



CALL TO ARTISTS

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS J2020-01

Metro Parks Tacoma Public Art Program

PARC: Public Art Reaching Community

Artist Training Cohort and Permanent Public Art Projects

Optional Information Session: Wednesday, January 29, 2020, 5:30-6:30pm, Metro Parks Tacoma Board Room, 4702 S 19th St, Tacoma, WA 98405

Deadline to Apply: February 10, 2020, 11:59pm

Budget: \$500 participation-based stipend, \$1,000 project stipend, and opportunity to compete for a minimum of five permanent public art projects averaging \$30,000 each

Opportunity

Metro Parks Tacoma is seeking Pierce County artists with an active studio practice, who wish to learn how to develop artwork for the public realm, to participate in a 'hands-on' public art education program. Artists may work in a variety of disciplines and may or may not have previous public art experience.

The training, which is free of charge to selected artists, is valued at approximately \$4,300 per participant. **Participating artists will create temporary projects and have the opportunity to apply and compete for one or more of at least five permanent public art projects averaging \$30,000 each, funded by Metro Parks and the City of Tacoma.**

Background

The field of public art is competitive. Often, talented artists are faced with a 'Catch 22' - an artist needs experience working in the public realm to be selected for public art opportunities, but how does someone obtain that experience? An artist may have entry-level experience, but this does not always help one progress to the "next level". PARC is designed to provide artists with the training and experience necessary to be competitive when applying for public art projects locally, regionally and nationally. To compete successfully for public projects, artists need skills that supplement artistic talent and studio experience:

1. **Professional presentation skills.** These include the ability to interview well within the context of public art, as well as skills in the development and public presentation of proposals.

2. **Ability to work with communities.** Many public art projects require extensive community engagement, and some projects request that artists actively involve the community in the creation of artwork.
3. **Understanding construction processes.** Artists must be able to read architectural drawings and engineering specs, understand construction processes, and be able to communicate with contractors and fabricators.
4. **Project management skills.** These include negotiating contracts, developing scopes of work and budgets, managing your own work and that of sub-contractors, meeting deadlines, maintaining appropriate insurance and licenses, and paying taxes.

These skills, and more, will be taught through a combination of classroom sessions, field trips, hands-on experience creating temporary projects, mentorship, and peer discussion sessions.

Timeline – all dates subject to change

January 29, 2020, 5:30-6:30pm	Optional Information Session
February 10, 2020, 11:59pm	Applications due
By February 21, 2020	Selection of cohort and notifications
Late March - May 2020	Classroom Sessions (5 all-day Saturday sessions)
June 2020	Context-based learning projects
July 2020 - December 2021	Permanent projects

Artist Eligibility

- Applicants must live in Pierce County, WA
- Applicants must be 18 years or older
- Applicants must apply as an individual
- Applicants must have an active art practice, in any medium, producing artwork on a regular basis
- Applicants must be interested in creating permanent public artworks
- Applicants must commit to attending all 5 training sessions, which will take place Saturdays late March-May 2020 (we will work with selected artists to schedule sessions, please contact staff prior to applying if you have any concerns)
- Applicants cannot be an employee, board member, council member, or commissioner of Metro Parks or the City of Tacoma

Selection Criteria

- Artistic quality as exhibited in past work
- Interest in creating permanent public artworks
- Commitment to furthering artistic practice
- Priority will be given to artists who have not been the lead on a major public art commission (\$20,000 or over)
- Artists will be selected to complement each other and create a diverse working group in terms of art forms, ethnicities, cultural experiences, ages, backgrounds, abilities, etc. The selection panel will reserve the right to not fill all 12 cohort openings and/or re-open the opportunity to create a more diverse and/or complementary working group.

Commitments

Selected artists are expected to attend all sessions. Artists will participate in five day-long workshops, in preparation for a cycle of public art commission applications and interviews. Training sessions will be Saturdays late March-May 2020. Additional sessions and experiences will be scheduled, to include temporary projects and presentations, interviews for projects, field trips, peer discussion groups, and one-on-one mentorship as needed.

Lead Mentor Artist: Elisheba Johnson

Elisheba Johnson is a curator, public artist and administrator heavily influenced by the Fluxus movement and the accessibility of art experiences and objects. Johnson, who has a BFA from Cornish College of the Arts, was the owner of Faire [Gallery Café](#), a multi-use art space that held art exhibitions, music shows, poetry readings and creative gatherings. For six years Johnson worked at the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture on capacity building initiatives and racial equity in public art. Johnson is currently a member of the Americans for the Arts Emerging Leaders Network advisory council and has won four Americans for the Arts Public Art Year in Review Awards for her work. She currently co-manages Wa Na Wari, a Black art center in Seattle's Central Area. In addition to Johnson, a variety of experts will assist in the training and mentorship process.

Submission Process: Submit the following items via Submittable

(<https://tacomaarts.submittable.com/submit>):

1. Basic Information: Series of yes/no questions that will help us determine eligibility and fit for the cohort.
2. Narrative Questions:
 - Describe yourself and your artistic practice. (300 words or less)
 - Why do you think you are a good candidate for creating permanent public artwork? (300 words or less)
 - Anything else you want to tell us? (optional, 300 words or less)
3. Work Samples with Descriptions: Submit up to 10 digital images of past work with short descriptions. Show us your strongest recent work in any medium. If you have created work in the public realm (publicly, privately, or self-funded), please include it.
4. Resume: Resume should not exceed 3 pages. Please include any previous experience working in the public realm, and work, life, or volunteer roles that could relate to public art. For instance, public artists often benefit from having diverse skillsets and backgrounds in things like construction, customer service, community work, or a wide range of other experiences.

QUESTIONS? Contact Rebecca Solverson, 253-591-5564, rebecca.solverson@cityoftacoma.org.