



Off the Rails

The Church & Duboce transit area is characterized by its brightly glinting web of tracks embedded in the street.

Rail that is being replaced as a part of the MTA Church & Duboce Muni Track and Streetscape Improvement Project will be salvaged by Rebar and used to create sculptures on the new Church Street boarding platform and sidewalks.



an art installation proposal for the
ReBAR Church & Duboce Muni Track and Streetscape Improvement Project

Off the Rails is a **re-use and re-imagining** of the venerable rails that have kept Muni trains moving through Duboce Triangle for the last 40 years. Light rail tracks—recycled from the construction project that is re-shaping the streetscape—are transformed into gestural art pieces that define space on the sidewalk, offer a grounding point for commuters to pause and rest against, and create a distinctive gateway element for the neighborhood. They are reminders of the mutability of infrastructure and their clean, industrial lines speak to the brawn of the commuter system that makes Duboce Triangle the transit-first residential nexus and a model for neighborhoods across the city.

What:
 Three sculptures are composed of six stacked rails each, approximately 15 feet long, rising obliquely out of the sidewalk almost as if they were lifting themselves out of the pavement, before diving back into the ground again. Suddenly along their length, the parallel rails bend, separating and converging to create sculptural “moments”: a seat for one, a plank to lean against, a place to tie your shoe.

Who:
Off the Rails will be created by **Rebar** (www.rebargroup.org), a San Francisco-based art and design studio. Rebar’s approach is to remix elements of the familiar fabric of everyday life in novel ways, creating new meanings and challenging assumptions about the way we perceive public space.

How:
 Muni rails will be directly re-used and re-fabricated from the rail replacement project. **The design is modular:** each sculpture variant uses a set of common bends that can be mixed-and-matched to create unique pieces. At least three variations will be produced within the budget, and depending on economies of scale in fabrication and/or increased funding, additional sculpture installations could be added.

Why:
Off the Rails captures a moment in the neighborhood’s history when the timelines of infrastructure renewal and community renewal cross. By re-using the silent but strong materials that built the neighborhood, and re-casting them into a new and playful role, the piece makes the banal special and the tough, delicate. It also adds tremendous value to a highly-tread urban space by creating opportunities for inhabiting space that relate directly to the daily habits of commuters and residents. By re-using existing local materials the artwork embodies best construction practices.

