Dan Bergeron
APOTHECIUM

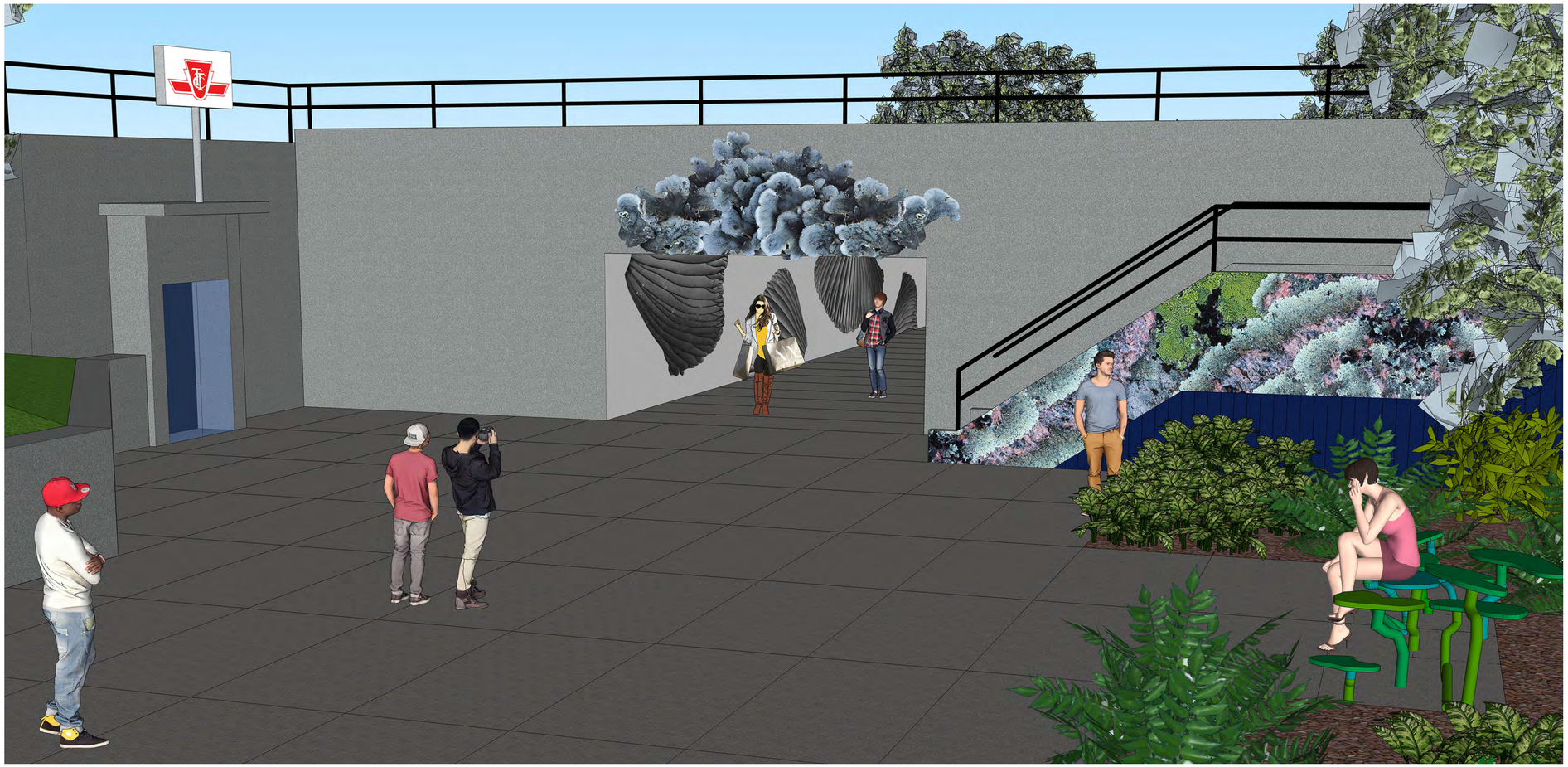
Apothecium is a sculpture and light installation that uses the rarely observed beauty of lichens to activate the Glen Road Pedestrian Tunnel. Comprised of large, illuminated lichen sculptures on the north and south retaining walls, a lichen-inspired network of lights on the ceiling of the tunnel, mushroom patterns on the tunnel walls and a bench invaded by lichen in the site's south plaza, this installation brings together the natural and urban environments through the ubiquitous and overlooked lichen. *Apothecium* will focus the site of the Glen Road Pedestrian Tunnel on the small living things that we don't always notice, but whose beauty surrounds us.

The inspiration for this idea came while exploring the Rosedale Valley Ravine with my children. We were drawn to the many fallen trees and the life that continued to thrive on and around them. Lichens were abundant and their visual variety was impressive. A lichen-inspired artwork acknowledges the long history of the bridge (lichenometry is a method of dating objects based on lichen growth) and marks it as a place with a past. Lichens' seeming ordinariness which, under close scrutiny becomes remarkable complexity, also struck me as a rich metaphor for the diversity of natural life within Toronto's ravines, and for the concrete, brick and steel that make up our built environment and that inspires my own artistic practice. Lichens are composite organisms, made of algae and fungi living symbiotically. The shape, colour, pattern and texture of lichens and their fellow fungi are at the heart of my proposal as a reference to the site's past, its renewal, its hidden beauty and its dedication to co-existing with the Rosedale Valley Ravine.

Apothecium is proposed for three areas: the north and south retaining walls, the inside walls and ceiling of the tunnel, and the tunnel's south side landing. A large lichen sculpture, based on 3D scans of actual lichen, will be installed above each of the tunnel entrances. Made of High Density Polyethylene (HDPE), which has a high strength-to-density ratio and tensile strength, these sculptures will house environmentally sustainable LEDs to illuminate the entrances at night. When lit, the opaqueness of the HDPE will create a glowing effect mimicking lichens' ability to glow under ultraviolet light. HDPE is made from post-consumer recycled materials and, as part of my community involvement plan, waste collected from Toronto's ravines will be recycled and repurposed to create some of the material for these sculptures.

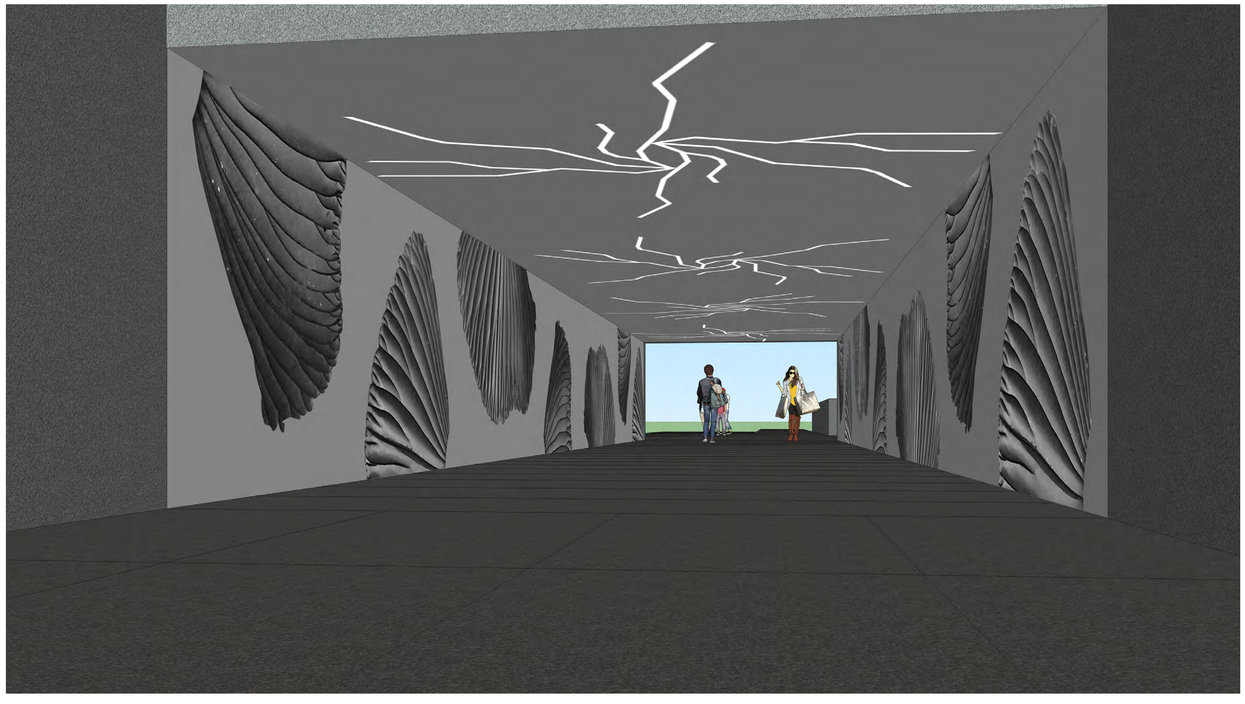
A network of branching LED lights, inspired by the elaborate growth and reproduction patterns of lichen, will illuminate the tunnel. Along the tunnel walls, form liners will be used to create patterns of mushroom gills: another small ravine organism. This natural shape will create an elegant sense of motion, a compelling texture and will contribute to the site's exploration of those small but beautiful living things that thrive in our urban forests and backyards.

In the plaza, lichen inspired seating will provide a place upon which to view small, 3D printed sculptures within the landscaping. These 3D printed sculptures will be created through a combination of community clean up initiatives in the ravine and artist-led 3D printing workshops. These sculptures will also take their inspiration from the often-ignored living things that populate the ravine and will focus upon bringing their beauty into view. I have a particular interest in creating functional artworks and see the possibility to design a lichen-inspired bike-rack or bollards. These free standing sculptures and custom infrastructure pieces would visually unify the site and will demonstrate a kind of public art that is functional, rooted in the community and based upon the needs of Glen Road Pedestrian Bridge's users.

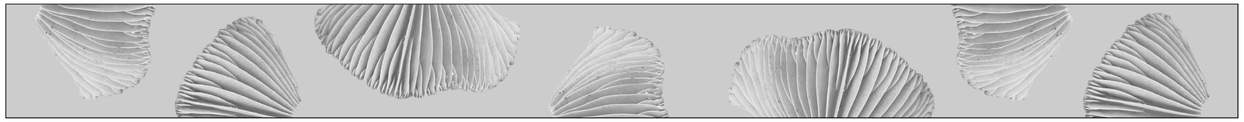


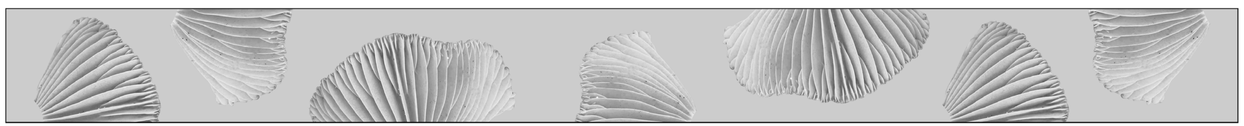
View of south plaza by day (above) and at night (below).

View of north tunnel entrance.

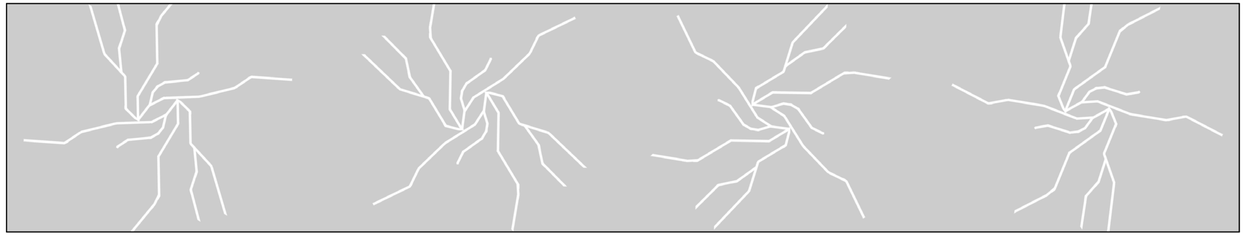


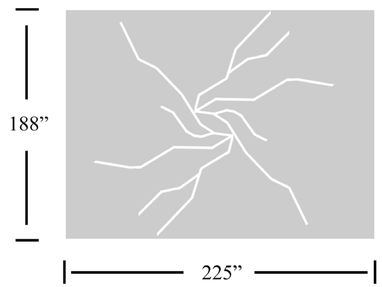
View of tunnel interior.





Mushroom patterns in the concrete of the tunnel interior.





Lichen-inspired LED lighting patterns in the tunnel ceiling.