

## INSIDE LOOK:

AUSTIN AIPP PROJECT  
ABIA TERMINAL EXPANSION  
PROJECT (PHASE 1)



# LaunchPAD

PUBLIC ART DUO

JANET ZWEIG | BY STEVE PARKER

In applying for the City of Austin's **LaunchPAD** program, my primary motivation was to find a way to navigate the murkiness of a career in public art. While I've had the opportunity to make a few temporary works, I am still a bit mystified about how everything happens in the application process. Some of the biggest questions I've had include: what are the qualities of a strong proposal? Is my portfolio competitive, and if not, what am I lacking? How does an artist build up a resume for public art if you need experience to get commissions (a Catch-22-type situation)? While I certainly don't have complete answers to these questions yet, my visit to NYC for a studio visit was a good step in the right direction.

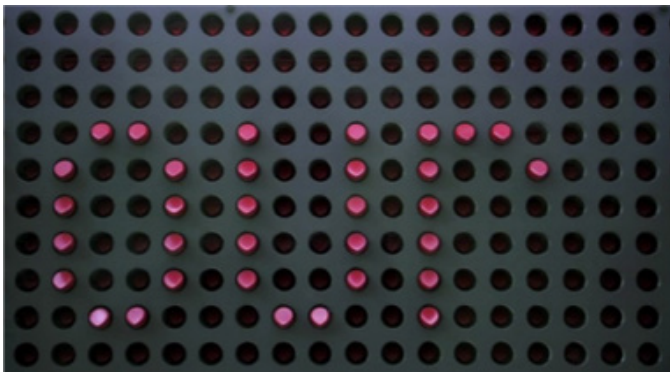
My first meeting in New York was, naturally, to visit Janet Zweig's studio. Janet is a truly inspiring artist and person. She's actually one of the first artists I studied in depth (upon the recommendation from Dharmesh Patel) and her work is a manifestation of everything I value in public art. She's also extremely artistically literate and draws from so many interesting sources. In addition to her artistic practice, she teaches at RISD and Brown, and has shared so many brilliant texts about public art with me.



I met with Janet at her beautiful studio in Brooklyn and met her very sweet dog. We talked a bit about current challenges she is facing with a few commissions, and how to navigate these sorts of situations. The biggest takeaways from this visit were, in retrospect, fairly obvious, but extremely helpful nonetheless:

- 1) Continually expose yourself to great art & public art projects
- 2) Be very detail-oriented in all public art projects, including planning, bookkeeping, and email correspondence.
- 3) In your cover letters, be very direct and use clear and relevant examples of past work.

This info has served me well even in the short term - since taking Janet's advice, I've been fortunately more successful in RFQs.



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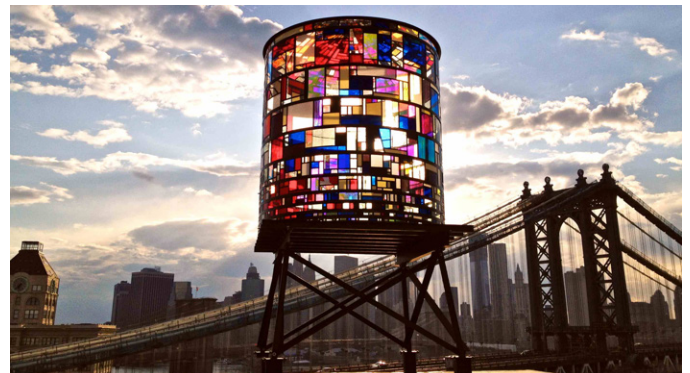
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Finally, in my visit I had the opportunity to see a few public art projects (mainly from the Public Art Fund) and an amazing exhibition at Pioneer Works in person, which were very exciting. Pictures are below. I look forward to the next visit and continuing to wrestle with these questions about public art.



In addition to my visit with Janet, I also met with several contacts facilitated by Janet. In summary, I met with two wonderful people at Percent for Art, Kendal Henry (who is also an incredible artist, pictured above) and Reina Shibata. If memory serves, Percent for Art is the largest municipal public art funding organization in the country. The crazy part is that they are staffed by only three employees, yet produce so much. The biggest takeaway from the meetings with Kendal & Reina: Be proactive about introducing yourself to curators / public art directors. Meet them for coffee and send them cold emails. They need to know you exist! Kendal also clued me into a couple of opportunities that were not on my radar - the Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens has an annual call for a public art residency. I was also happy to share with Kendal & Reina information about the **LaunchPAD** program in Austin. Kendal in particular was very intrigued by the program and wanted to be connected to the folks in AIPP back in Austin.



**Cultural Arts**  
CITY OF AUSTIN  
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