Tension Sculptures Park Avenue

Joseph La Piana

Tension Sculpture Installation Park Avenue

Tension is a concept that exists in both the material and mental realm. As a force in the physical world, tension calls to mind the stretching of something between fixed points, perhaps to the moment of rupture. In the realm of psychological, it is used to convey a highly strained state of emotional being. For his latest body of work, "Tension Sculptures" artist Joseph La Piana aims to interrogate these existing definitions, making manifest the underlying dynamic at play in both.

Located on the meridians of Park Avenue—beginning at 53rd and continuing to 70th—five sculptures of varying dimensions bring together La Piana's interest in exploring the boundaries of tensile strength. Comprised of rubber stretched between and wrapped around stainless steel armatures, akin to a cats-cradle, La Piana's installations brings to the fore the forces of tension, evincing them through the material process of the materials elasticity and potential for decay. Exposed to the elements as well as the constant pressures being applied through their taut state, the potential fragmentation of the stretched material allows for a transformative experience without direct intervention or manipulation, a central theme of La Piana's work.

With these sculptures, the rigid, linear nature of La Piana's "Tension Paintings" is translated into three dimensions, inviting the viewer to observe the forces of gravity and tension as they act upon, and alter the form of, each of the five sculptures. But the "Tension Sculptures" also extend the the conceptual dialogue that has come to define La Piana's ongoing body of work. With the sculptures, he finds parallels between his work and the current experiences of individuals on a global, social scale. Every day, tensions are promulgated by conflicts—whether political, social, environmental, or interpersonal. These enduring disputes intensify the divisions among us. La Piana's sculptures, stretched to their capacity, echo this state of cultural and emotional disruption.

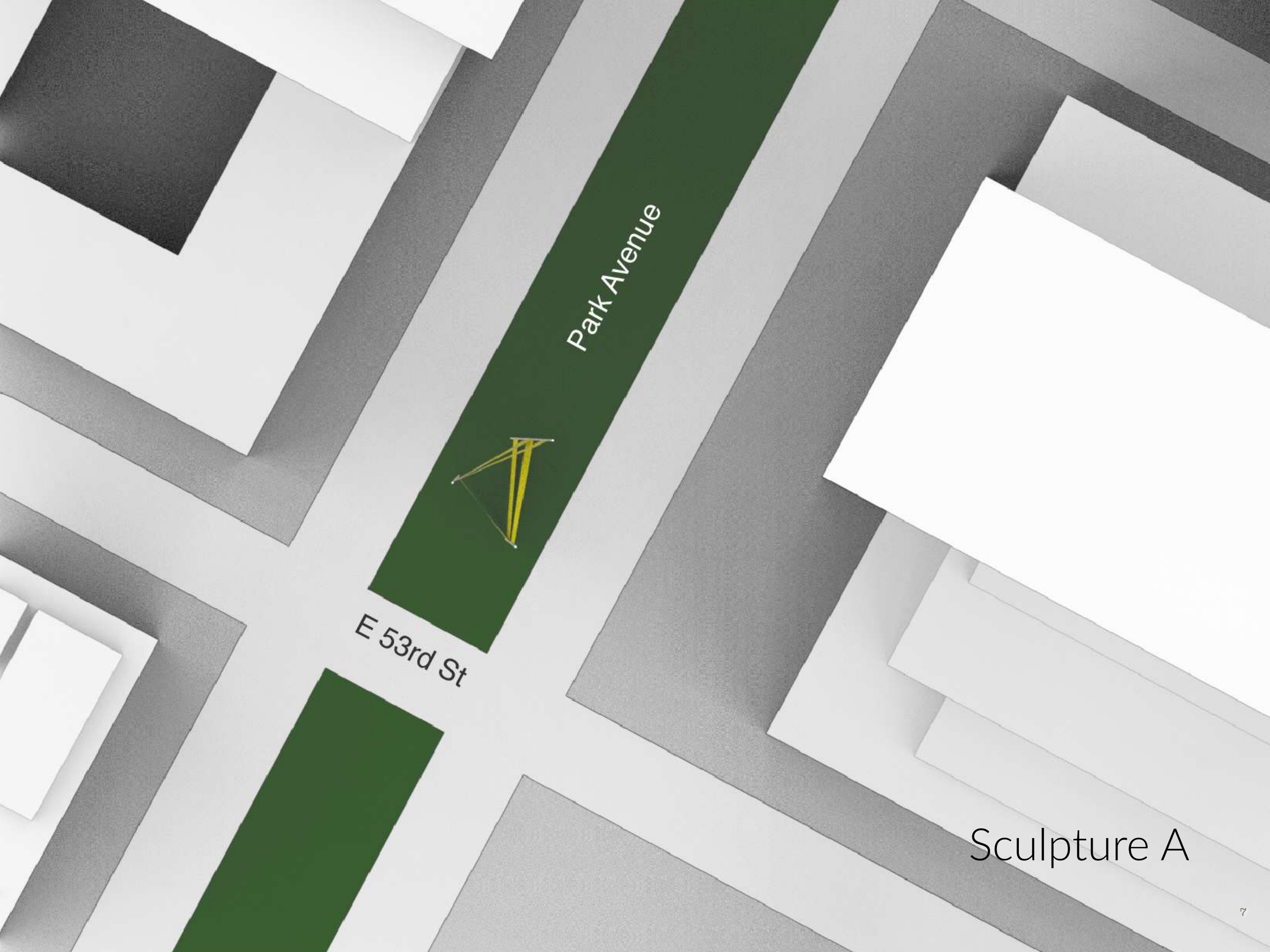
Taken together, these conflicts challenge our thresholds for patience, tolerance and — perhaps most troublingly — maintaining hope. A myriad of troubles fosters the growth of tension within our everyday lives, so much so that our emotional and psychological states are being stretched to their limits. What results is a feeling of impending implosion; we are drawn to the verge of snapping, collapsing as institutions and structures around us seemingly do the same. Too often, these tensions are a catalyst for grave acts of violence.

Ultimately, it is La Piana's hope that we explore the parallels between his sculptures and the current state of affairs. Tension is a powerful force: it is a source of internal and external agonism that brings to the fore questions, real and metaphorical, about states of integrity in the face of growing dissonance and countervailing pressures placed on our collective identities.

Sculpture E
E 70th St
Sculpture D
E 67th St

E 60th St
Sculpture C

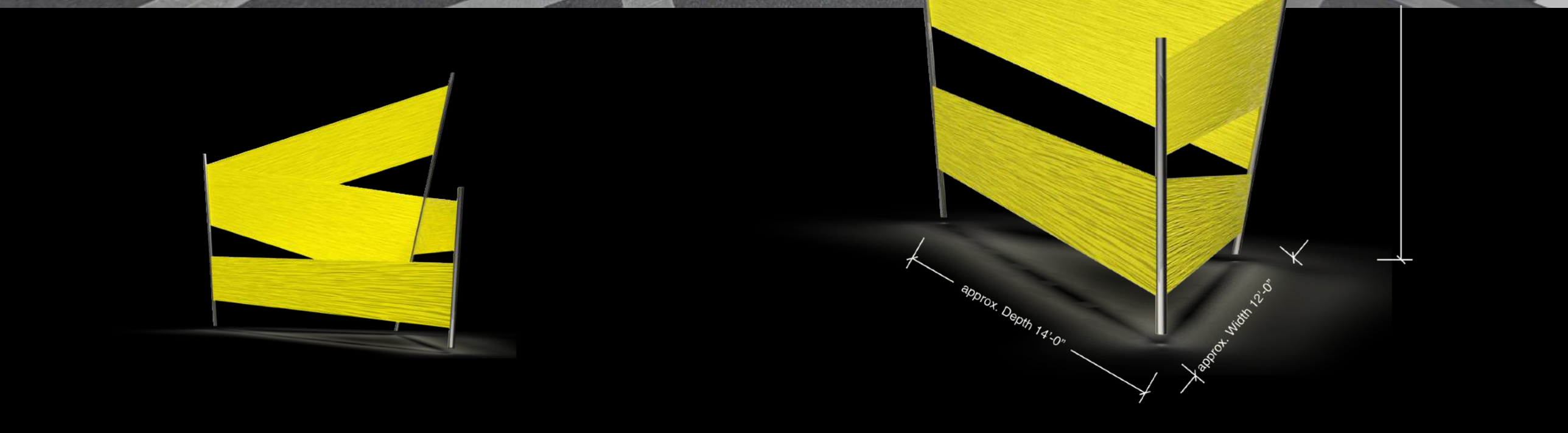
E 57th St
Sculpture B
E 53rd St
Sculpture A

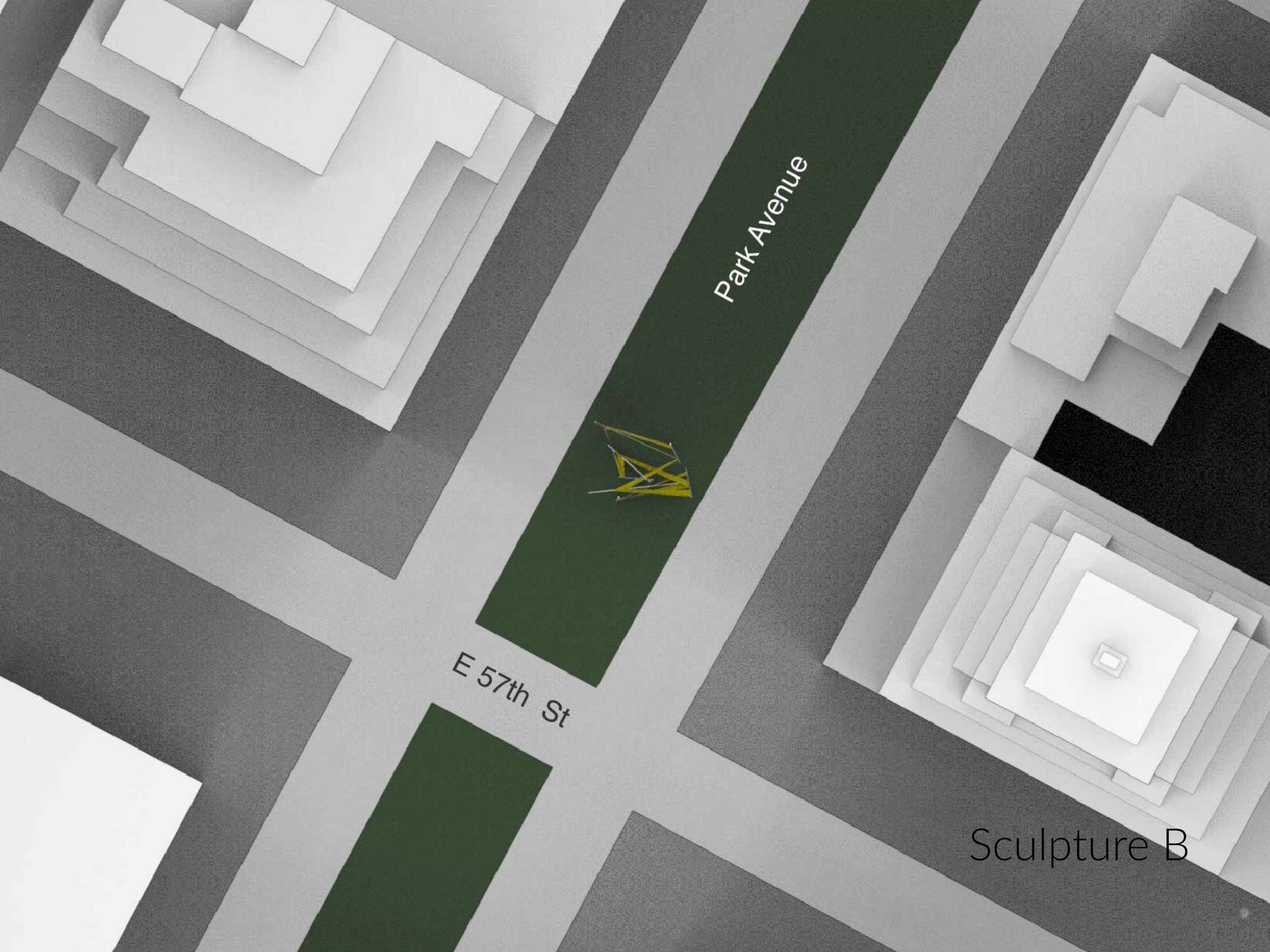


Sculpture A

ONE WAY
DON'T BLOCK THE BOX
FINE +2 POINTS
FAÇADE TRANSFORMATION
BEST RATE
approx. Height 12'-0"

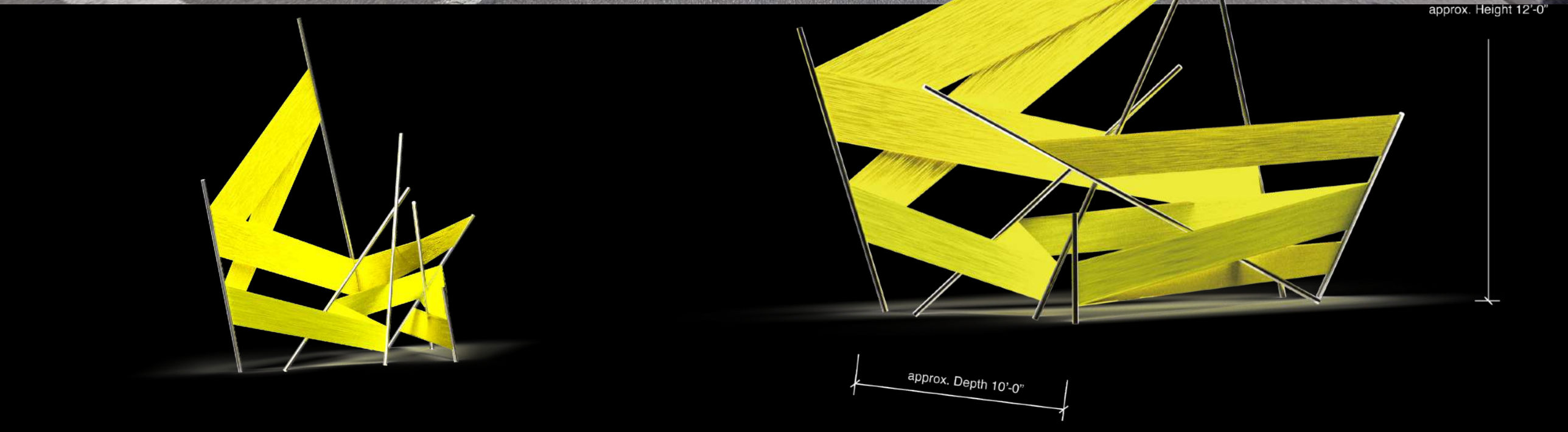
Sculpture A

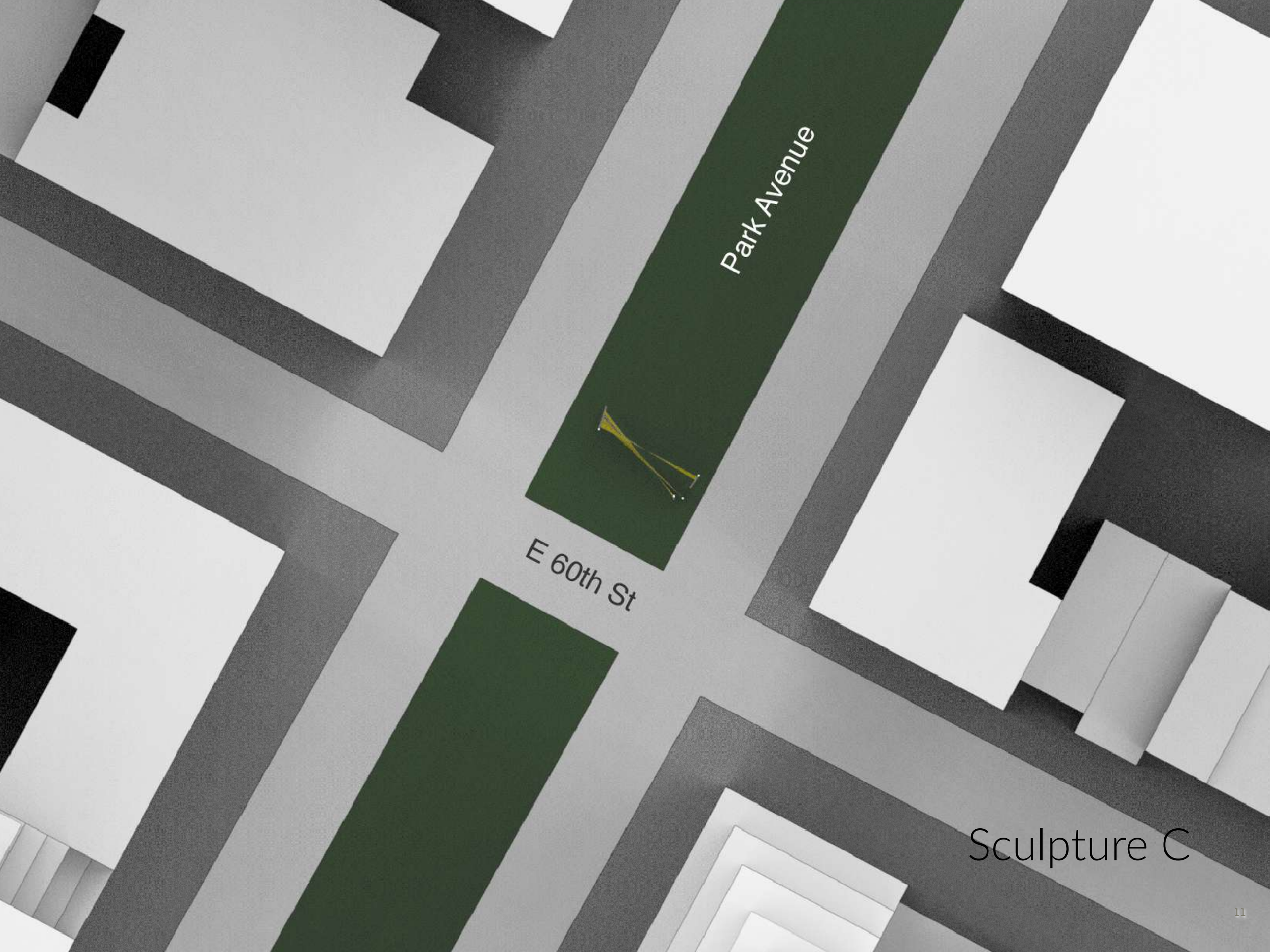

approx. Depth 14'-0"
approx. Width 12'-0"


Park Avenue
E 57th St
Sculpture B

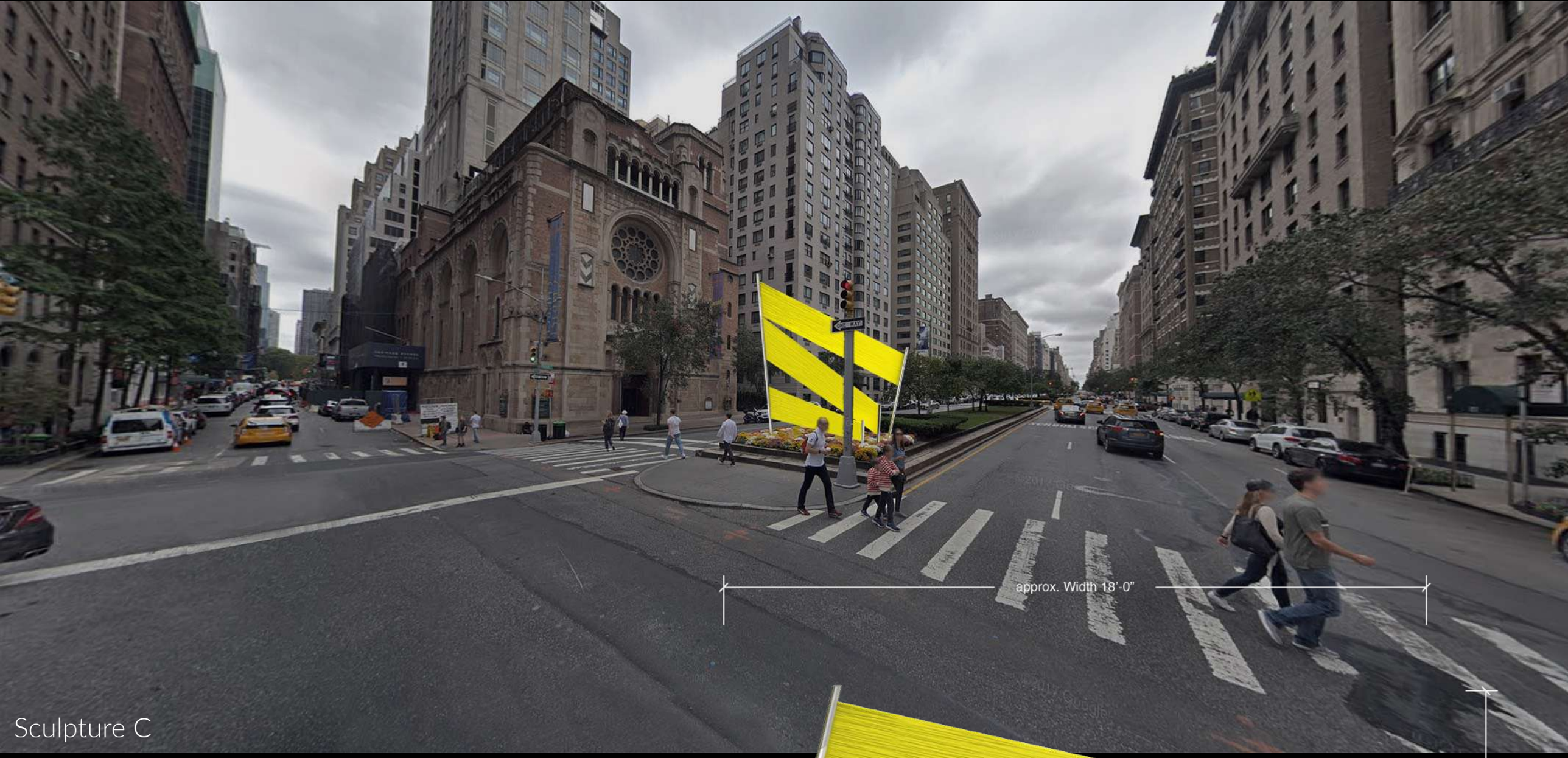
FedEx
citibank
citibank
approx. Width14'-0"

Sculpture B

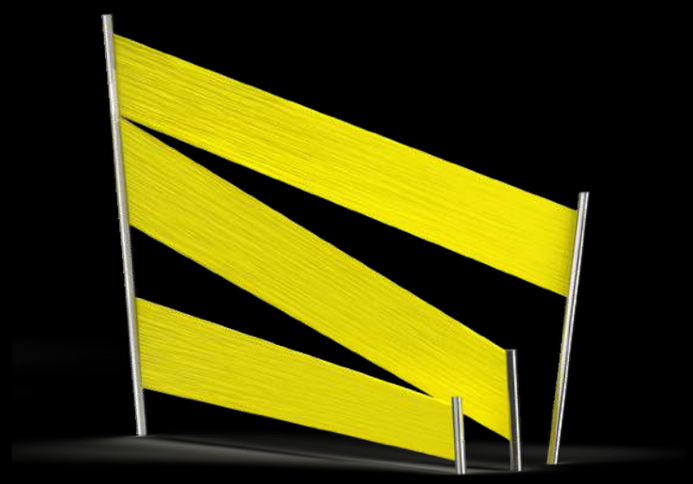

approx. Height 12'-0"
approx. Depth 10'-0"

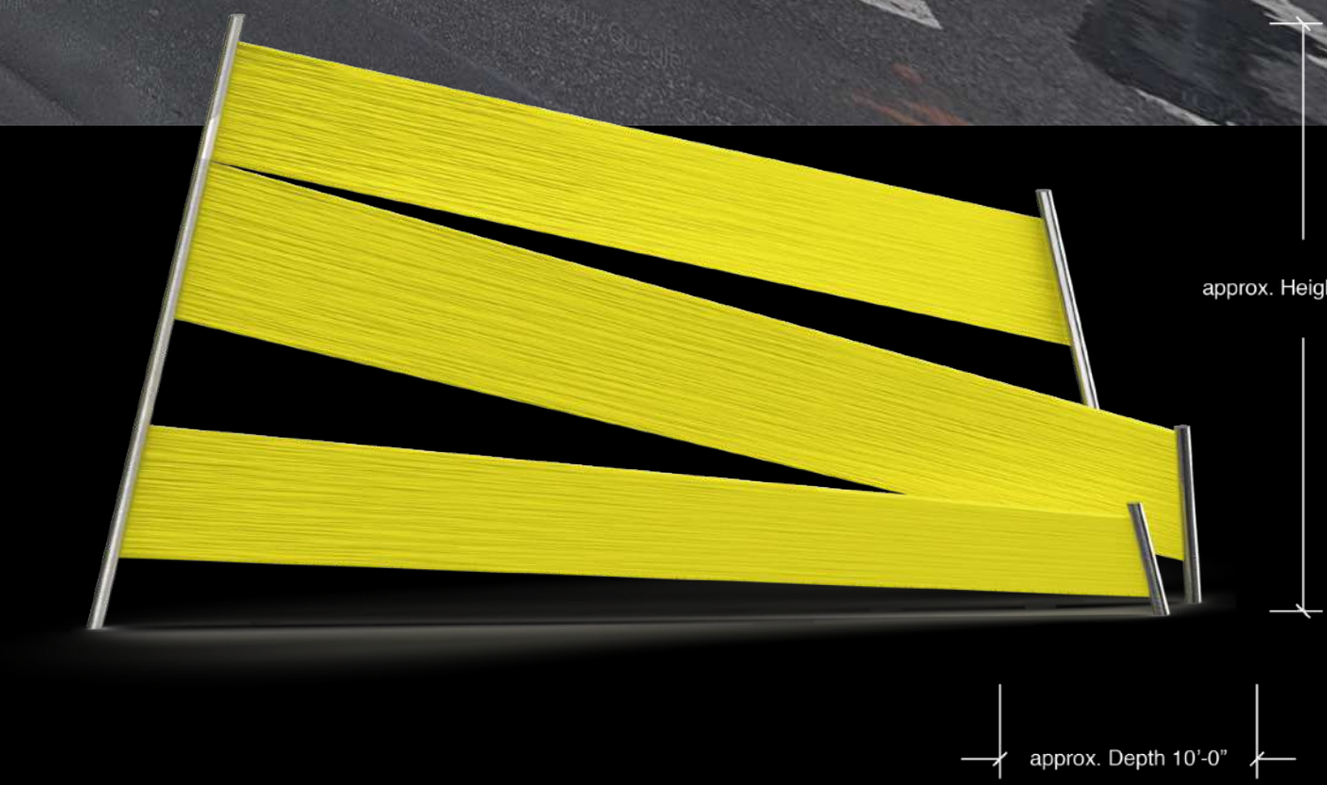


Sculpture C



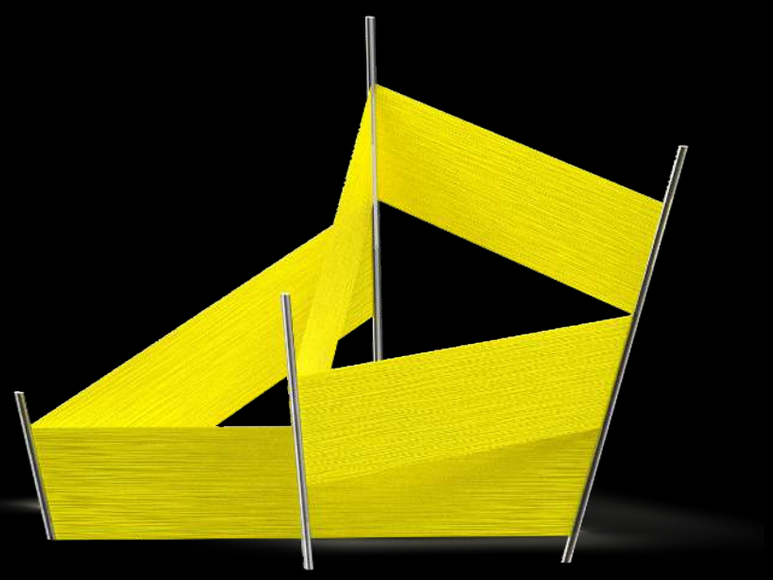
Sculpture C

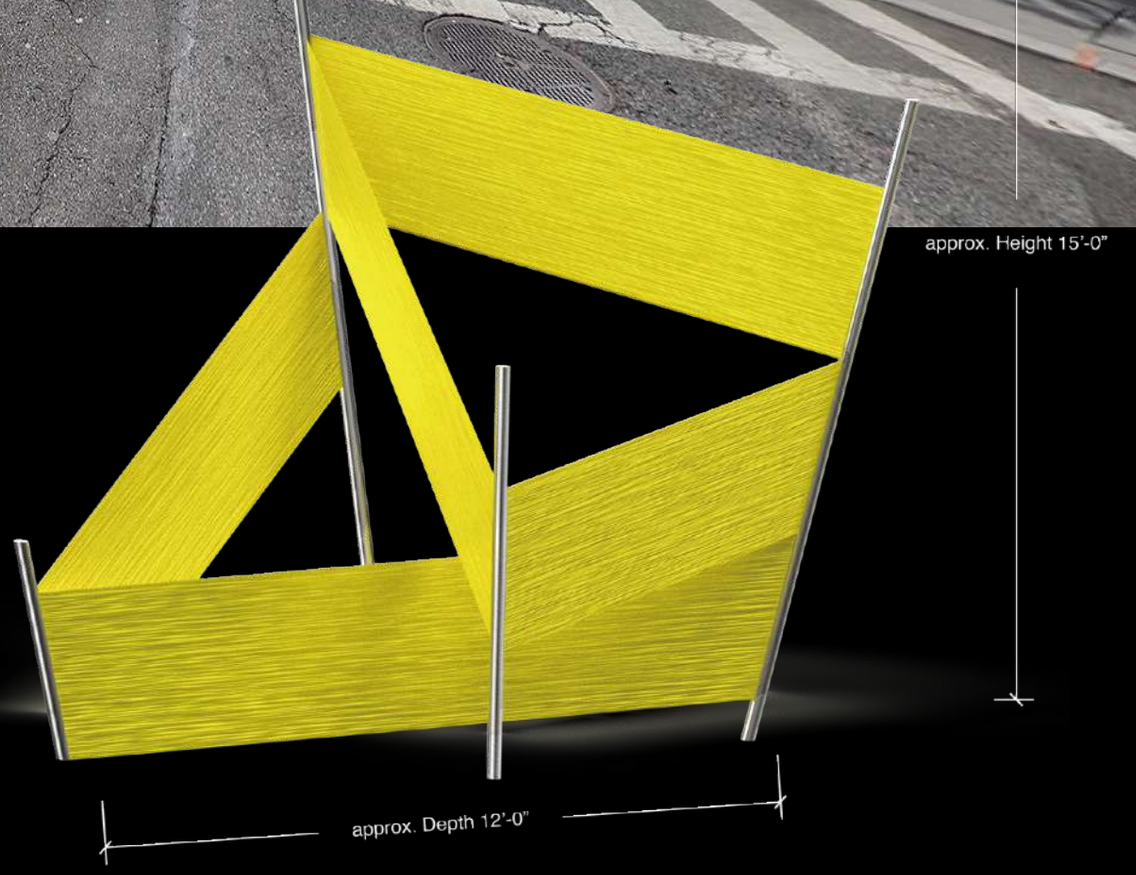


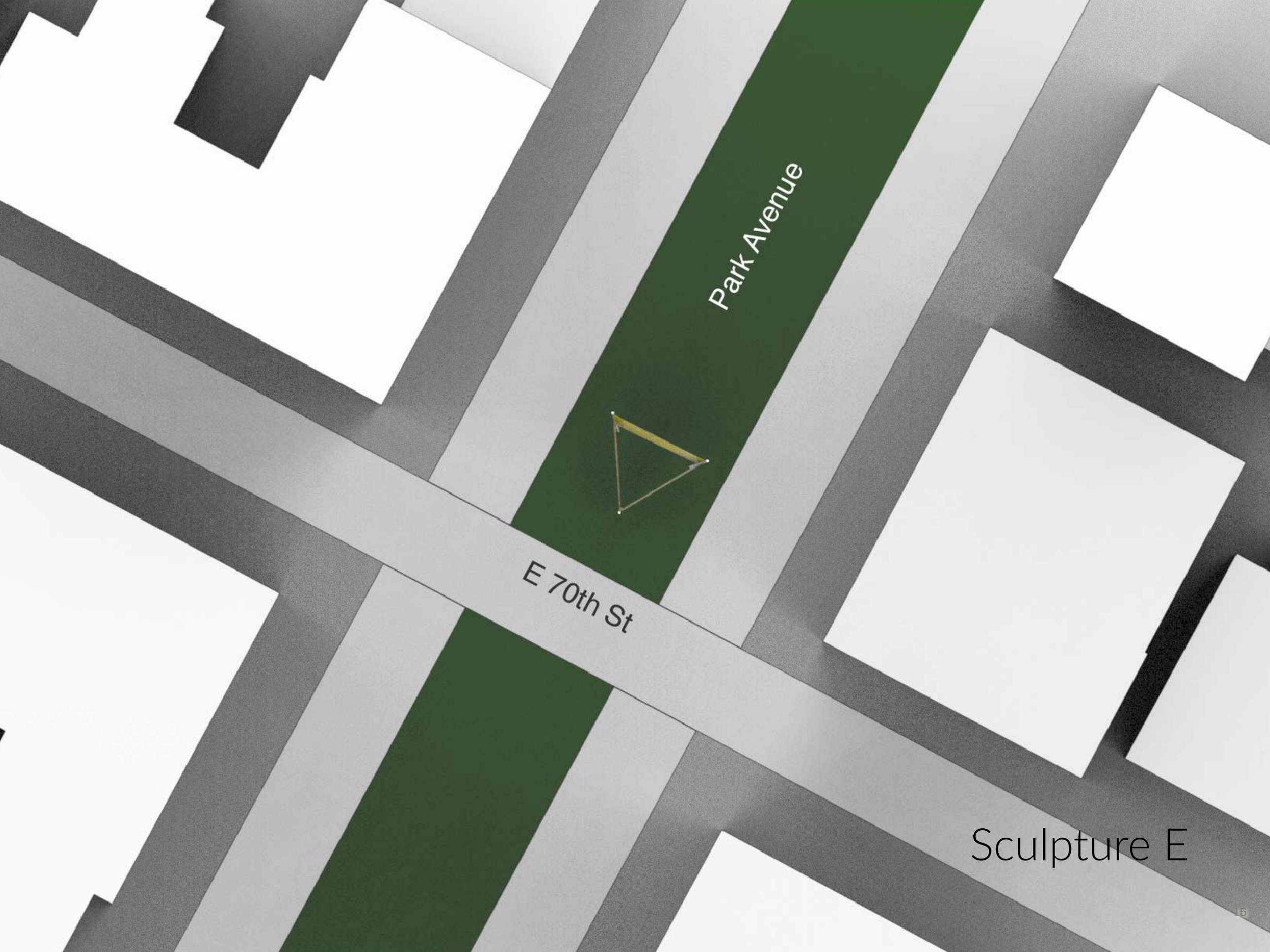


E 67th St
Park Avenue
Sculpture D

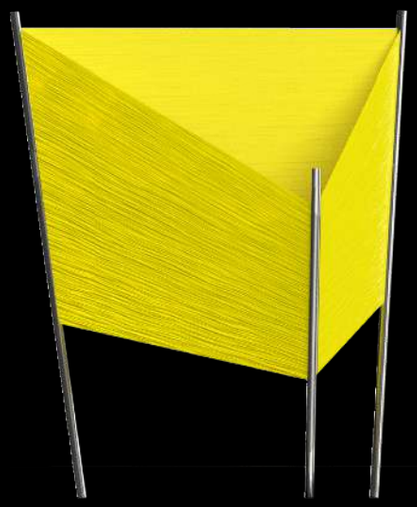
Sculpture D







Sculpture E

Asia Society
STOP
HERE ON
RED
SIGNAL
approx. Width 12’-0”
approx. Height 16’-0”
approx. Depth 10’-0”

Sculpture E