



ARGENTSTUDIO



LAWRENCE ARGENT

Lawrence Argent's art encompasses a breadth of form, material, and site that push the viewer to confront their assumptions about environments and the art that exists within them. These interventions envelope a path of consciousness through which the physical promotes the non-physical - the sublime emerges as a vehicle traversing a slippery foundation in the gap between stimulus and response.

Lawrence Argent was born in England and trained in sculpture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia and has a MFA from the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, Maryland. He is the recipient of numerous fellowships including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Colorado Council on the Arts, the Core Fellowship at the Fine Arts Museum, Houston, Texas and has been an artist in residence at the John Michael Kohler Foundation. In 2002 he was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Award from the University of Denver. In 2013 he was awarded the Denver Art Museum DAM Key Award. He retired as a professor in 2016 and was awarded Professor Emeritus status in 2017. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, and is currently working on numerous public art projects around the globe.



From the artist

In my public art projects I am attempting to somewhat reduce the hierarchical nature of what is assumed to be art. So much of what influences the way an audience experiences art, particularly contemporary art, is the fear of not knowing what “it” is supposed to be. My overarching intention is to break down these barriers. I do this not by placating to the generic but confronting the generic and reinventing a presence that can illuminate and stimulate. I wish to foster an interest that permits the viewer to interact on a multitude of levels and perhaps questions the ingrained notions of his/her assumed, obtained belief systems.



BACKGROUND

A prevailing conviction surrounding my work in the public art arena is that I am always attempting to open myself to the nature of the site and the multitude of complex influencers - whether it be the history, the architectural landscape and/or the characteristics of the viewers, participants, and cultures involved. Like all my public art works, “site” becomes the trigger by which ideas unfold. It means building a connection with a place and the people who live in it. I attempt to create a resonance, a sensorial bond between people and their environment.

The journey my work embarks on is always fettered by the essential desire to capture essences. Its charge is to simplify the experiential language that enters one’s consciousness whilst complimenting a potency to signify a much larger possibility. I remove as much of the signified purpose of my concept as is possible, so that all that is left is the essence. It is this pure incarnation that permits an interaction without expectation; it becomes familiar and hence not intimidating, thereby creating a new possibility for an experience that grows with engagement.



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I see what you mean

DENVER, COLORADO / 2005

City and County of Denver, Denver
Convention Center Expansion Public
Art Project

Composite Materials and Steel
(40 x 24 x 22 ft.)

Initially, this piece was a response to the notion of "Convention Center". The site itself hosts the exchange of ideas and the transference of information between participants. It also draws from two major stereotypes of "Western Art", realistic bronzes and kitschy chainsaw sculptures, but cannot be labeled as either. The piece captures the likeness of a bear, not through realism or caricature, but through essence.

The bear peers into the glass walls of the Denver Convention Center and provides a role reversal if one encounters it from the interior of the building. The viewer may be left wondering who is viewing whom. The outcome is a humorous parody with the familiar and the sublime.





The historical ignition of place, which include Shelby Parks' turn of the 20th century amusement park, its' sports fields and natural landscape, drove Argent's ideation process towards a visual play on whimsy and connectedness. It conjures a poetic metaphor of reflection inclusive of the emerging, mercurious mocking bird (state bird of Tennessee) and the highly-polished granite mirror wall. The "trophy" bird appears to have interest in the hole, the wall and melody of surface treatment and the fascination with reflections. Is it looking at the form as a point of intrigue, curiosity and passage or is it the association of hole and nest that triggers a view to home, comfort and new beginning?

The two pieces symbiotically encompass possibilities of reflecting and the act of reflective thinking, creating a multitude of questions to explore.



Reflection

NASHVILLE TENNESSEE / 2012

Metropolitan Arts Commission of Nashville & Davidson County, Shelby Park

Bird: Stainless Steel (13 x 12 x 4 ft.)

Wall: Black Chinese Granite (11 x 11 x 3 ft. 6 in.)



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Flowing Kiss

COLUMBUS, OHIO / 2013

City of Columbus, Greater Columbus Arts Council,
The Columbus Arts Commission.

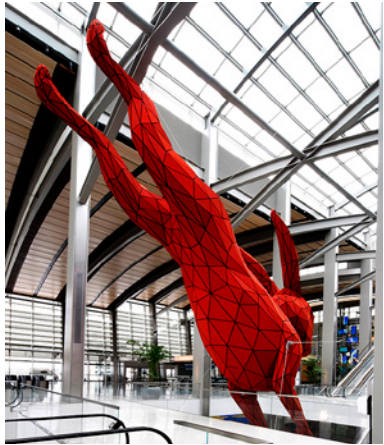
Granite and Stainless Steel, (Size: 14 x 7 x 7 ft.)



This artwork is a response to the sentiment that Argent gathered on a site visit, which stirred notions of inclusiveness, admiration, enjoyment and love for a place that the community of Columbus calls home.

Many of us remember the moment and place of a first kiss or sweetly admire the action of affection between a parent and child, loved ones and each other. It is a gesture of love, friendliness, fondness, and affection. A kiss can be freely given just as an experience can be had spontaneously. The artworks location and siting provides for an arena of playful interaction as one traverses the passage between and is subsequently ignited by the release of the gestural embrace.





Air Travel - Drive, exhaustion, anticipation, anxiety, hope, desire, frustration, despair, patience, contentment, success, joy, and attachment are many of the nouns that describe some of the emotions that rattle in our personal baggage as we transit through the hubs of air travel.



Argent explains that what surfaced repeatedly as he considered what he was attempting to create as well as the space he was interacting with was the notion of “baggage”, both literally and metaphorically. Oh, the immeasurable relief we feel when we see our bags surface from the mouth of the conveyor. The joy in the sense of reconciliation, the part that was separated is now joined to form the happy union of owner and owned. It is spit out on the rotating tarmac; yes it’s yours. You feel the elation, the relief, of now being complete after the journey. You feel one again.

“It is this “connection” that drove me towards finding two elements that could exude in essence a need for equivalent resolve - two parts that make a whole.”

Leap

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA / 2011

Sacramento Arts Commission, Terminal B of Sacramento International airport

Rabbit: Aluminum and Crushed Glass (56 x 11.5 x 24 ft.)

Suitcase: Green Granite and Bronze (8 x 6 x 2.5 ft.)



Solaris Plaza Project

VAIL, COLORADO / 2007

Water, given its many states and its role in the geologic formation of the mountainous regions of Colorado, provided a connection of concept to place. The singularity and power of the human connection and our relationship to water is embodied in the strategic implementation of sculptural elements in the plaza design. The Solaris Plaza needed to function as an entryway, a place for seasonal activities, and as a meeting place and sanctuary for its own unique experience.



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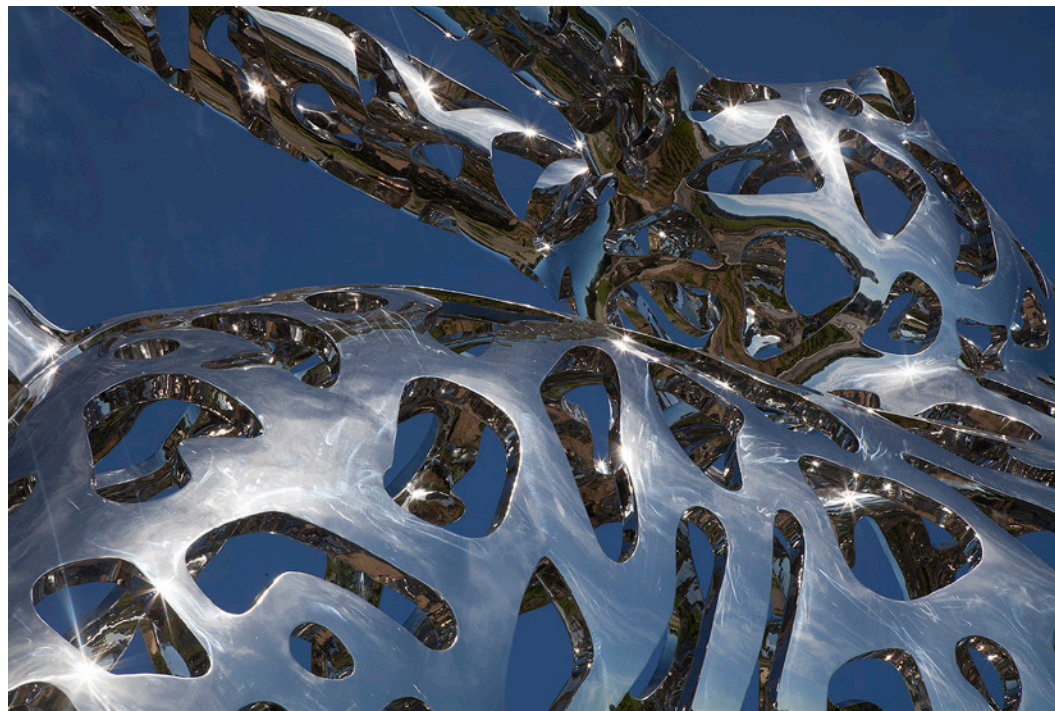
Water Tree

One of multiple art works including sculptural elements and landscape design
Composite Materials, Black Granite and Computer Controlled LED's
(22 x 27 x 27 ft.)

Droplet

Bronze, Black Granite and Fire Element (25 x 8.5 x 8.5 ft.)





A private commission for Craig and Katherine Hall for their winery in St. Helena, California. The intention was to integrate "Little Bunny Foo Foo", a childhood poem that Katherine would share with their children growing up, into the vistas of their newly remodeled winery.



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Bunny Foo Foo

ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA / 2014

Hall Winery

316 grade Stainless Steel (30 x 15 x 7 ft.)



Your Move

HOUSTON, TEXAS / 2011

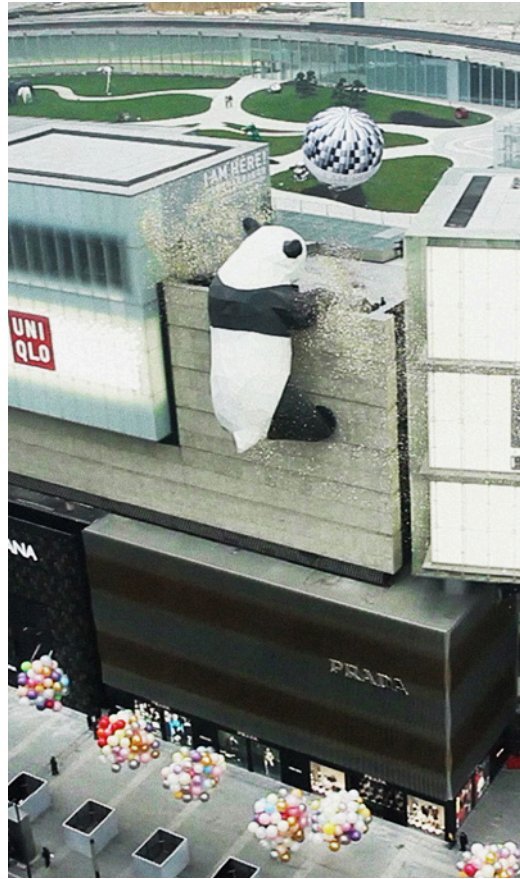
Public art project for the University of Houston, Calhoun Lofts Project
(International Graduate Student Housing Complex)

Granite and Bronze (13 x 30 x 36 ft.)



The artwork represents a conduit between the past and the present, in relation to form and history. The traditional gourd-like forms are surfaced with patterning taken from three “snapshots”, moments that embody the educational journey: stairs, weaving and patching. From these, images were developed and translated into three dimensional surface treatments. The manipulated surfaces that encase these forms create a wonderfully active visual landscape that promotes a dialogue of inside and outside, illuminating the inherent nature and connectivity of the vessel.





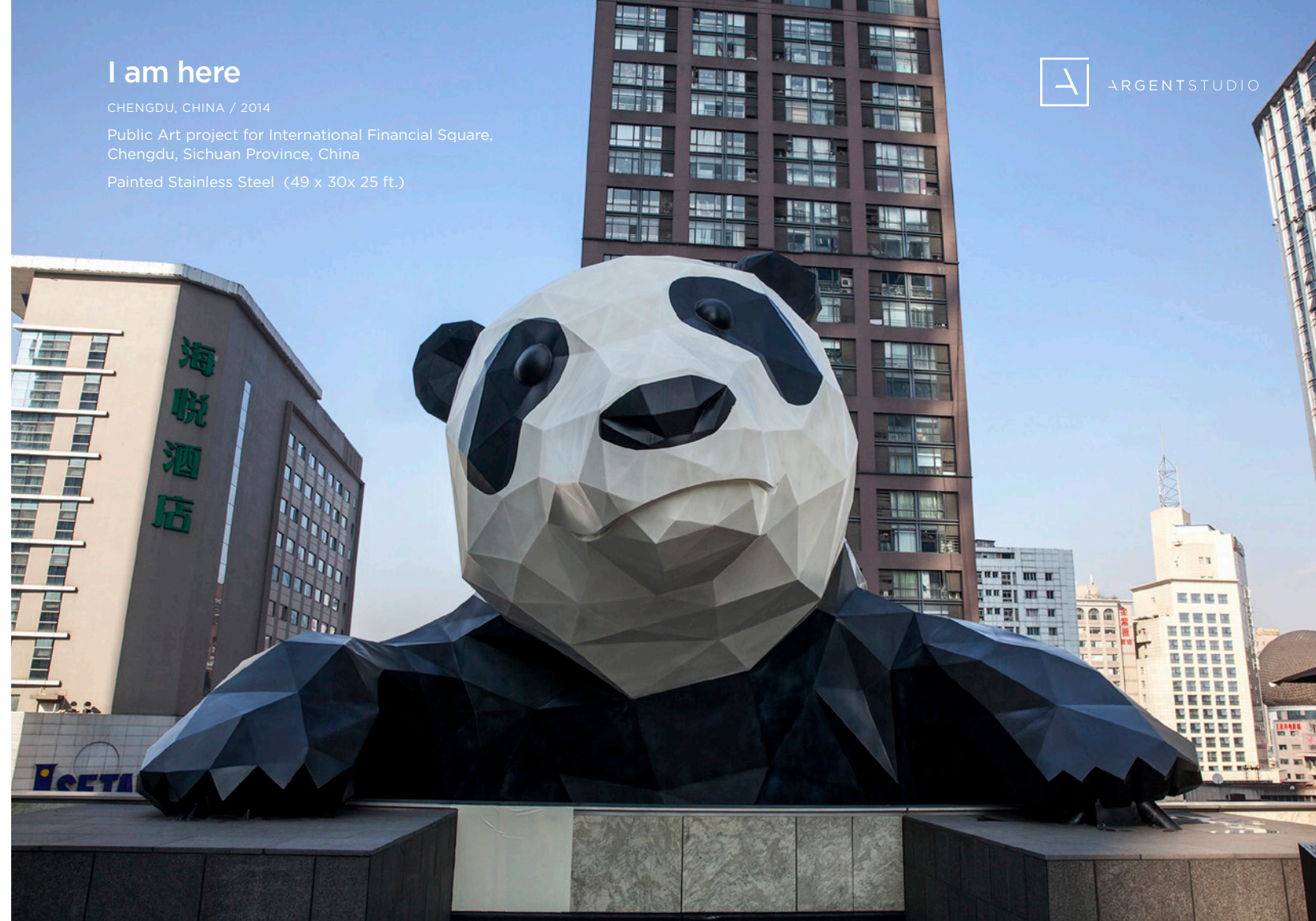
As the name suggests, the panda declares its presence and imbues the site-specific project with poignant social meaning, whilst at the same time acting as a reflection of place and a reminder of the continued need to protect this creature. The juxtaposition of these two concepts prompts the viewer to elevate the contemplation of a dialogue between conservation and consumerism.

I am here

CHENGDU, CHINA / 2014

Public Art project for International Financial Square,
Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

Painted Stainless Steel (49 x 30x 25 ft.)





Pieces Together

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA / 2014

Martin Luther King Memorial Hospital,
Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Granite (18 x 20 x 7 ft.)

The design of Pieces Together was inspired by the idea that each part of the whole is integral, as in a jigsaw puzzle. Argent saw parallels between puzzle pieces and all the voices of a community. To hear these voices firsthand, he spent a week in Willowbrook, California, where his team interviewed those same local residents. They answered questions like, "What is your hope for your community?" and spoke about their connections to art and creativity. The interviews, which capture moments of personal struggle and triumph, have been compiled and edited for viewing on a companion website.



The website where these interviews and stories reside is an integral part of this work. Whilst awaiting consultation in the hospital, patients alongside visitors can access the relationship between object and place. Upon clicking the explore button on the home page, the user is directed to a digital representation of the physical work where one can explore and discover who each set of lips belong to. The viewer can then hear each individual's story in the form of a video interview.



Ghost Trolley

AURORA, COLORADO / 2007

City of Aurora, Colorado

Composite materials resembling frosted weathered glass and LED fixtures (20 x 11 x 2 ft.)



Reinforcing the philosophy that public art should have the ability to provide a non-hierarchical art experience that can be interpreted on many levels, the element of whimsy became augmented when Argent aspired to manifest a transformation of a trolley streetcar. He wanted to tweak it such that, only at one particular line of sight going east and similarly going west on Colfax Avenue, would one notice this trolley planted in the median strip. Only at these specific vantage points would the trolley appear full scale and to be full width. Fabricated from composite materials resembling frosted weathered glass, it is lit from within with banks of LED fixtures, giving it a soft, almost spectral glow.

Within this humorous play on perspective and assumption there lies perhaps an essence that connects the viewer to the past and the light of the future.



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Whispers

DENVER, COLORADO / 2002

University of Denver, Entrance to Ritchie Center

Limestone, Bronze and Sound Elements

Limestone Bases (18 x 12 in. feathers to 6 x 4 in.
Various heights between 11 - 13 ft.)

Bronze Lips (18 x 9 x 9 in.)

This is a public art commission at the south entrance to the Ritchie Wellness Center, University of Denver. It is composed of four limestone benches and five columns. Intricately carved lips adorn the fronts of each bench. Each pair have been taken from life casts made from a diverse section of the university community (a 3-D laser scanner read the form and a stone milling machine enlarged the pieces). The buff limestone from which the benches and columns are made is similar to that used throughout the construction of the Ritchie Center.

An electronically sensed system is activated when someone sits on the benches, engaging hidden speakers. Pre-recorded lectures grow from a curious whisper into an audible conversation. The content of these lectures varies from poetry readings and scientific discoveries to discussions on rhetoric theory, in the hopes of sparking curiosity and a desire to engage further with these subjects.



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C'era Una Volta

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA / 2018
Trinity Place, 8th and Market Street
18 sculptural elements designed for
Trinity Plaza

C'era Una Volta is an artwork comprised of many parts woven throughout the site, transforming it into a place of engaging mystery and unfolding meaning. Inspired by classical icons of beauty and the stone quarries from which these ancient sculptures were made, C'era Una Volta re-envisions and abstracts classical forms using contemporary digital technologies. Historical fragments appear in transformed ways throughout the central garden and walkways. Paving artworks play with perspective, one of the prime interests of classical and Renaissance artists. Ultimately, this artwork is more than a series of objects. It is an immersive experience created through engagement with an unassumingly unique location within the heart of San Francisco.

Venus

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA / 2016

"C'era Una Volta", Trinity Place, 1 of 18 sculptural elements designed for the plaza
Stainless Steel (92 x 36 x 20 ft.)



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Fragments

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA / 2016

“C’era Una Volta”, Trinity Place, 8 of the 18 sculptural elements designed for the plaza
Carrara Marble



Aphrodite of Knidos



Venus Italica



Capitaline Venus



Three Graces



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Fragments

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA / 2016



Kneeling Aphrodite/Venus



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Giuliano de' Medici



Winged Victory



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Glass Bollards

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA / 2016

"C'era Una Volta", Trinity Place, 2 of the 18 sculptural elements designed for the plaza

19mm Crystal Glass Layers (84 x 32 x 32 in.)



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