

Opinion

JOANNA WEISS

On the Greenway, public arts that feels alive



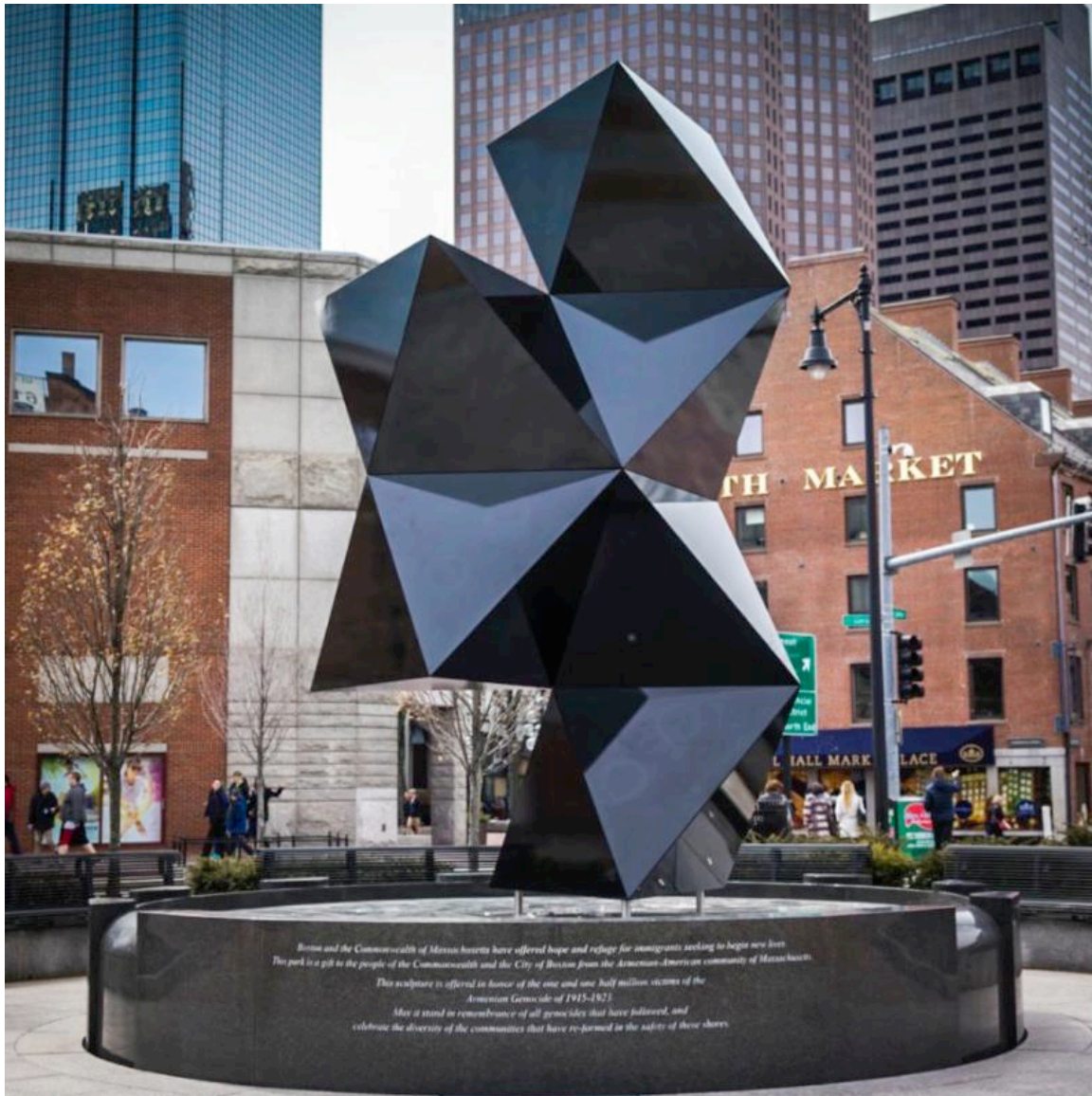
Designed to be reconfigured each year to represent the shifting immigrant experience, the Armenian Heritage Park sculpture (above) as it appears this year.



By Joanna Weiss GLOBE COLUMNIST April 11, 2015

EARLY ON a Sunday several weeks ago, a crane descended on the Rose Kennedy Greenway and cleaved a sculpture in two. This was by design. The massive aluminum structure at Armenian Heritage Park - a dodecahedron, split in half - is reconfigured every year into a different, striking shape. Architect Don Tellalian laid out plans for 25 different arrangements, after which the cycle will start again. It is meant to represent the immigrant experience: people pulling themselves from their former countries, shifting their identities, creating new lives here.

It might well be the gem of the Greenway so far: an example of public art that is both permanent and alive.



The Sculpture in 2014

MATT CONTI

When the Armenian Heritage Foundation first made plans to finance and endow a Greenway parcel, there was controversy and [much debate](#). Would this be a literal reference to a dark time in history? A somber intrusion in a public space? Tellalian, 78, a longtime Boston architect who donated his work, argued for something different: an abstract sculpture that would capture a broad human experience, beside a walkable labyrinth meant to symbolize life's journey.

The result required substantial engineering; portions of the park, which opened in May 2012, sit barely 2 feet above a tunnel up-ramp, and each half of the sculpture weighs 3,354 pounds. The sculpture sits on a reflecting pool that pours over its sides. A stream of the same water shoots up in the labyrinth's center. The result, in the

summer, is irresistible. Tellalian likes to watch as families cross from Faneuil Hall toward the North End: Inevitably, children spy the labyrinth and peel off to walk its path.



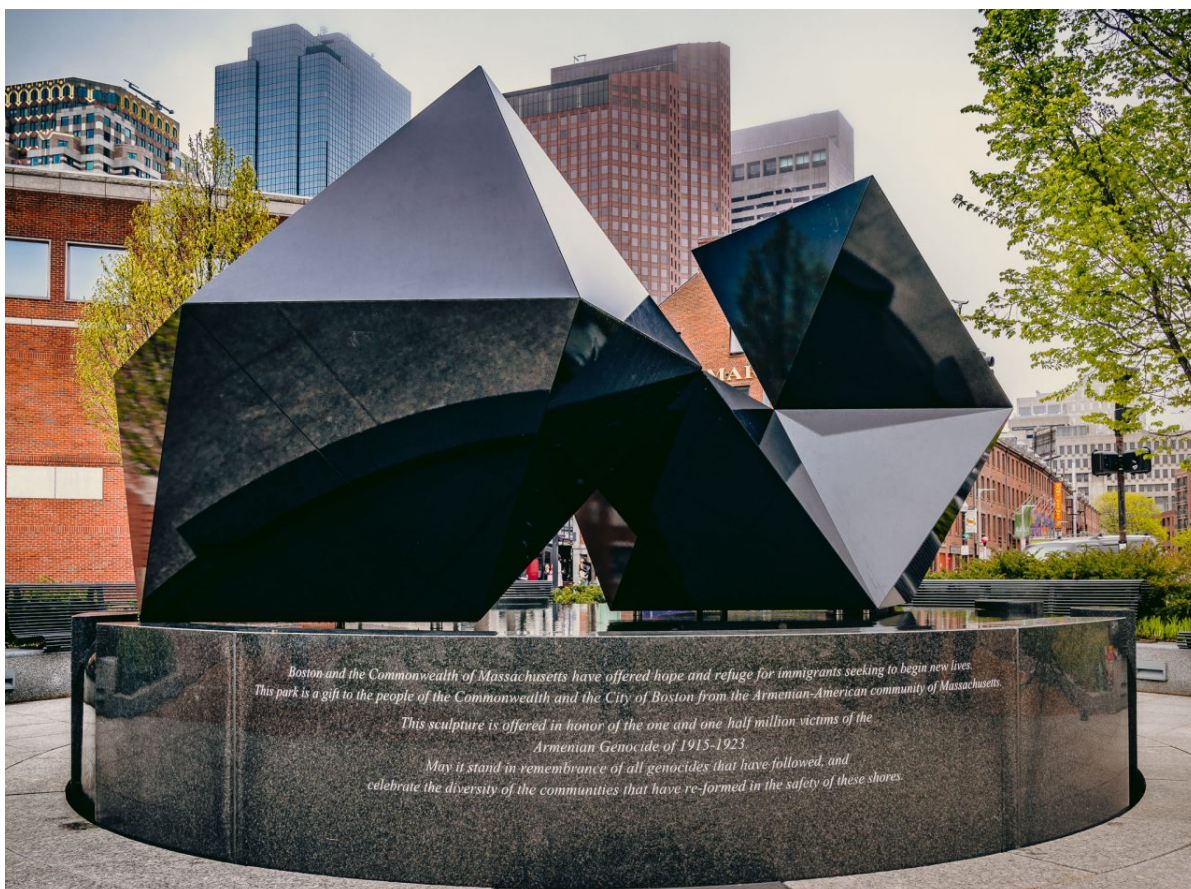
The Sculpture in 2013 MATT CONTI

The Greenway is in the midst of an ambitious five-year [plan](#) to expand its public art portfolio. For now, there's a moratorium on permanent works. But "Abstract Sculpture" - that is its official name - proves that permanence is not stasis. Some public art, striking as it is, eventually fades into the landscape. Some integrates itself into the city's daily life.



The Sculpture in 2012

MATT CONTI



The Sculpture in 2016

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