor it is to display our creation in such a historic and beautiful part of our great city!” says Medrano.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Bill Shirley

**SOURCE:** [www.houstonpress.com/arts/true-north-take-a-stroll-down-heights-boulevard-for-this-outdoor-exhibition-6601506](http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/true-north-take-a-stroll-down-heights-boulevard-for-this-outdoor-exhibition-6601506)

## “Heritage Lanterns” (2005) sculptures

**BY** Carter Ernst & Paul Kittelson



**LOCATION:** Root Memorial Square Park (corner of Clay St and La Branch St)

**PERMANENT • COST:** \$150,000

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** The five stainless steel sculptures are internally lit and feature various Victorian Era-styled “cut-outs.” The ornamental spires and tower-like structures of the lanterns are typical of the Victorian style in the 1800s. The lanterns vary in height from five to seven feet. LED lights installed at the base of the *Heritage Lanterns* ensure that they glow with changing colors after the sun goes down. Their lit interiors reflect a fleeting glimpse of Houston’s past allowing us to pay tribute to the grand Victorian neighborhood that once occupied the area at the beginning of the 20th century. “The techniques used in my own work have often transferred to my ideas for community participation,” says Ernst.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Chris Olbekson

**SOURCE:** [www.houstonfirsttheaters.com/Houston-First-Outdoors/Visitor-Information/Civic-Art](http://www.houstonfirsttheaters.com/Houston-First-Outdoors/Visitor-Information/Civic-Art)

## “Tolerance”

(2011) sculptures **BY**Jaume Plensa

**LOCATION:** Rosemont Bridge over Buffalo Bayou (@ Allen Pkwy)

**PERMANENT • COST:** Part of the \$58 Million budget to restore Buffalo Bayou Park



**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** Artist Jaume Plensa imagined harmony and unity in his creation of *Tolerance*, consisting of seven aluminum-framed human figures representing the seven continents. The large majestic sculptures are made in his signature alphabet pattern, each representing a mix of languages including Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Greek, Hindi and Cyrillic. At night the figures glow from within, creating a constellation of beacons. The artist’s inspiration comes from his belief that despite all of our many differences that make us unique, such as religion or language, we are all trying to achieve similar things, such as love, health, prosperity and the success of our children. .

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

**SOURCE:** [www.houstontx.gov/civcartolerance.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/civcartolerance.html)

## “Preservons La Creation”

(Let’s Preserve the Creation) (2014) mural



**BY** Sebastien “Mr. D” Boileau

**LOCATION:** 2800 San Jacinto St

**PERMANENT UNTIL BLDG IS SOLD • COST:** \$90,000+

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** Standing

five-stories tall, 60 foot high and one city block-wide, it is the largest mural produced in Houston’s history. This work of art carries with it a mission of public art awareness and community-centered art projects that connect the business and creative sectors. Texan-French Alliance for the Arts (TFAA) joined with Boileau to bring to life a conversation about the importance of street art, and other urban art forms, to the culture of a city, and to have and preserve creativity in daily life. In doing so, they act on one of the main principles of TFAA, which is cognizance of the link between art, society, and the human condition – with all its trials and triumphs. Urban real estate developer Adam Brackman’s company, Common Ground, invited Boileau to paint the building after he bought it because of its redevelopment potential. He’s enlisted muralists before to bring attention to his buildings and deter crime, also appreciating how street art can temporarily enliven a neighborhood in transition. Most of the buildings he buys and sells eventually will be razed, he reasons, “but in the meantime, let’s make them something.”

**SOURCE:** <http://texanfrenchalliance.org/feature-of-the-month-the-biggest-mural-in-houston-preservons-la-creation-3/>

## “Houston Bayou” (2012) mural **BY** Dixie Friend Gay

**LOCATION:** George Bush Intercontinental Airport, in the connector walkway from the A/B garage into Terminal B, ground level

**PERMANENT • COST:** part of the \$800,000 budget from the airfield’s capital improvement fund

**DESCRIPTION / ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** Dixie Friend Gay says she approached this project with the concept of creating a complete



environment that celebrates Houston’s unique bayou systems and natural beauty. Design elements are 8’ x 73’ Byzantine glass mosaic mural installed on a serpentine wall, Byzantine glass wrapping 5 large adjacent columns and a terrazzo floor design that enhances the mural and echoes the bayou theme. 1½ million pieces of glass were used in the mural, and fabrication alone was a yearlong process working with 4 full time artisans. The terrazzo floor design enhances the mural by using hand broadcast patterns that evoke the banks of the bayous. There are 40 cast bronze reliefs of native creatures; lizards, turtles, frogs, fish, inserted throughout the floor.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Samra Thompson

**SOURCE:** <http://dixiefriendgay.com/work/public-commissions/houston-bayou/>



## “Abrazo monumental”

(Monumental Embrace) (2014) sculpture

BY Jorge Marín

**LOCATION:** Discovery Green

**TEMPORARY • COST:** \$71,000

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** For over 25 years, Marín has presented his winged bronze sculptures in more than 200 exhibits worldwide. The allegorical and fantastic creatures portray perfection of the human body, and spark dialogue around themes of desire, will and determination with the body and mind. A winged angel holds a dying woman. Though her eyes are closed, she is still alive, as in desperation one arm clings tightly to the angel. His expression is a complex mixture of sadness at her anguish and perhaps of resignation as to the inevitability of death, while showing his concentration on the comfort that his arms can offer. The wings are magnificent in detail, yet he chooses not to fly but to offer what solace he can. And we sense that he knows that it is not enough. It is a heart-breaking metaphor for the human condition.

**SOURCE:** [www.discoverygreen.com/wingsofthecity](http://www.discoverygreen.com/wingsofthecity)

## “Remnant Reverie” (2011)

BY Kaneem Smith

**LOCATION:** Houston Permitting Center (1002 Washington Ave)

**PERMANENT • COST:** Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** a hanging forest of hand-painted, burlap coffee bag chimes. The artist



even encourages you to touch her installation of burlap, jute, acrylic paint, and found objects. By creating thought-provoking installations out of repurposed fabric materials for her sculptural investigations, she hopes to challenge the viewer to participate in a dialogue that references global concerns on ethical trade, the West’s over-consumption of natural resources, colonialist interactions on the natural environment and the economy of developing nations.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

**SOURCE:** [www.houstonpress.com/arts/for-great-art-head-to-the-houston-permitting-center-seriously-6376915](http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/for-great-art-head-to-the-houston-permitting-center-seriously-6376915)



## “Points of View” (1991) sculpture

BY James Surls

**LOCATION:** Market Square Park

**PERMANENT • COST:** Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** Points of View is an abstract 25-foot sculpture made of treated pine and painted steel and is mounted on a concrete base. The sculpture rises from its base on five metal legs that merge to form spirals from which planks made of pine relate to the form of a pinecone. Twenty-five elongated, wooden planks protrude from the bottom and top of the spiral form. The protrusions at the bottom project out in a parallel direction, while the protrusions at the top project upward. The sculpture stands like an axis mundi, embodying civic myths of growth

and abundance. The historical significance of Market Square as the heart of the city’s financial and political life for decades is expressed by the work’s distinctive, raw, and oracular vision. Surls felt the piece would bring people’s eyes up and lead them into the city and be a hopeful and visionary piece.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Adam T. Baker

**SOURCE:** McGrath, Joe. “Market Square Park.” *Cite* Fall 1992-Winter 1993: 14. Print.

## “Pachikadi and His Flying Friends”

(2011) sculpture

BY Elaine Bradford

**LOCATION:** Vinson Neighborhood Library (3810 West Fuqua)

**PERMANENT • COST:**



Undisclosed (funded by Percent for Art - City of Houston)

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:** Elaine Bradford’s whimsical installation for the Vinson Neighborhood Library consists of a life-sized, crochet-covered Asian elephant that spews colorful yarn sweaters from its trunk onto nine Canadian geese suspended from the ceiling. The installation tells a story about geese wanting a little more color in their lives, and a fantastical elephant that lends them yarn from its own vibrant sweater. Bradford draws inspiration from children’s stories such as those of Dr. Seuss, Hans Christian Andersen, and Lewis Carroll. The installation is an entry point for viewers not only to the library, but also into a world of imagination. It will lead them to explore books, nature, their own creativity, and the larger Houston community.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

**SOURCE:** [www.haax.info/civcart/commissions/completed-commissions/vinson-neighborhood-library](http://www.haax.info/civcart/commissions/completed-commissions/vinson-neighborhood-library)

## “MiniMurals - Sofia”

(2015) mural BY 2:12

**LOCATION:** Stella Link Rd & Latma Dr

**PERMANENT • COST:** Unknown

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:**

Henry David Thoreau once said, “The world is but a canvas to your imagination”. 2:12, a Houston-based artist takes this concept to it’s literal end. Wielding an X-acto knife, spray paint, wheat paste, and other assorted tools, 2:12 transforms mundane, trivial landscapes around us into art. Where a nondescript wall existed, now becomes a gateway to his imagination, a glimpse into his artistic expression. Much of his inspiration comes through traveling, which has opened his eyes to the



beauty and diversity of other cultures. His hope is to break up the monotony of everyday life for those that come across his paintings and to inspire others with his art just as the world has inspired him.

**SOURCE:** <http://minimurals.org/artist/212-2/>

## “Geometric Mouse X”

(1971) sculpture



BY Claes Thure Oldenburg

**LOCATION:** Corner of McKinney and Bagby St

**PERMANENT • COST:**

Undisclosed **DESCRIPTION/**

**ARTIST’S THOUGHTS:**

*Geometric Mouse X* is an abstract, geometric representation of a mouse that is composed of ¾ inch thick Cor-Ten steel that is welded and bolted together. Geometric Mouse X was part of a series of

five geometric mice in different sizes and colors. The Houston *Geometric Mouse* (scale X) is unique because it is the largest of the group with a fixed unitary form. Only the two teardrop chains, attached to the eyelid-windows, are moveable. The mouse theme, more specifically, the head of the mouse, began to emerge in Oldenburg’s work in 1965. The image was used as a mask with a design based on a profile of a movie projector in the performance piece *Moveyhouse* - the reels being the ears and the nose as the lens.

**SOURCE:** [www.houstontx.gov/municipalart/geometricmouse.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/municipalart/geometricmouse.html)

## “Wave of Life”

(1953) fountain sculpture

BY Wheeler Williams



**LOCATION:** Houston Main Building (HMB) of The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

**PERMANENT**

**COST:** Unknown

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST'S THOUGHTS:** The Prudential Insurance Company placed this sculpture at the Prudential Building (Houston's first suburban skyscraper) in 1953; the University of Texas acquired the work as part of the purchase of the Prudential Building in 1974. Carved from a single block of Indiana limestone, it measures 8 feet x 18 feet x 7 feet and is the largest sculpture in the United States carved out of one piece of marble. Williams carved his interpretation of the American family, depicting a man and a woman holding a child, to symbolize the future. The work took a period of almost two years.

**SOURCE:** [www.houstonmod.org/bldg\\_detail.asp?id=20&by=endangered&ss=2](http://www.houstonmod.org/bldg_detail.asp?id=20&by=endangered&ss=2)

## “Virtuoso”

(1983) sculpture • BY David Adickes

**LOCATION:** 615 Prairie St

**PERMANENT • COST:** Undisclosed

**DESCRIPTION/ARTIST'S**

**THOUGHTS:** *Virtuoso* has the distinction of being the first larger-than-life sculpture to emerge from the hands of artist and sculptor David Adickes. In the early 1980s, he created the 36-foot tall, 21-ton cubist-style sculpture on a commission from the developer of Lyric Centre, the office building behind it. Developer Joe Russo asked for a piece of public art that paid homage to music, dance and performing arts, making it a fitting neighbor for the adjacent



Theater District. The completed abstract sculpture depicts a giant cello, being played by mustachioed and goateed player, who is completely invisible except for his head, hands and bow. Behind the cello is a trio of abstract orchestra members, on a more life-size scale, playing a violin, upright bass and a flute. Their bodies reminiscent of string instruments, their hands are attached to seemingly invisible arms. If you stand close enough, and traffic is quiet, you can hear a classical soundtrack playing at the sculpture.

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Cortney Martin

**SOURCE:** <http://365thingsinhouston.com/2014/04/07/virtuoso-sculpture-downtown-houston-david-adickes/>