

Mentorpods: a creative
mentorship platform
designed to support
novice* artists in developing
and pitching public art
concepts with expert
guidance.

to Support Emerging Public Artists
Across Ontario

SEPTEMBER 2025

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WORKSHOP TABLE
- at MentorPods session

1 ABOUT MENTORPODS

1.1 SUMMARY

MENTORPODS was created by SUMO project and delivered in collaboration with dexd. The Program was designed as a creative mentorship platform to support novice* artists in developing and pitching public art concepts with expert guidance

It ran from late June through August (2025) and received applications from across Ontario, including Hamilton, Ottawa, and Windsor—demonstrating a widespread need for mentorship opportunities in the field of public art.

MENTORPODS brought together small, interdisciplinary teams of experienced professionals—artists, architects, project managers, engineers, and technical advisors—who mentored ten selected novice artists. The mentees received tailored guidance to refine their creative skills, expand their professional networks, and navigate the complexities of public art practice.

*Novice Artist is defined as an artist new to the field of public art—whether a recent graduate or an established studio artist exploring or beginning to create work for public spaces.

Through this exchange of knowledge and experience, MENTORPODS helped equip emerging artists with the tools and confidence to make meaningful contributions to the public realm and the broader cultural landscape.

Ruth A Mora BArch, MArch, OAA MFA LEEDap
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1.2 PARTICIPANTS

1.2.1 Team and Collaborators

LEAD:

Ruth A. Mora Izturriaga, Project Lead

Ruth is the co-founder of SUMO project, a practice that focuses on the integration of Art, Architecture and Urban Design. Through it and as part of the Toronto Public Art Commission, she has worked with the public and private sectors, to engage local actors in the decisions that shape our city.

PARTNER-ADVISORS

Tonya Hart, Mid-Career Public Artist

Tonya is a Toronto-based Canadian artist whose practice explores the invisible forces of light, energy, and magnetism to forge connections with the natural world. These often unseen elements manifest in diverse expressions, shaping both the conceptual and material dimensions of her work. Over the past decade, her work has been shown in New York, Venice, and Seoul, alongside large-scale light installations across Canada. Her commissions include collaborations with Daniels Corp., Informa Canada, and the National Capital Commission.

CO-LEAD

Karen Zwart Hielema, Project Co-Lead

Karen is a Public Art Consultant, Architect and collaborator on projects focused on the human experience of public space including public art, wayfinding, exhibitions, installations and with mentorship programming as part of a Public Art Plan. She is a member of the Toronto Public Art Commission.

Trent Baker, Project Director of Public Art at Eventscape

Trent leads Eventscape's public art division with over two decades of experience in creative design and project management across site-specific public art, fine art, and custom architecture. He has delivered 100+ projects across Australia, Southeast Asia, and North America, with a focus on permanent installations involving light. With a hands-on, collaborative approach, Trent has developed a deep understanding of materials, their behavior, and manufacturing processes, alongside a unique perspective on the entire project life cycle.

1.2.2 Guest Lecturers

We would like to sincerely thank all of our guest lecturers for their generous time, expertise, and insights. Your contributions enriched the MentorPods program, providing invaluable guidance and inspiration to our emerging artists. Your support has helped foster the next generation of creative talent in the public art field.

Tonya Hart

Artist

Karen Mills & Ben Mills

Public Art Consultants at PAM (Public Art Management)

Anna Passakas

Artist / Blue Republic

Pedro A. Mora-Izturriaga

Architect / Small fabricator

Trent Baker

Project Director of Public Art at Eventscape

Sara Vargas Nessi

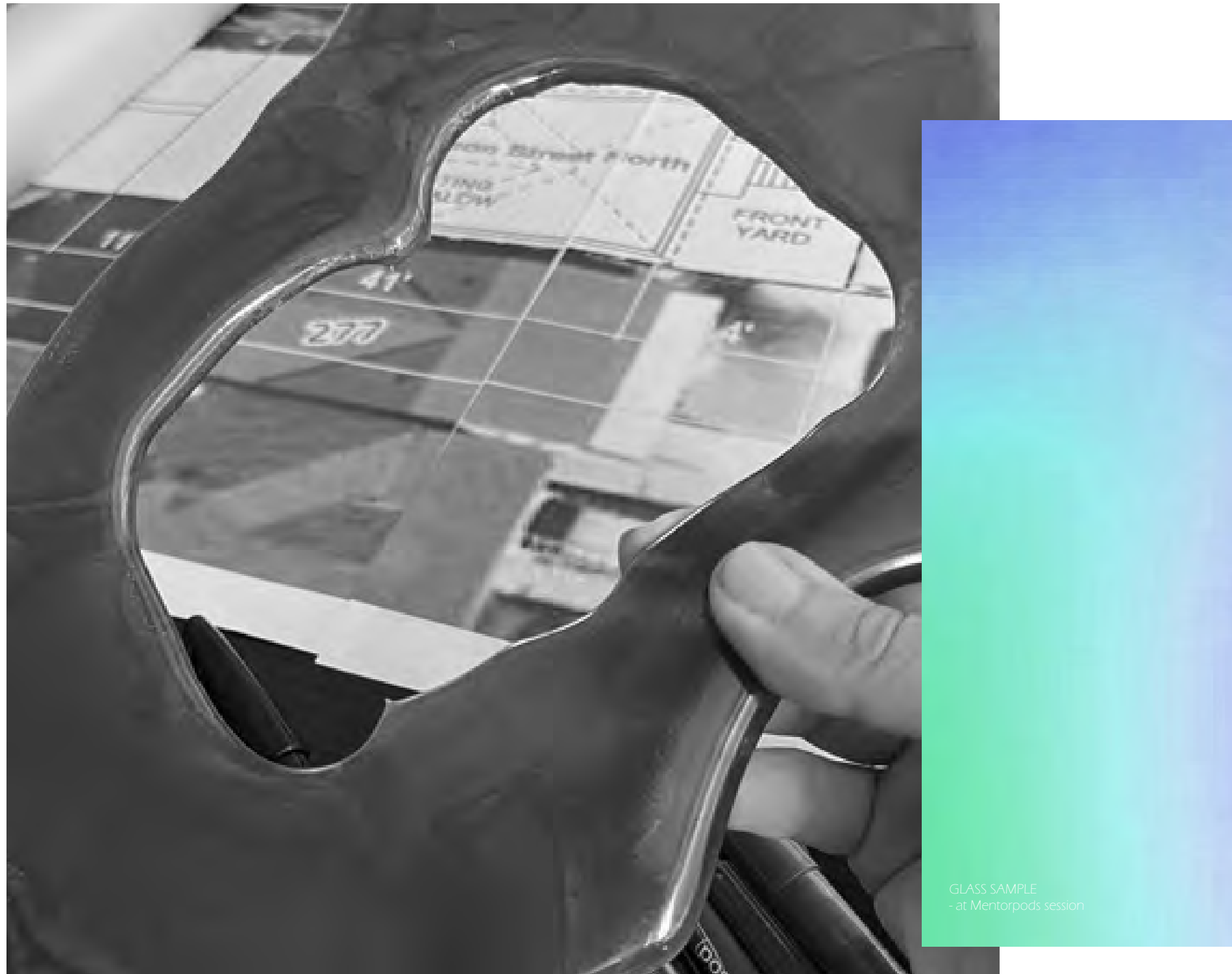
Artist / Photographer

David Gouverneur

Associate Professor of Practice at Penn University
Landscape Architecture / City Planning Department

Emily Ricketts

Conservator, Public Art & Monuments, Cultural Partnerships,
Economic Development & Culture
City of Toronto



GLASS SAMPLE
- at MentorPods session

2 MENTORPODS PROJECT

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MENTORPODS is a platform designed to create opportunities for novice artists in the field of public art. By novice, we refer to artists who are new to public art—whether recent graduates, emerging professional artists, or those with established studio practices but no direct experience in public art.

Much like the “Canadian experience” barrier faced by newcomers seeking employment, access to most public art opportunities in Ontario is portfolio-based. This creates a catch-22: artists are expected to demonstrate prior public art experience in order to qualify, yet they cannot build that experience without first gaining access to opportunities. The situation is further complicated by the complexity of standard application processes, often structured as two-stage submissions requiring written proposals, budgets, insurance, and other professional documentation. For many, this combination becomes a significant barrier to entry.

Our previous research, [Inclusive Mentorship: Integration of New Artist to Public Art \(2023\)](#), has shown that these barriers can be addressed by:

Providing mentorship and expert guidance in areas such as design, fabrication, and installation.

Creating temporary, low-budget, low-risk opportunities.

These alternative approaches to public art practice broaden access, opening doors to new demographics and making the process more inclusive. MENTORPODS was developed as a response to these findings.

Additional challenges are particularly acute for newcomers to Canada or to specific cities. Many lack established social and professional networks that can provide support, open doors to opportunities, or help them navigate local systems. Without these connections, artists often struggle with applications or, for those who do reach the first stage, face economic and logistical difficulties that make it hard to carry projects through to completion.

It is this realization that led to the creation of the project described in the pages that follow



GLASS SAMPLE
- at MentorPods session

3 SELECTION PROCESS

3.1 CALL FOR SUBMISSION

The process started with a call for submissions which was launched on Akimbo and promoted across social media to reach a wide audience. Posted for three weeks

based on the published criteria, then met to compare results and shortlist 20 candidates for interviews.

**Call for Applications - MentorPods:
A Mentorship Opportunity for
Novice Artists in Public Art**



Photography: Rachael Johnson, Art: Al Mon, Art by Stanton Soucy / SUMO: An Collective at Sumoc Gallery

MentorPods: Opportunity for Novice Artists to Pitch Public Art Concepts with Expert Guidance
An initiative by SUMO Project in collaboration with DEXD
Deadline: May 21, 2025 at 23:59 ET

Mentorship Opportunity - SUMO Project in collaboration with DEXD, is receiving applications from Novice* Artists** to participate in MentorPods, a creative platform for novice artists to pitch public art concepts with expert guidance and support.

MentorPods will consist of small, interdisciplinary teams of experienced professionals (artists, architects, project managers, engineers, and technical advisors) mentoring selected novice artists or mentees (10 mentees will be selected).

Akimbo Add (partial)
See full add in
Appendix A.1

Interviews followed and were conducted online (15 minutes each) to assess suitability and commitment, of the candidates. All candidates were asked the questions below:

- Why do you want to enter public art, and how does it connect to your current practice and career stage?
- How many years have you been in studio practice?
- Are you available to attend in-person sessions in downtown Toronto on Friday mornings?

Ten mentees were accepted, with all applicants notified of the results. Three later withdrew due to scheduling or personal reasons (outlined in the conclusions). The final group included artists across diverse media and

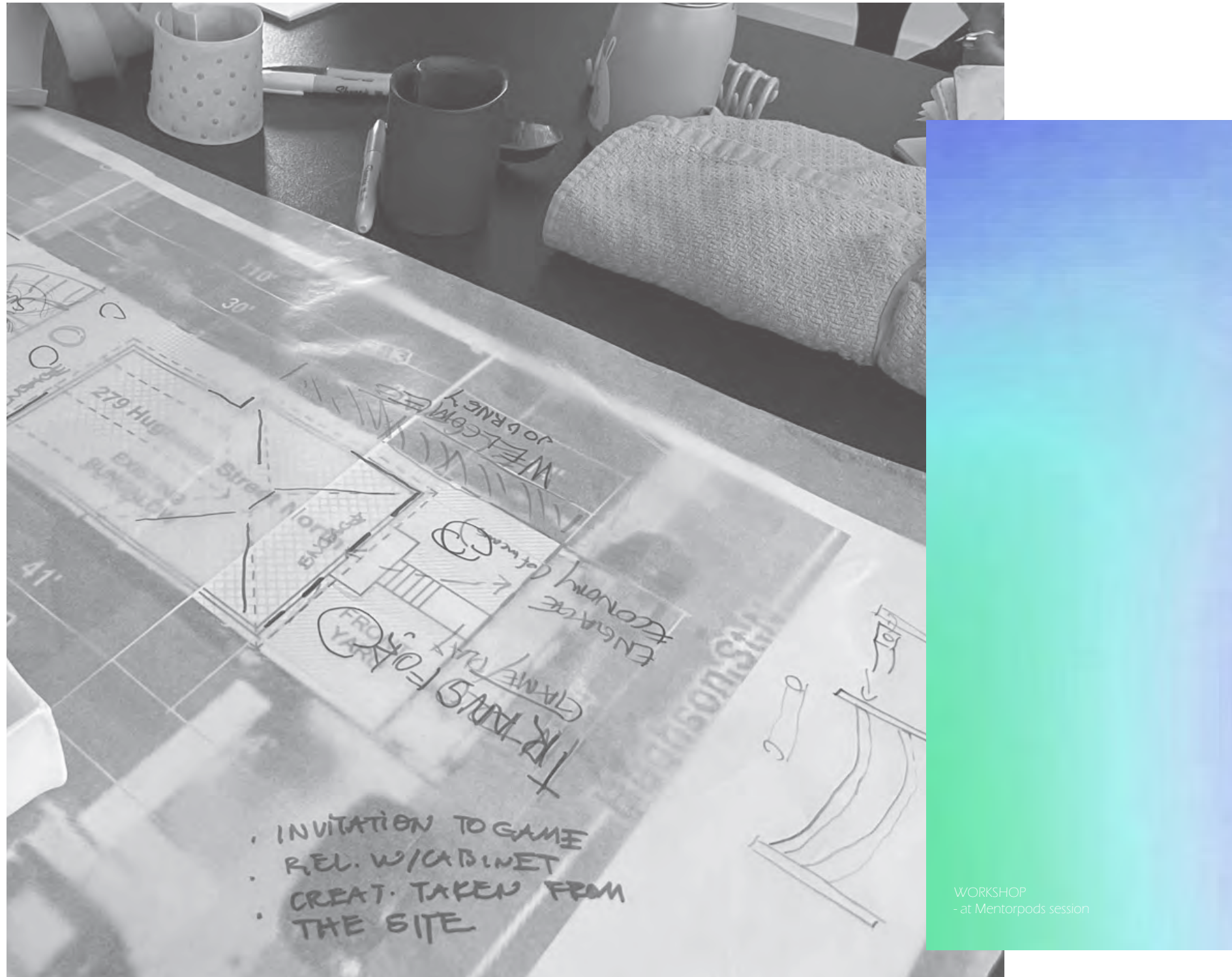
The final participant group brought together artists from varied media and experience levels, from recent graduates to seasoned practitioners, all entering public art for the first time.

3.2 PRE-SELECTION AND INTERVIEWS

It was followed by a preselection process where program leaders independently reviewed and ranked applications

3.3 SELECTED MENTEES

See appendix A.3



4 WEEKLY SESSIONS

Each session consisted of two parts: [presentations by program leads](#) and [guest lecturers](#), followed by [workshops](#) where participants developed and presented their assignments over ten weeks. Guest lecturers—professionals and educators with expertise across the public art process—complemented the knowledge shared by the program leads.

4.1 WEEKLY SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Week 1 - Introduction

[Ruth A. Mora](#) introduced herself, her studio [SUMO Project](#), and the research foundation of the program. She explained the mentee selection process, reviewed the project schedule, guest speakers, and billing procedures, and shared a group contact list. Each mentee introduced themselves and their work. Ruth presented the assignment: responding to a fictional public art call, guiding mentees through the full process from ideation to creation with mentorship support.

Week 2 - Setting the Stage [Program Lead Presentation](#)

[Ruth A. Mora](#) outlined public art acquisition mechanisms in Toronto, from the former Percent for Art Program to

the new CBC, BIAs, direct commissions, and the Toronto Public Art Commission. She compared real-world calls, budgets, and one- vs. two-stage processes, highlighting which opportunities best suit novice artists (simpler calls, temporary works, festivals). She also shared resources like Akimbo, LinkedIn, and organizations such as Downsview Park and The Bentway, whose selection and implementation systems are specifically tailored to support novice and emerging artists.

[Workshop](#)

Mentees presented initial concepts for the fictional call.

Week 3 - Navigating the System [Program Lead Presentation - Public Art Plans](#)

[Karen Zwart Hielema](#) presented a case study of her work as a Public Art Consultant using an example of a public art plan created for the Municipal Public Art process (City of Vaughan). The public art plan responds to the requirements of a municipality and is presented to a public art commission or in this case, the Design Review Panel. The conversation focused on how an artist would then take the public art plan to guide their proposal and where they would find opportunities and prepare a response.

Finding Opportunities and the Application Process

Discussions focused on identifying opportunities and understanding the overall application process. Participants shared resources for finding or creating opportunities, followed by guidance on how to analyze a call and structure an effective response. In general, public art opportunities including those commissioned through the municipal processes are through calls for submission that are published online – akimbo.ca being a common platform used for public art. Calls for submission involve an application and proposal process that will ask for your CV, Biography and Artist Statement. Calls for submission are generally straightforward. It is essential to respond precisely to the requirements—whether that involves tailoring your content to the call, providing the specified materials, or following the correct file names and formats. Failing to meet these requirements can result in rejection on technical grounds.

Workshop

Mentees presented the ongoing development of their concepts, emphasizing the core principles of their ideas, how that fit with their body of work and interests as an artist, and how it related to the site. Proposals sought to transform elements of the site, comment on physical properties of the site or relationships to the surroundings,

welcoming people to the site or marking a transition or threshold.

They were also asked to share preliminary thoughts on how their proposals might interact with each other. Some concepts were physically connected and required more in-depth coordination regarding adjacencies and how the artwork might connect while others brainstormed on conceptual connections and use of shared materials or elements of each other’s proposal.

Week 4 - Concept Development and Budgeting Program Lead Presentation - Artist Briefs

Public Art Plans A presentation by Art Consultant [Karen Zwart Hielema](#) on the call for concept ‘supplementary information’ provided to artist teams who were invited to submit concepts for the Union Station Bus Terminal public art project. This document illustrates the ‘artist brief’ regarding site history, information, technical considerations, proposed art zone location etc. that the artists received to consider for their concept design. This served as background information for the eventual winning artist team, Blue Republic, who will join the program later, as guest lecturers.

Guest Lecture - Building a Portfolio - Temporary Festivals

[Artist Tonya Hart](#) presented her work and focused on

projects for “Lumiere”, a temporary festival in Toronto. She described her process for concept submittals, schedules and budgeting, development, constructive drawings and execution of the pieces and key lessons learned. It was eye-opening and inspiring. Providing real examples that compared proposal vs. reality scenarios.

Key insights included learning how to reuse elements of or entire components of temporary installations, how to communicate with fabricators when having all or part of your installation produced by another party, and how to manage your time and effort when submitting an application to present a high level budget and concept that allows for further refinement when you are selected to realize your piece.

Workshop

The group collaboratively reviewed a site plan to identify their preferred proposal locations

-Then each participant presented their updated concept using a 6-minute timed presentation and feedback [Pecha Kucha](#) style requiring the mentees to be succinct and brief.

-We further discussed how their proposals might interact with one another and work collectively.

-To help mentees stay true to their concepts, they revisited their ideas, and each chose one word to describe their project. These words included: introduction/play, welcome, familiarity, connection, sustainability, storytelling.

-We also selected overall core principles for all the proposals: such as ‘being good to the environment’, ‘use economy of means’, ‘be inclusive, addressing people of all ages and backgrounds’, etc.

Week 5 - Materiality and Contracts

Guest Lecture - Artist Contracts & Working with Art Consultants

[Public Art Management’s](#) art consultants [Karen Mills](#) and [Ben Mills](#) shared their expertise with the mentees regarding key challenges and considerations regarding contracts. It is important for artists new to the field to protect their rights, understand their responsibilities, and build confidence in navigating agreements. The contract will outline the scope of the purchase—whether it involves an artwork, design, or other services—define the project timeline and specify the agreed-upon compensation.

They outlined the two main types of contracts commonly used for public art projects. The Artwork Services Agreement is made directly with the owner commissioning the work, with the artist taking full responsibility for managing and coordinating the design, detailing, engineering, fabrication, and installation. The Design Services Contract, on the other hand, defines the artist’s role as providing the design concept, while another party oversees the detailing, engineering, fabrication, and

installation. They discussed the advantages and drawbacks of each contract type.

Workshop

Mentees presented their concept development with a focus on material exploration for a temporary outdoor installation. Sample materials—including waxed canvas, ceramics, recycled glass, outdoor fabric, and landscape fabric—were brought in for discussion and hands-on evaluation.

Discussions focused on how materials would be impacted by weather, public interaction, and even people sitting on the elements. The durability and suitability of the installations is critical, with constant checking back to each artist concept core principles and confirming that the material selection maintains the original concept and intent of the work. With material selection well underway, the concept of budgeting was introduced as a task to complete as part of the submission document.

Week 6 - Working with Fabricators and Navigating Large Scale Artist-Led Projects

Guest Lecture - Artist Experienced in Design Contracts

Anna Passakas of the artist team Blue Republic spoke to

their large-scale public art projects. These were executed under the artist contract for design model and involved putting together a team of experts to deliver the project. Blue Republic has completed two large public art projects in Toronto.

Anna noted that when a project is awarded based on a concept that isn't yet fully developed, it often requires refinement, additional information, and a deeper understanding of multiple factors to bring it to life. She discussed how elements such as the site, material processes, and evolving client needs can prompt the artist to adapt or pivot while staying true to their artistic vision.

Examples included renegotiating the artwork's allocated space to accommodate advertising, modifying the production process to ensure greater durability, and adjusting the budget to reflect these changes. Other considerations involved integrating the artwork with building elements, planning installation in publicly accessible spaces, and determining how much of the fabrication to complete personally versus outsourcing to professional fabricators.

Guest Lecture - The do's and don'ts of fabrication.

Pedro Mora-Izturriaga works with small to medium sized fabricators and presented one of his projects as a case study to illustrate the role of shop drawings and the do's and don'ts of fabrication. He discussed the challenges of translating artistic concepts into construction-ready documents and

highlighted practical considerations—such as modularity, standard material sizes, and transportation limits—and how these factors impact constructability, project timelines, and overall cost.

Workshop

Pedro Mora-Izturriaga was invited to participate in the mentee workshop session, to offer his expertise specific to the proposals in progress by the program participants to help advance the concepts from ideation to constructability. He supported participants in exploring materiality, detailing, and other design options, helping them translate their concepts into site-specific, buildable pieces.

Week 7 - Proposal Development

Workshop

The entire session for Week 7 focused on reviews of the mentees proposals, constructive drawings and budgets. The proposals in progress were reviewed according to the assignment (call for submission). The following were common themes regarding areas requiring development.

- o It's essential to respond precisely to the call for entry by providing exactly what is requested, following the specified format and naming conventions. Generic submissions should be avoided.

- o Include measurements for your piece to give a precise sense of scale on drawings

- o Review your sketches and concept images to ensure the scale is represented accurately and consistently.
- o Constructive drawing feedback included how to represent your concept accurately.

- o Provide enough detail to clearly illustrate how your piece could be fabricated and installed.

- o For budgets, be sure to account for transportation, installation, and deinstallation costs.

- o Ensure your drawings and plans are carefully tailored to the specific site, incorporating accurate measurements and thoughtfully considering existing features, obstacles, or conditions that could affect the design, fabrication, or installation of your work.

Week 8 - Collaborating with Fabricators & Artist Journey

Workshop

Mentees presented their draft proposals and raised specific questions to refine them for submission.

Guest Lecture - Custom Large Scale Fabrication

Eventscape is a custom architectural fabricator and a leading producer of public art, with offices in Toronto and New York, where Trent Baker serves as Director of the Public Art Division.

Trent presented the Eventscape facilities and shared an overview of the capabilities of their fabrication shop through examples of public art and how artist concepts were developed further by the team of engineers, architectural designers and others. The examples highlighted topics such as safety considerations, site conditions affecting a piece's longevity, and the appropriate use of public art. They also emphasized how transportation impacts design decisions for packaging, storage, transport, and installation, as well as the documentation needed for production, recording the final work, and ongoing maintenance.

Guest Lecture - Getting Started with Public Art

Sara Vargas Nessi is a fine artist with a background in theatre and photography. Originally from Venezuela, she graduated from Centennial College's Fine Arts Studio in 2016. Since then, she has been developing her art practice while also completing public art projects.

She discussed her journey and approach to applying for calls for submissions, explaining how she adapted her studio practice for public art. Using examples from a Centennial College installation and her Nuit Blanche participation, she highlighted developing concepts through experimentation, collaboration, and client input, emphasizing perseverance and the value of pursuing opportunities and grants in public art.

Week 9 - Art as Mediator and Concept reviews

Workshop

The group's concepts and selected materials were reviewed and discussed, with critical feedback provided to help refine ideas and guide further development.

Program Lead Presentation - Borders and Bonds: Art as a mediator

Ruth A. Mora discussed her work, referencing her book Borders and Bonds: Art as a Mediator, which examines the evolving role of public art, from fostering community building to acting as a mediator in conflict resolution. Drawing on the book's central arguments, she highlighted how public art, situated in shared spaces, can spark dialogue,

create common ground, and transform points of tension into opportunities for understanding. In this framework, public art is positioned not only as a catalyst for cohesion but also as an instrument of conflict resolution, offering symbolic and experiential platforms where diverse voices can be acknowledged and reconciled.

Week 10 - Art as Mediator, Materials & Maintenance and Final Feedback

Guest Lecture - Art and the City

As PENN UNIVERSITY Associate Professor of Practice in Landscape Architecture / City Planning, David Gouverneur presented his work and the work of his students from his cross-disciplinary design studio courses that address social, environmental, cultural and economic issues in the city. He shared precedent projects in Philadelphia, Boston, Latin-America and Africa, completed by the students from field trips to the selected sites that included working sessions/charrettes with local planning authorities, politicians, community leaders, universities to illustrate and generate conversation about the role of art in the city. The students' art interventions demonstrated how art can be a catalyst to confront urban issues and bring people with varying

viewpoints and opinions together. He also showed the Central University in Caracas (UCV) as an example of art integration into architecture.

Guest Lecture - Emily Ricketts

Conservator, Public Art & Monuments, Cultural Partnerships, Economic Development & Culture City of Toronto

Emily Ricketts shared her expertise regarding key challenges and considerations for the care and maintenance of public art. She discussed examples and case studies to illustrate practical knowledge including pros and cons of selected materials, designing for durability, finishes and/or protective coatings, creating a maintenance manual, budgeting for maintenance, and reliable resources to consult.

Mentees developed an understanding of how to select materials for permanent, semi-permanent, and temporary outdoor artworks, considering maintenance, repair, and replacement needs over time. Additional topics, illustrated through existing public art examples, included theft and vandalism, as well as the effects of light and temperature on materials.

Workshop

Final feedback was given on the mentees' concepts, and the remaining steps and requirements for completing their projects were thoroughly reviewed and discussed.



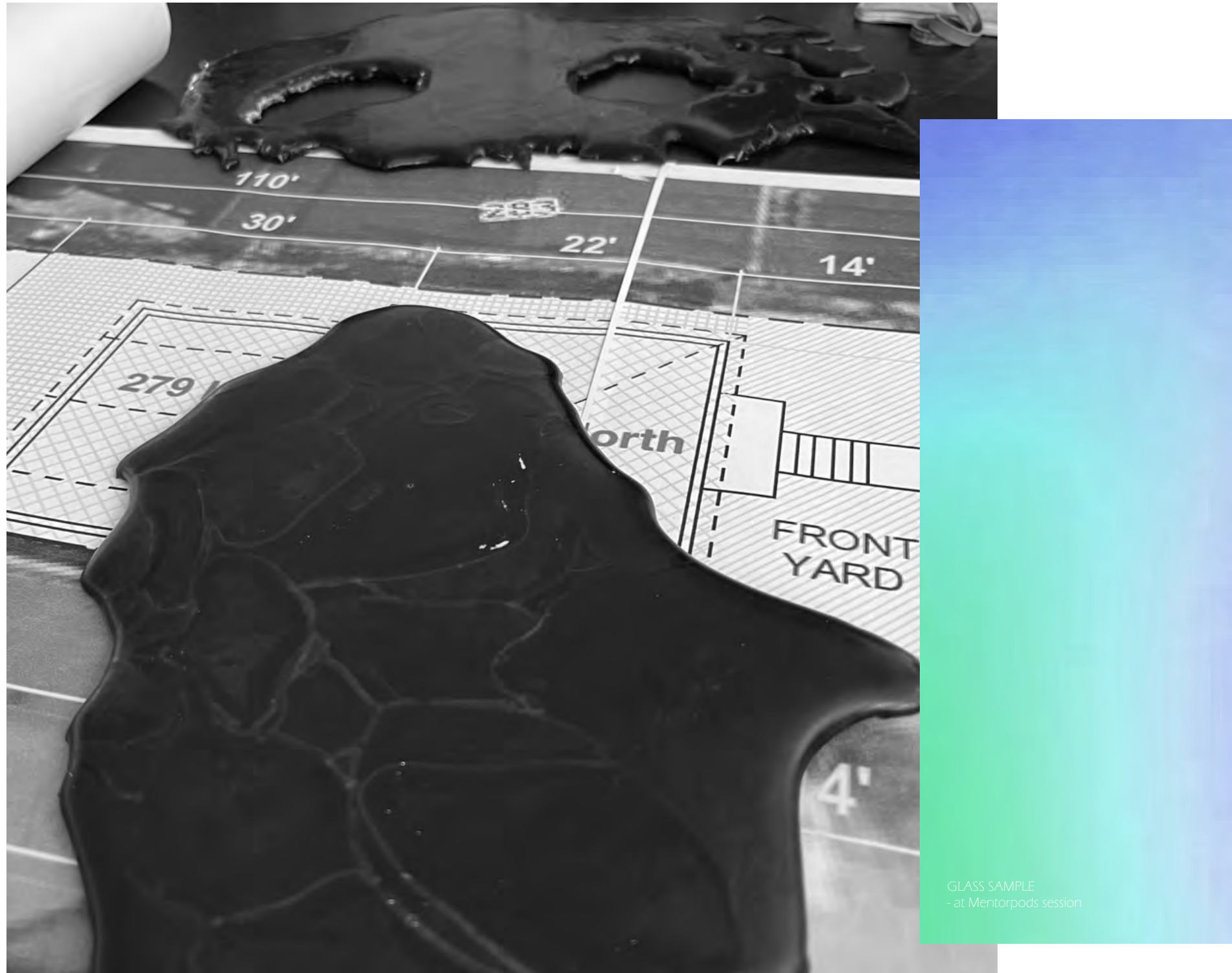
4.2 ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

The assignment asked participants to respond to a fictional two-stage call for submissions, based on a real site in Hamilton, Ontario. The goal was to walk through the full process—from ideation to addressing real site and budget constraints (see Appendix A.2 for details).

The assignment was originally tied to [Windrose](#), a temporary art structure at Downsview Park. By the time funding was awarded, the structure had been removed, and the Hamilton site was selected instead. Its proximity to the monthly [Hamilton Art Crawl](#) on James Street North made it a particularly good fit for novice artists entering public art, as the event fosters temporary pieces opportunities, visibility, community engagement, and experimentation in a supportive environment.

[See appendix A.1](#)

GUEST LECTURES	DATE	TOPIC
Karen Zwart Hielema	11-Jul-25	Karen Zwart Hielema shared a case study of her work as a Public Art Consultant, highlighting a public art plan developed for the City of Vaughan. Such plans address municipal requirements and are presented to bodies like a Public Art Commission or, in this case, the Design Review Panel. KZH outlined key topics covered in a public art plan, and the discussion centered on how artists use these plans to identify opportunities, shape proposals, and prepare responses.
Tonya Hart Experienced Public Artist	18-Jul-25	She spoke about the do and don't's of temporary public art. Using real personal projects to demonstrate the difference between concentrating on the difference between 'proposal' vs. reality in the process (Budgets, Drawings, Sketches, Fabrication, and installation)
Karen Mills & Ben Mills Public Art Consultants at PAM (Public Art Management)	25-Jul-25	As a public art consultant, Karen and Ben Mills talked about two types of contracts and their advantages and disadvantages. Provided examples of real life situations and how the issues were overcome
Anna Passakas Experienced Public Artist From Blue Republic	1-Aug-25	Anna Passakas, talked about two projects to illustrate how they transitioned from small format illustration to public art large format, using 2 sites: the Eglinton Station / Redpath Condo & the Union Station (USBT-bus terminal) which include both wall installation and sculpture. Team work and building a larger consultant team were also discussed.
Pedro Mora-Izturriaga Architect + Small fabricator		Presented one of his projects on going a case study to illustrate the role of shop drawings and the do's and don'ts of fabrication. He discussed the challenges of translating artistic concepts into construction-ready documents and highlighted practical considerations—such as modularity, standard material sizes, and transportation limits—and how these factors impact constructability, project timelines, and overall cost.
Pedro Mora-Izturriaga Architect + Small fabricator		He was invited to participate in a workshop, offering expert guidance to help advance the mentees existing proposals from ideation to constructability. Supporting participants in exploring materiality, detailing, and other design options, helping them translate their concepts into reality while maintain artistic intent, the concept, in the process.
Trent Baker Project Director – Public Art at Eventscape	8-Aug-25	Eventscape is a major fabricator based in Toronto. Through national and international public art projects, existing fabrication tools and methods were discussed. Focusing on the particular challenges of installing a permanent artwork outside, highlighting the effects of natural elements (water, wind forces, etc.) as well as pedestrian traffic, city pollution, etc. along with the possible solutions.
Sara Vargas Nessi Young public artist		Talked about getting opportunities to show your work and grow from studio practice to public art practice. Using her own experience to illustrate how to get organized to respond to applications in great numbers, keeping a schedule of recurrent temporary art opportunities (festivals, biennials, art fairs, etc.), and grants submissions in Canada.
Ruth A Mora	15-Aug-25	She spoke about her book <i>Borders and Bonds: Art as a Mediator</i> , which explores the evolving role of public art—from a means of community building to a potential mediator in contexts of conflict. Drawing on the book's central arguments, she highlighted how public art, situated in shared spaces, can spark dialogue, create common ground, and transform points of tension into opportunities for understanding. In this framework, public art is positioned not only as a catalyst for cohesion but also as an instrument of conflict resolution, offering symbolic and experiential platforms where diverse voices can be acknowledged and reconciled.
David Gouverneur PENN UNIVERSITY Associate Professor of Practice Landscape Architecture / City Planning Department	22-Aug-25	David Gouverneur, Associate Professor of Practice in Landscape Architecture and City Planning at Penn University, presented his and his students' work from cross-disciplinary studio courses addressing social, environmental, cultural, and economic challenges in Philadelphia, Boston, Latin America, and Africa. He highlighted student projects developed through field trips and charrettes with local authorities, community leaders, and universities, demonstrating how art can catalyze dialogue and unite diverse perspectives. He also showcased the Central University of Caracas (UCV) as an example of art integrated into architecture.
Emily Ricketts Conservator, Conservator, Public Art & Monuments, Cultural Partnerships, Economic Development & Culture City of Toronto		She talked about the final stage of a public art process: Maintenance Reports, and the impact in Conservation & Maintenance of Public Art by the cities over time. Including the effect on materiality, public interaction, pedestrian traffic, graffiti, exposure to the elements, the evolution of public spaces and other considerations on the artworks over long periods of time.



GLASS SAMPLE
- at MentorPods session

5 ASSIGNMENT RESULTS

Mentees produced submissions in response to the two-stage call, demonstrating strong effort and commitment. The group’s mix of studio practice experience proved valuable, fostering peer-to-peer learning in a highly cohesive and collaborative environment.

While each participant initially developed an independent proposal, their work evolved into a cohesive, collective proposition. Dialogue emerged not only among the artists but also between their site-specific pieces, creating connections through shared themes, complementary approaches, and overlapping concepts. The collaboration was further enhanced by sharing parts of the budget for common elements, allowing resources to be used more

effectively while fostering a sense of unity and collective ownership. The resulting body of work reflects both the distinct contributions of each artist and the collaborative energy generated through this interconnected approach.

Final submissions included a CV, expression of interest, project proposal, relevant experience, and budget (see Appendix A.3 Mentees’ submissions). A collective statement was also added to explain the relationship between the works on site.

Throughout the program, a shared resource list was compiled from group discussions, guest lectures, and participant research (below)

Finding opportunities	reference residencies	artists we like	fabricators	Funding	materials
all the cities municipalities)	banff centre	ernesto neto	https://eventscape.com/	For Digital art	CBC Specialty Metals & Processing https://www.cbcmetals.ca/
https://www.banffcentre.ca/	https://www.gladstonehouse.ca/art-program/	hugo la pietra	https://punchclockmetal.com/	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Hn8DpJiiQ80l5k7ln1fPRmLfobpwOnP/edit?gid=60154866#gid=6	Lasernett https://www.lasernett.ca/
Public Art Management	ulpture Park (NYC)Annual Public Art Fellowhsip	Do Ho Suh		https://www.arts.on.ca/grants/media-artists-creation-projects	How can public art be made more sustainable?
The bentway	Fogo Island Arts	Teresita Fernandez		with BIAa	
downview park	Mattress Factory	Julianne Swartz	https://artcast.com/	https://stepspublicart.org/i-heart-main-street-bia-program/	
https://www.nyfa.org/	Skowhegan	Alicja Kwade		https://www.colourcodeprinting.com/	
https://canadacouncil.ca/	Bemis Center	https://www.saravargasnessi.com/			
https://www.arts.on.ca/					
https://torontoartscouncil.org/					
https://harbourfrontcentre.com/					



Assignment Site, Front elevation (above)

Concept Image of Front Facade: Shelf Life's Solitude (left) and Connect (right) Cabinets by Jenny Santos installed on the exterior wall of the house alongside Olha's Tkachenko's house banner facade (illustration) and Liz Lau hanging installation, Welcome (next page) >>>





Assignment Site, Back elevation (above)



Concept image of Back Facade: Shelf Life's Nature (left) and Play (right) Cabinets by Jenny Santos installed in the back exterior of the house. Also pictured: Eva Pestrin's installation, Fibre Fence (next page) >>>



GLASS SAMPLE
- at MentorPods session

6 CONCLUSIONS

An in-person course format was selected because we believed it would foster more active engagement and have a greater impact on the learning process. This was confirmed by participants through the program survey. And personal statements.

However, this format also presented challenges during the selection process that limited the ability of some individuals to participate. These challenges are outlined below and will be considered when planning future iterations of the course.

SELECTION PROCESS

Applications were received from across Ontario, highlighting the strong demand for programs of this kind.

Short interviews with preselected applicants proved essential to confirm the quality of submissions, ensure consistency with applications, and assess each applicant's ability to commit to the program.

During interviews, three recurring challenges emerged as key decision factors for applicants: commuting, childcare, and scheduling—particularly given that the program ran during the summer months.

Childcare

Because the program schedule was tied to granting

timelines, summer sessions created difficulties for participants with children. The need for additional childcare not only limited availability but also introduced an economic barrier, which may have unintentionally excluded artists based on income. Although this issue affects all parents, it was most evident among women, who made up approximately 90% of applicants.

A fall session may be more suitable for artists with school-aged children, reducing both logistical and financial strain

Distance / Commuting

Some participants traveled long distances—commuting from as far as Windsor to Toronto—while others, such as applicants from Ottawa, declined due to the time, cost, and scheduling demands of travel and lodging. Those who did make the commitment were eventually affected in their performance by the burden of travel.

Future versions of the program could consider online delivery, multiple in-person locations (Toronto, Hamilton, Brampton), or limiting participation to a defined radius around the host city.

Scheduling

The course was held on Friday mornings over ten weeks in the summer. While Friday was chosen for its relative

flexibility, the season, day of the week, and time of day all influenced participants' ability to attend, with work and school obligations cited as primary conflicts.

For future iterations, alternative schedules should be considered—such as evening sessions, different weekdays, or a fall term—to improve accessibility.

WEEKLY SESSIONS

Weekly sessions had two parts: a guest lecture on a selected topic and a workshop or presentation on participant assignments.

While we had hoped to share lecture recordings more broadly, legal and proprietary considerations prevented this. The in-person format, however, proved essential for open and unrestricted knowledge sharing.

ASSIGNMENT

Most artists excelled at concept development, but translating ideas into reality was a major challenge, particularly in maintaining the original design intent.

Future iterations could focus more on practical skills, including:

- Developing construction drawings
- Building adaptable economic frameworks within site and budget constraints

The new assignment location was positive:

- Accessible for site visits
- Connected to the broader Hamilton arts community familiar to participants

Proximity to the [Hamilton Art Crawl](#) inspired the idea of realizing proposals—an element not included in this program but worth considering for future iterations

PARTICIPANT SURVEY & OUTCOMES

Participants completed a survey and concluded the program with a final session to reflect on and share their experiences..

Overall experience was positive, confirming the value of in-person sessions.

The program helped build a sense of community and peer support.

Some participants experienced renewed commitment to their practice.

Participation reconnected artists with local communities and resources, fostering a new network.

While not part of the program, many expressed strong interest in realizing the collective proposal. Practical constraints—budget, timing, owner permission, site insurance, and alignment with the Hamilton Art Crawl—prevented immediate implementation, though it may be considered for future development.

In summary, the program demonstrated the value of an in-person format in fostering dialogue, community, and renewed artistic commitment, even as it revealed barriers related to childcare, commuting, and scheduling that must be addressed in future iterations. The experience underscored both the strong demand for initiatives of this kind and the potential of collective proposals to move beyond the classroom into the public realm. By building on these insights—refining program logistics, expanding practical training, and exploring opportunities for project realization—future versions can become even more inclusive, impactful, and responsive to the needs of emerging public artists across Ontario.
