

VAULTED WILLOW, 2014

Artist: Marc Fornes & THEVERYMANY, New York

Location: Southwest side of Borden Park

Owner: City of Edmonton Public Art Collection

Budget: \$592,500

The multicoloured body of Willow comprises 721 aluminum stripes, 14,043 one-quarter-inch rivets and 60 epoxy anchors. It took a four-person crew four days to assemble this giant Meccano set. Like a grain bin on the prairies, the aluminum gets thicker nearer the bottom, and in Willow's case, the rivets become more frequent where strength is needed.

A highlight of Borden Park's

ongoing revitalization, artist Marc Fornes describes the work as "architectural folly," taking us back to an era of regal ornamentation that was decried during the revolutionary era.

But because of the way it's assembled, the piece also speaks to working-class industry and mechanical production in a way that's unusual in large-scale art, and fitting for blue-collar Edmonton.

Each curved floral-hued shingle in Willow's striated skin is unique, digitally fabricated, and the effect from afar shifts radically up close, as if looking closely at a pixelated photograph or into individual faces

in a vast crowd — perhaps the "very many" in Fornes's company name.

In Paris, Fornes's work is in Centre Pompidou's permanent collection, and has been the architecture in Louis Vuitton pop-ups on the Champs-Élysée, and can be seen in London and San Francisco.

An earlier version of the piece had the colours of English potter Thomas Minton's Blue Willow dinnerware, portraying the fable of a pair of forbidden lovers caught by the maiden's father's soldiers, put to death and finally transformed into doves by the gods. The blue and white colours changed, but "willow" remained.