

In a special tribute this summer, the Chicago Department of Transportation will take inspiration from Phyllis Bramson’s artwork for the design and color palette of the median landscaping along Michigan Avenue from Roosevelt Road to Oak Street. Bramson’s 30 year retrospective, “Under the Pleasure Dome”, will be exhibiting at the Chicago Cultural Center starting in June. Through interviews, studio visits and analysis, CDOT has produced a landscape design that reflects the curving natural forms and fanciful imagery found in Ms. Bramson’s art.



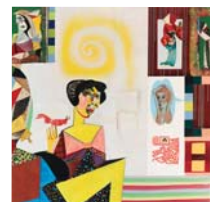
The Michigan Avenue Medians are located between Roosevelt Road and Oak Street. The Northern section is known to the world as “The Magnificent Mile”. The Southern section is identified as “The Cultural Mile” due to the wealth of Cultural Institutions and Organizations located between the Chicago River and Roosevelt Road.

**DESIGN PROCESS:**

Ms. Bramson’s compositions depict “figure and narrative moves” based on “love that started with Adam and Eve”. The images are “infused with lighthearted airiness and amusing anecdotes about love and affection in an often cold and hostile world”. The landscape is designed to encompass this whimsy and folly with a touch of the unexpected. In addition, literal translations in color, texture, shape, collage and layering has been creatively applied to the plant selection and placement in the medians as a living interpretation of her works of art. Delightful and unexpected floral effects will unfurl naturally as the summer progresses.



FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE



PICASSOISMS, FEMME FATALE I



SHAPE STUDY: ROUND, OVAL, SPIRAL, LINES, RIBBONS



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN NORTH MEDIANS



RENDERING OF THE PLAN VIEW FROM CULTURAL CENTER

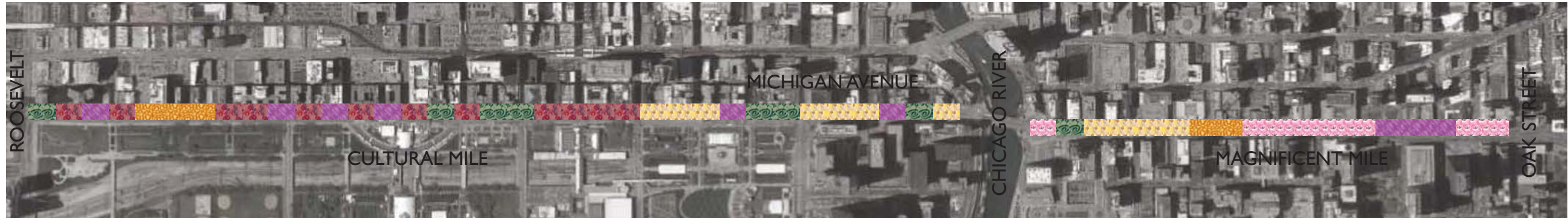


RENDERING OF THE BIRDS EYE VIEW FROM CULTURAL CENTER

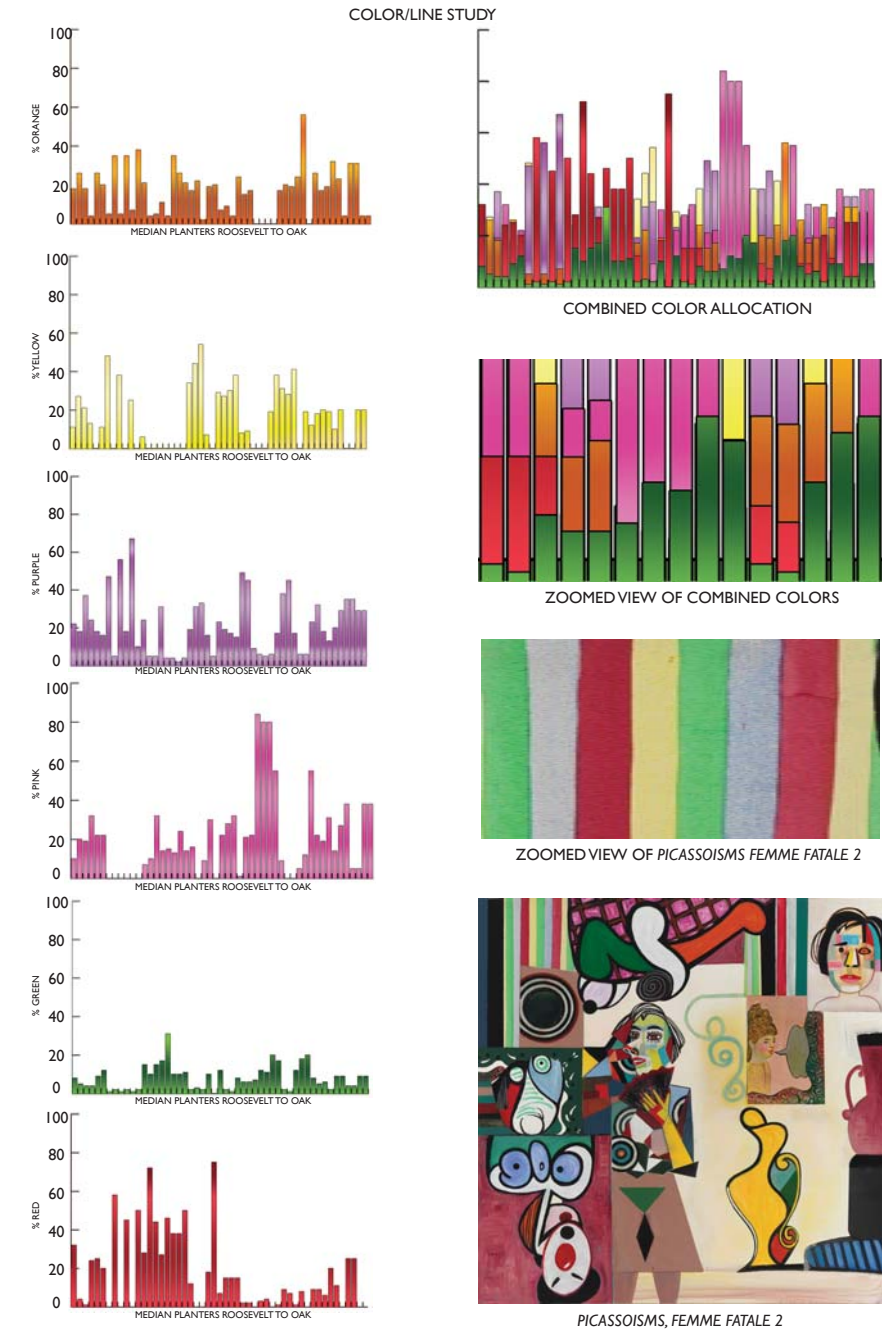
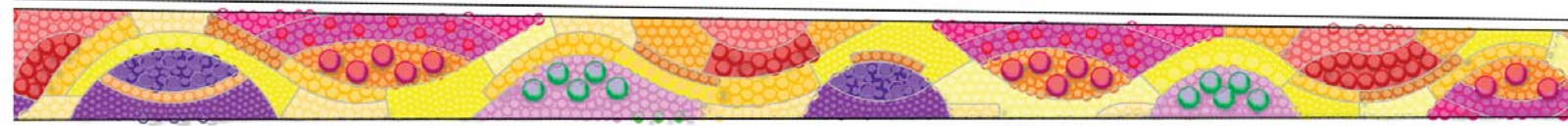


MICHIGAN AVENUE AT WASHINGTON STREET - PERSPECTIVE VIEW TO NORTH WEST

COLOR PALETTE OF MAIN STRUCTURAL PLANTS THROUGHOUT THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT



The long and linear medians on the Cultural Mile are designed with serpentine of colorful structural plants as the main focal point. These ribbons of color act as a unifying and repetitive element of the design. High intensity contrasting hues create a dramatic effect.



OVAL SHAPES



ROUND SHAPES



SPIRALS



LINES



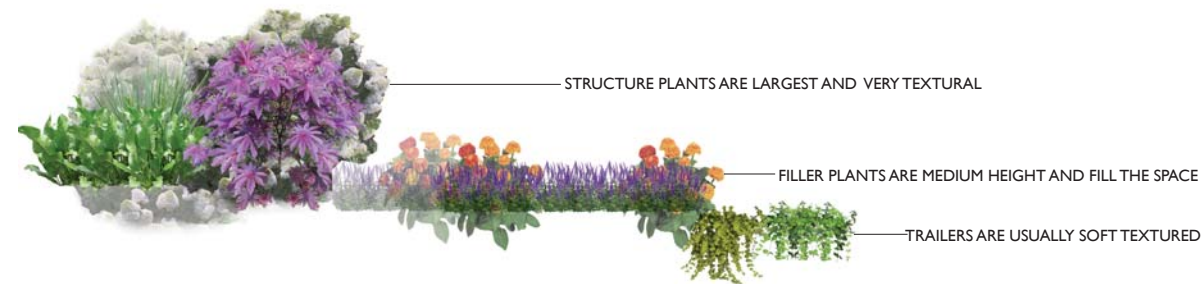
The medians to the north of the River are small, modular rectangles that are arranged in linear groups. The design strategy differs from the south in that it is more geometrical with patterns extending between groupings of medians. Some medians include single plants that act as a surprising focal point. Plants have been selected based on geometrical forms and shapes prevalent in Ms. Bramson's compositions.



MICHIGAN AVENUE VIEW NORTH FROM WASHINGTON



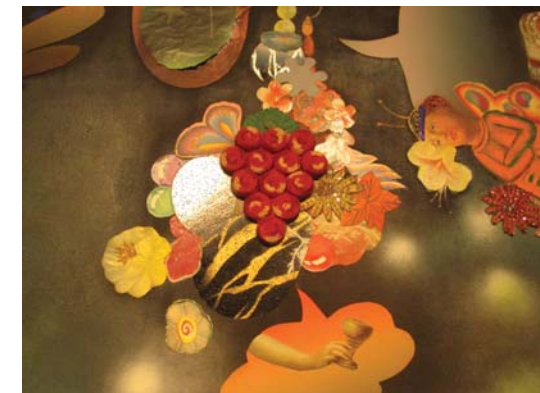
HIERARCHY OF PLANT MATERIAL



LAYERS OF PLANT MATERIAL

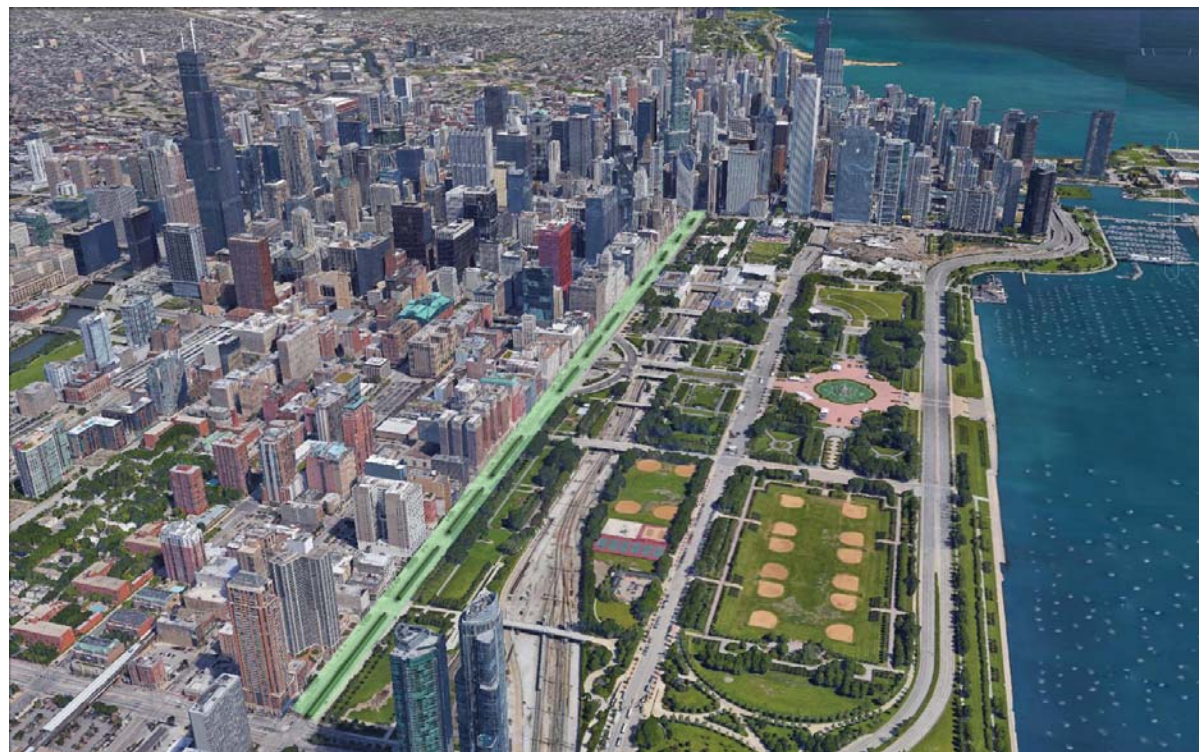
The Michigan Avenue medians utilize a layering method which includes taller plants with bold foliage or shapes to provide structure, medium sized plants that fill in the areas around the structure plants and trailing plants that spill over the edges. This layering, textural effect is similar to the assemblages of mixed media utilized in Ms. Bramson's artwork.

COLLAGE AND MIXED MEDIA WITH VARYING TEXTURES





The flowers and fauna depicted in Ms. Bramson's compositions "have no specific identity, they are chosen for their colors, decorative and ornamental shapes and romantic innuendo". The gardens "like the paintings of Fragonard, usually deal with pastoral pleasures, where figures dally, often hiding a secret or the unsaid". The Michigan Avenue medians are designed to be a utopia of overflowing flowers that are lush, fantastical and pleasurable for the public. Hidden within the plants and flowers you will find birds, insects and butterflies going about their business unnoticed by the passerby.



Chicago is in the center of a principal route of the Mississippi Flyway where over 7 million birds migrate back and forth between wintering and breeding grounds. Though it may seem unlikely, the Michigan Avenue medians play host to a number of species of birds by providing, food, water and shelter. CDOT has identified over 50 species of birds (both migratory and permanent dwellers) using the medians as a temporary habitat. In addition, the medians are purposely planted with plants that attract pollinator butterflies, moths and bees. Michigan Avenue has been extremely successful in attracting Monarch butterflies which lay their eggs on Milkweed plants, hatch into caterpillars and metamorphose into the next generation of Monarchs.



MIGRATED MONARCH



MONARCH CATERPILLAR AND CHYRSALIS



NEWLY EMERGED MONARCH



SIGHTED BIRD SPECIES ON MICHIGAN AVENUE

- American Redstart
- American Goldfinch
- American Tree Sparrow
- Baltimore Oriole
- Bay Breasted Warbler
- Black and White Warbler
- Black Capped Chickadee
- Blue Jay
- Brown Thrasher
- Cape May Warbler
- Cedar Waxwing
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Common Flicker
- Common Grackle
- Common Yellowthroat Warbler
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Empidonax Flycatcher
- Field Sparrow
- European Starling
- Fox Sparrow
- Gray Catbird
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Hermit Thrush
- House Sparrow
- Indigo Bunting
- House Wren
- Least Flycatcher
- Lincoln's Sparrow
- Magnolia Warbler
- Marsh Wren
- Olive sided Flycatcher
- Northern Junco
- Palm Warbler
- Northern Waterthrush
- Philadelphia vireo
- Phoebe
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Rock Pigeon
- Robin
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird
- Savannah Sparrow
- Sedge Wren
- Song Sparrow
- Tree Sparrow
- Swainson's Thrush
- Veery
- Swamp Sparrow
- White-crowned sparrow
- White-throated sparrow
- Wilson's Warbler
- Winter Wren
- Yellow-breasted Chat
- Wood Thrush
- Yellow-rumped Warbler

