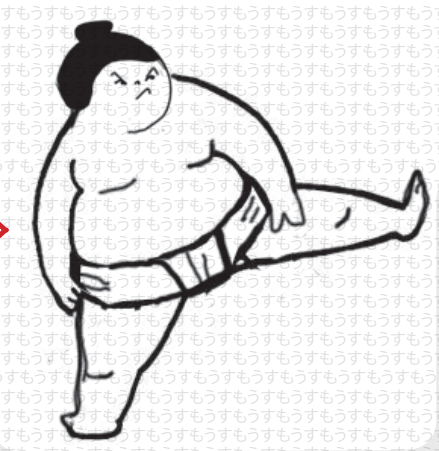


行きます  
let's go!

**HOW TO READ THIS GUIDE:**

- RED ➤ Main process
- DARK GREY ➤ Additional information
- BLUE ➤ Advice



**START**  
Find opportunities that 'FIT' you not the other way around

**WHY?**  
Because you don't have a professional portfolio, local experience, similar work to the one required, or all of the above

Such opportunities often include festivals, pilot projects, temporary venues, and public or open spaces like walls and gardens

**'FIT' means**

- Fit your conceptual position: Principles, beliefs, themes
- Fit your Skill Level: Experience, and capacity to deliver
- Fit your Resources: Within your time, budget, & material resources

**LOOK FOR**  
Low Budget Low Risk Offer Support

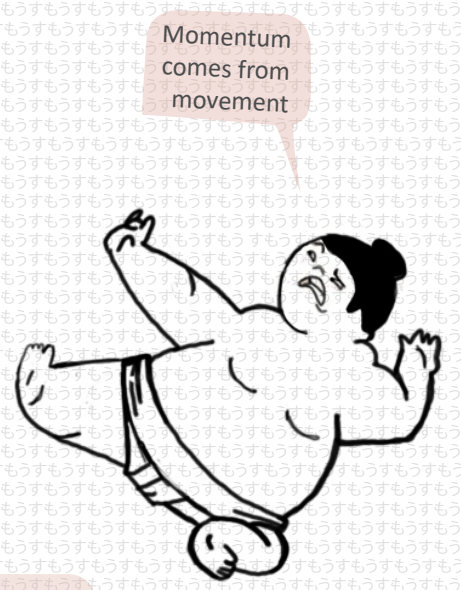
These three conditions offer greater flexibility for experimentation, testing new ideas, and even room for errors, as exposure, budget, and risk are lower than for a permanent piece, for both the artist and the organizer. Adding support (technical review, fabrication, etc.) empower artists to take risks, grow, and collaborate effectively, while ensuring strong results in a controlled environment —making them especially suitable for novice or less-experienced artists

This helps NOVICE artists connect with peers, build skills, and expand professional and social networks

**ADVICE #1**  
**START SIMPLE & WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE**

Look around to see what resources are available, and consider how you can make the most of them using your abilities

Think about what you can do, not what you can't



**ADVICE #2**  
**THE GOLDEN RULE**

Good Cheap Fast ➤ Pick 2

Good + Cheap = Slow  
Good + Fast = Expensive  
Cheap + Fast = Not Good

**ADVICE #3**  
**BE HONEST AND REALISTIC**

don't promise anything you can't deliver

**CALL FOR SUBMISSION**

ONE STAGE CALLS OR IDEAS CALLS

TWO STAGE CALLS often include detailed sketches, plans, budgets, and other requirements, which are generally suited to more experienced artists

How do you obtain those opportunities?

**ALTERNATIVE PATH**

If you don't know where to start, just start anywhere

**CREATE YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES**

Find places—formal or informal—around you, where you can show your work

Join forces: work "collectively" with other artists you may know

**APPRENTICESHIP or MENTORSHIPS**

Work "collaboratively" to expand your knowledge and accelerate your development

You have selected an opportunity that 'fits' you, now you generally would submit:

- CV / BIO**: Emphasize background and experience that directly relates to this opportunity
- ARTIST STATEMENT**: Avoid generic statements; respond specifically to the call, showing in brief HOW and WHY your work addresses the challenge
- SAMPLES OF WORK**: Select work that best reflects the call's focus and explain why it's appropriate. If you lack specific applicable past work, demonstrate the potential of your practice by visualizing how it could translate into public art, using a sketch or photomontage as a proposal
- PROPOSAL**: Explain your concept verbally and demonstrate how it translates visually. Place your concept in its intended environment to reveal how it 'fits' with 'the call', the space, the people around it, and everything it interacts with. Your proposal should feel doable—something that truly fits the site and the budget

WHEN YOU MAKE A DRAWING: think concept think materials think cost

For example, consider installing a small sculpture in your front yard (if you have one) to benefit from everyday pedestrian traffic or reach out to neighbourhood cafés or shops to ask if you can display your work on their walls

Reach out to local business, neighbourhood and cultural associations; introduce yourself and ask about any artist opportunities they may offer. Get into their mailing list

Work "collectively" rather than collaboratively. Collective work lets artists share the same concept or goal while developing their own individual style

Working with others can open opportunities to grow your knowledge, expand your network, and participate in events. Even artists who prefer to work alone benefit from connecting, sharing ideas, materials, techniques, and resources

Mentorship offers guidance, feedback, and industry insight from a more experienced artist, helping emerging artists develop ideas, refine direction, and navigate opportunities through a flexible, conversational relationship.

Apprenticeship is hands-on and skill-focused, where emerging artists work directly with an experienced artist or studio to learn techniques, processes, and tools through real, practical projects

Be sure to include credits—title, medium, dimensions, price, and a way to contact or follow your work (e.g. Instagram). Document the piece in place with photos or videos to begin building your portfolio, and record the location and year.

Keep a log of materials, techniques, procedures, suppliers, and other fabricators so you can refer back when needed or start building a reference library for future work

This process also serves as a constructive exercise for your own development

So you've prepared your proposal, and submitted it

**KEEP TRACK**  
including of the expected date of the selection committee's response and the deadline for the completed artwork (just in case you get selected)

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
you got the commission, now what?

**MAKING THE PIECE** **TIME CONSIDERATION** **CONTRACTS** **BUDGET \$\$\$**

**CONCEPT**  
Does the artwork convey your idea? Does it communicate the concept you intended?

Some artworks lose their essence during fabrication. In the push to solve practical issues, the concept can slip away. It's the artist's role to keep it alive—make sure your piece clearly carries your original intent

**Public Engagement**: be ready to explain your work, stay open and engaged, and avoid getting defensive.

**Public Opinion**: Everyone is entitled to their opinion. Be prepared to hear feedback you may not like about your work. See advice #4

**Constructability**  
Materials also carry meaning—make sure they align with your concept and core principles (i.e. sustainability)

**MATERIALITY**  
Select materials that you or your fabricator(s) are familiar with to bring your vision to life

**Transportation**  
Public works tend to be large; factor in transportation limits—size, cost, handling—during development

Consider the dimensions in relation to standard material sizes

Consider the material's weight for handling, storage, and transportation

Plan dimensions to suit transportation—cars, trucks, van, etc.

**SCHEDULE FOR**  
Concept/Artwork development

Decide on the final shape and outcome, meet with the fabricator, and finalize materials, dimensions, composition, and other details

**WHAT TYPE OF CONTRACT IS IT?**  
All in? Design, build and install? Design only?

Clarify roles and responsibilities, confirm who is responsible for each task, outline what is included in the fee and how it is divided, and review the payment and delivery schedules

**Know exactly how the budget is allocated so you can plan more realistically and avoid surprises later**

This will help you understand how much of your budget is available for materials, for hiring help, or for any additional expenses.

**Material ordering / Delivery time**

Even common materials may need lead time—check stock and plan accordingly

**Copyright and Ownership**

Clarify ownership, delineate artist and organizer rights for marketing, promotion, education, and media, and specify reproduction permissions or restrictions

**Invoicing**

Confirm what information must be included in each invoice—such as dates, work descriptions, taxes, reference numbers—and clarify who it should be addressed to

Confirm which items are taxable and which are exempt—some grant-related expenses may be tax-exempt

**Fabrication / Assembly Time**

Usually, the organizer has a non-exclusive right to use photos and artist information for promotional purposes—provided proper credit, social media links, and additional artist information are included—while the artist retains authorship and ownership of their work

**Insurance**

Who is responsible for it, coverage scope for artworks and/or to others (damage, theft, vandalism) duration, special conditions, and claims and liability processes

**Installation Time**

Read the contract! Read. Pause. Ask. (Yes, the contract)

"One man's trash is another man's treasure"

Artists are always resourceful in transforming trash into treasure—working with leftover materials, discarded pieces, or unexpected donations. This mindset isn't just about making do; it's about seeing potential where others see nothing. Focus on what you have, what surrounds you, and what you can do with your own abilities. Limitations can spark creativity, and the materials already at hand often lead to the most inventive and authentic outcomes



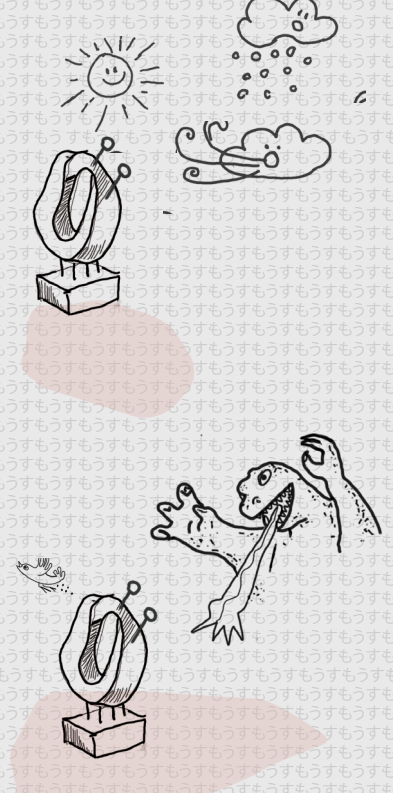
**ADVICE #4**  
**CRITICS**

There's constructive and destructive criticism—learn to recognize the difference. Focus on turning the negative into positive, using feedback to strengthen your work: look at why others are perceiving it that way, identify what could be improved, and use those insights to make your work even better. Don't take it personally



**Site Considerations**

- Uses** (how do people use the space): Is it a residential area, an office area, a park, or a plaza?
- Circulation** (people, bikes, cars, etc. Consider dimensions for accessibility): How does it affect the location of the artwork and/or the placement of the equipment? Check for clearances, outlets, secure locations, and other practical site details
- Natural forces** (How do natural elements—such as sun, snow, wind, and rain—affect the artwork?): Public artworks are generally exposed to the elements which can cause material damage, add extra weight, or pose risks to people nearby. All these factors must be carefully considered and tested. Test how the piece appears both during the day and at night
- Living forces** (Humans: adults, kids, elders, ADA; Animals: birds, rodents, etc.): Consider how people might interact with the work, its durability, and any potential hazard—such as whether it is climbable, poses risks of head or finger entrapment, or could create opportunities for undesired behaviour. Protect by using durable materials, reducing nesting opportunities, applying protective coatings, etc.
- Access to the Site** (Permits (i.e. encroachment), relevant by-laws—i.e. noise and light pollution—heritage considerations, and any other applicable legal requirements): For temporary events, check site rules: what can be removed, what must be restored, and how to leave the site after the event has ended



**THE WORK IS COMPLETE AND INSTALLED**

Who takes care of the artwork on site? Who is responsible for documentation and promotion?

**UNINSTALLATION & DOCUMENTATION**  
Uninstall the work, coordinating timing, transportation, and cleanup. Gather all additional documentation—press coverage, social media content, and professional photos (obtained or purchased)—and clarify who should be credited for each

**THE AFTERLIFE OF THE ARTWORK**  
Consider the afterlife of the artwork and its potential future uses

Think about whether it can be reinstalled elsewhere, sold, donated, repurposed, or recycled. Planning ahead helps ensure the work continues to have value, reaches the right audiences, and avoids unnecessary waste or storage issues

**STORAGE**: Think of this in terms of costs and fabrication methods

**RE-EXHIBIT**: It can be re-exhibited, generating additional income, expanding its audience, and increasing exposure

**TRANSFORM/RE-USE**: It can be unassembled, recombined, or repurposed in new way

すもっ HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO PUBLIC ART (for beginners)

**WORK WITH US**

SUMO project  
sumoproject.com  
IG: @sumo\_project\_inc  
admin@sumoproject.com

SUMO project is a multi-disciplinary studio which practice focuses on the integration of Art, Architecture and Urban Design

Believing that "specialization is for insects", we find opportunities in unusual places, to explore how our creative practice can contribute to improve the spaces we inhabit, public or private, with the use of art

Find more resources and a free downloadable digital version of this guide here

Canada Council for the Arts / Conseil des arts du Canada

This guide has been possible thanks to the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts

**Public Art Management**: Overseeing the full lifecycle of public art projects—such as murals and sculptures—from initial planning to installation

**Art Integration**: incorporating art directly into buildings and public spaces so it functions as an integral design component, not an add-on

**Art Strategies**: creating cultural frameworks that guide planning and strengthen places through artistic and cultural initiatives

If you share this credit!

All Rights Reserved ©SUMOproject  
Copyright © December 2025

SUMOfc  
IG: SUMO\_fc

SUMO fc is an art collective that uses human-centered design to explore how people shape their spatial and social environments. Our pieces question, test, and explore ideas that connect people to places

\*A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects