



# How to Win The CODAwards

## Emerge from the crowd.

2024 marks the twelfth year for the annual CODAwards program celebrating commissioned projects that required collaboration of design + art. Last year, there were 411 entries from around the globe, representing over \$54 million USD in commissions. Again, the CODAwards caused an international splash, garnering well-deserved recognition for the award winners.

Just as in previous years, the winners all had one thing in common: they submitted stunning and interesting projects, featuring artwork commissions that showcased collaboration by creative professionals.

How can you help your entry be noticed among hundreds? CODAworx gleaned a few key insights on creating award-winning entries from the people who make the award decisions – the jurors.

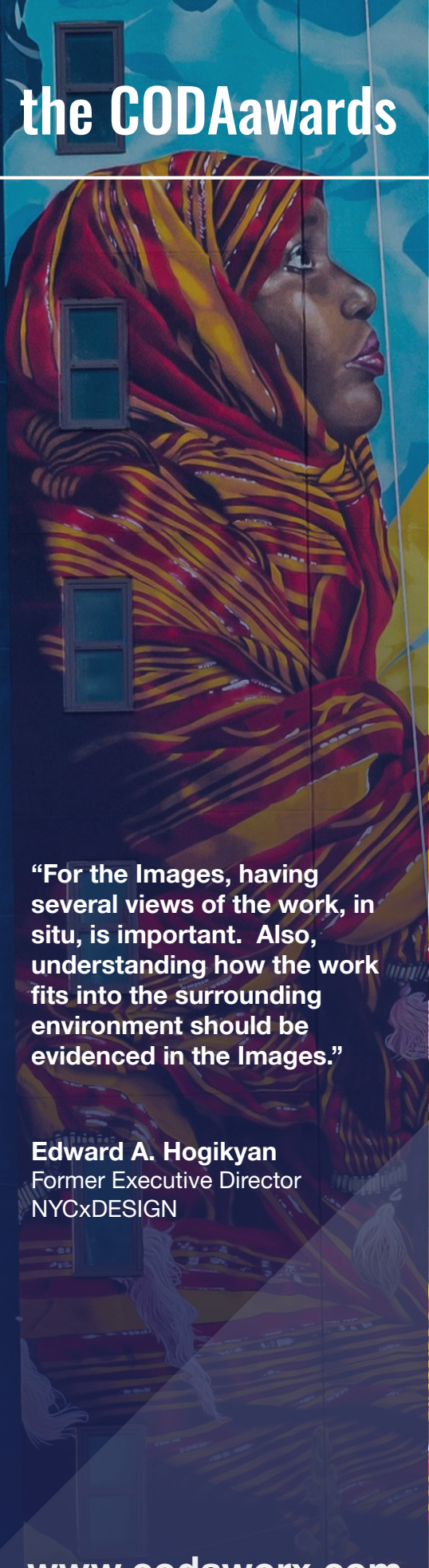
## Your Images

We could reiterate, postulate, and extrapolate on how true the picture-thousand-word equivalency cliché really is, but Barbara Tober, Chairman Emerita of the Museum of Arts and Design said it best:

***“Your images are terribly important. Different views, beautifully lighted—it’s important to have a view of everything from all different angles.”***

The winning entries are distributed to millions of people through hundreds of channels. It is essential that the accompanying images meet both the design qualifications (interesting subject matter, composition) and the press qualifications (as high-resolution as possible). We encourage you to consider those visual qualities that make your images eye-grabbing, expressive of the work’s intent and reflective of the work’s complexity.

You are encouraged to browse past winners to understand the quality of photographs required for a winning entry. For example, the photos provided for [\*The Spirit of Palatium\*](#) are an outstanding example of how the 2022 CODAaward winner in the Liturgical category included visuals from a variety of perspectives.



**“For the Images, having several views of the work, in situ, is important. Also, understanding how the work fits into the surrounding environment should be evidenced in the Images.”**

**Edward A. Hogikyan**  
Former Executive Director  
NYCxDESIGN



## Your Writing

In your project descriptions (under the overview, goals, process, and additional information sections), please take care to explain to the jury your goals for integrating artwork and describe the collaboration process of the design team. The jury seriously considers the description of the project. This is your opportunity to present the narrative of your work clearly and succinctly. We encourage you to help the jurors understand the project, collaboration process, and creativity involved and subsequently, become excited about a work after reading the project description.

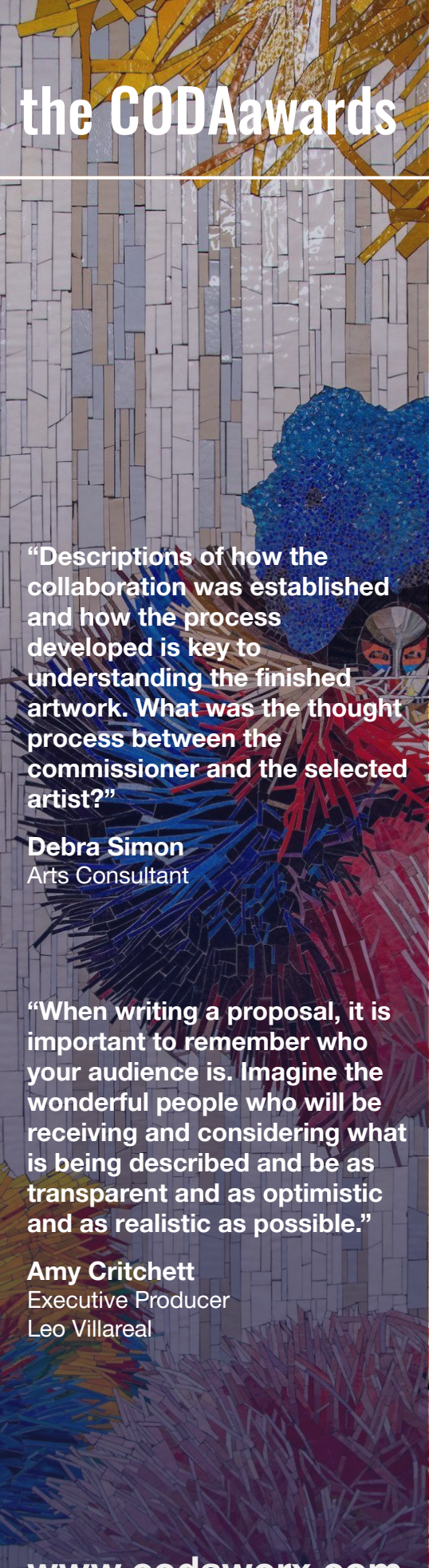
Edward A. Hogikyan, Former Executive Director at NYCxDESIGN, offers additional insight into the value of the written description:

*“For the description, be sure to answer the questions that are asked. What inspired the proposed concept? What are examples of any collaborative process used? What techniques/ innovations were used in the creation of the work? Take the time to share your journey and process so the judges get a full appreciation for your work.”*

Clearly articulating the goals of the project helps our jury to determine if the project was a success. The more explicit, the better. Want to have the sharpest story? Parse your answers and carefully edit your writing. Have your design team contribute and review your submission before you send it in. Even after submission, projects are editable until entries close at the end of May.

## The Art

The CODAwards center on the integration of art into space. Each entry must feature at least one site-specific work of commissioned art. Each winning entry will blend the art and design seamlessly to create a place as art, rather than a place with art.



**“Descriptions of how the collaboration was established and how the process developed is key to understanding the finished artwork. What was the thought process between the commissioner and the selected artist?”**

**Debra Simon**  
Arts Consultant

**“When writing a proposal, it is important to remember who your audience is. Imagine the wonderful people who will be receiving and considering what is being described and be as transparent and as optimistic and as realistic as possible.”**

**Amy Critchett**  
Executive Producer  
Leo Villareal

Arts Consultant Debra Simon has curated location-driven art projects in several major cities. Her advice to those submitting projects for CODAwards is to describe how the work makes the physical location come alive. She encourages those submitting entries to explain how the art relates to the “place” and how it deepens the experience while engaging viewers in a way that connects with them emotionally.

***“The strongest images of public art are those that show how people interact with and respond to the art. There is an authenticity when the connection is successful.”***

An example is 2022 CODAwards Public Spaces category winner [From Absence to Presence, Commemorating Contributions of Enslaved Peoples](#), located in Maryland. Using poetry, light, and structure, the project can be experienced in many ways—a fact well-documented in the photos. Shane Albritton and Norman Lee, the co-founders of RE:site, also worked with poet Quenton Baker and design/architecture studio METALAB.


An interesting team effort vital to the realization of a project vision is exactly the kind of collaboration that will be considered for the **Team of the Year** award. The Team of the Year is selected from projects in the Top 100, and not from just the location category winners, providing a wider pool of entrants a chance at recognition of their collaborative prowess and achievements. Outstanding CODAwards entries will fall in line with the emerging trend in the art and design world; artwork projects created in collaboration between artists, designers, architects, fabricators, clients and often, the ultimate users of the space.

## The X-Factor

The last piece of the puzzle, and the most difficult to grasp, is the x-factor of a project, the *je ne sais quoi*, the quality of a piece of work that leaves a distinct and lasting impression on anyone who experiences it. Your submission should convince the jurors that your work is timeless, memorable, and special.

Rosanne Somerson, President, Rhode Island School of Design, writes often about the value of art and its lasting role in improving the welfare of society.

***“The most memorable projects invited participants to experience the creative impulse, the site, the realization, and the interaction in new and memorable ways.”***



**“Since this award is about collaboration, I was particularly drawn to the projects that demonstrated the pairing of individual perspectives contributing to a new whole, rather than those examples where one person’s or firm’s idea dominated.”**

**Rosanne Somerson**  
President  
Rhode Island School of Design



## How to Win the CODAwards

Good candidates for the CODAwards are not all things to all people, but rather meet a specific need or execute a concept especially well. *Each One, Every One, Equal All*, the 2022 CODAaward winner in the Transportation category, is a good example of art with a powerful message. The work highlights the deep connections between individuals and society, while offering a spectacular, contemporary, and creative reimagining of a subway area. In the words of visual artist Nick Cave, “The artwork serves as a reminder that we are all unique and special individuals comprised of different characteristics and built from a lifetime of gathered memories.”

The CODAwards are also contemporary. We honor projects and artwork that push the boundaries of design. As juror Amy Critchett, Executive Producer at Leo Villareal, reminds us:

***“Commissioned art is a generous gift, an enormous responsibility and a very intimate expression on view for the world to see. If it is timeless it will meld into the substrate of the site. If it is a masterpiece, it will feel as if it has always belonged there.”***

Thank you for reviewing these suggestions. We look forward to receiving your CODAwards entry! ■

**“The images, written purpose and art placed in our public but separated public spaces will document this life altering human experience. The art will provide the vision, hope and faith in community and space that we need to move forward and thrive in a connected, collaborative world.”**

**Jackie Hamilton**  
Vice President, National Organization  
for Arts in Health

***To learn more about this year’s CODAwards and to see submitted projects, visit the CODAworx site at***

**[www.codaawards.com](http://www.codaawards.com)**

For questions about the CODAwards or the entry process, reach out to us at

**[info@codaworx.com](mailto:info@codaworx.com)**