

The Urbanologist

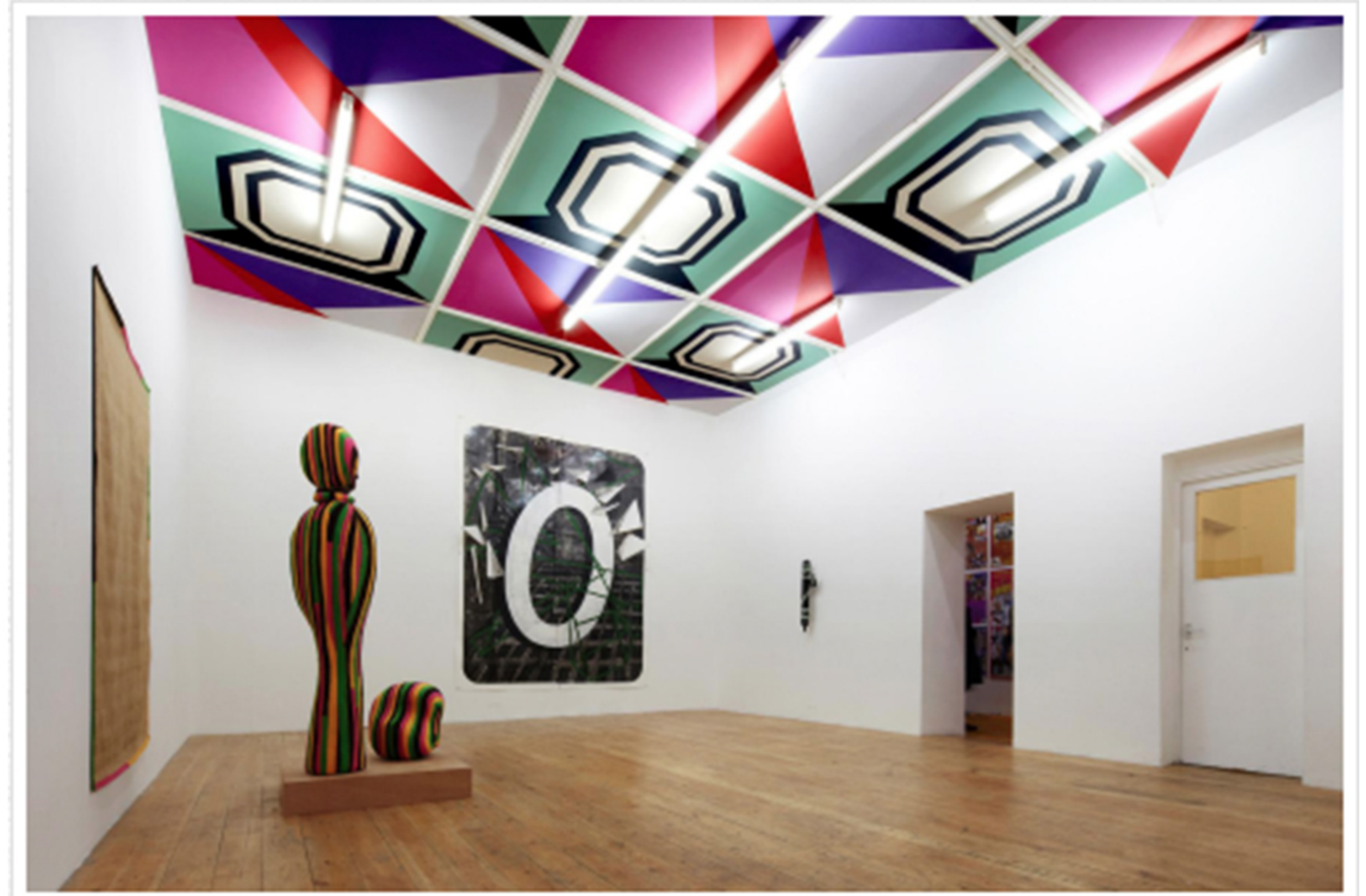
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An Interview With Sinta Tantra



What are your earliest memories of making art? Were there certain shapes, forms, materials that you found yourself drawn to early on?

When I was little I played the piano and coloured in shapes and patterns in my music books. I remember drawing coloured lines all across a piece called, 'Fireworks' - purple and orange pencil lines on one side, red and blue on the other. I loved painting - I remember raiding my older brother's oil paints and getting excited at discovering new materials.



Have you ever had an "aha" moment whilst in a walk around a new place and said "This is my space. I must do something with it."

I only think about making artwork for specific places when a curator or commissioner invites me to do something. When I do get introduced to somewhere new, I always bear in mind the idea of working against the architecture - placing artwork somewhere a little different, a little unexpectedly.



Many of my students wonder: "How do I get started?" Might you share some thoughts on your first initial successes (or failures) in obtaining commissions and such?

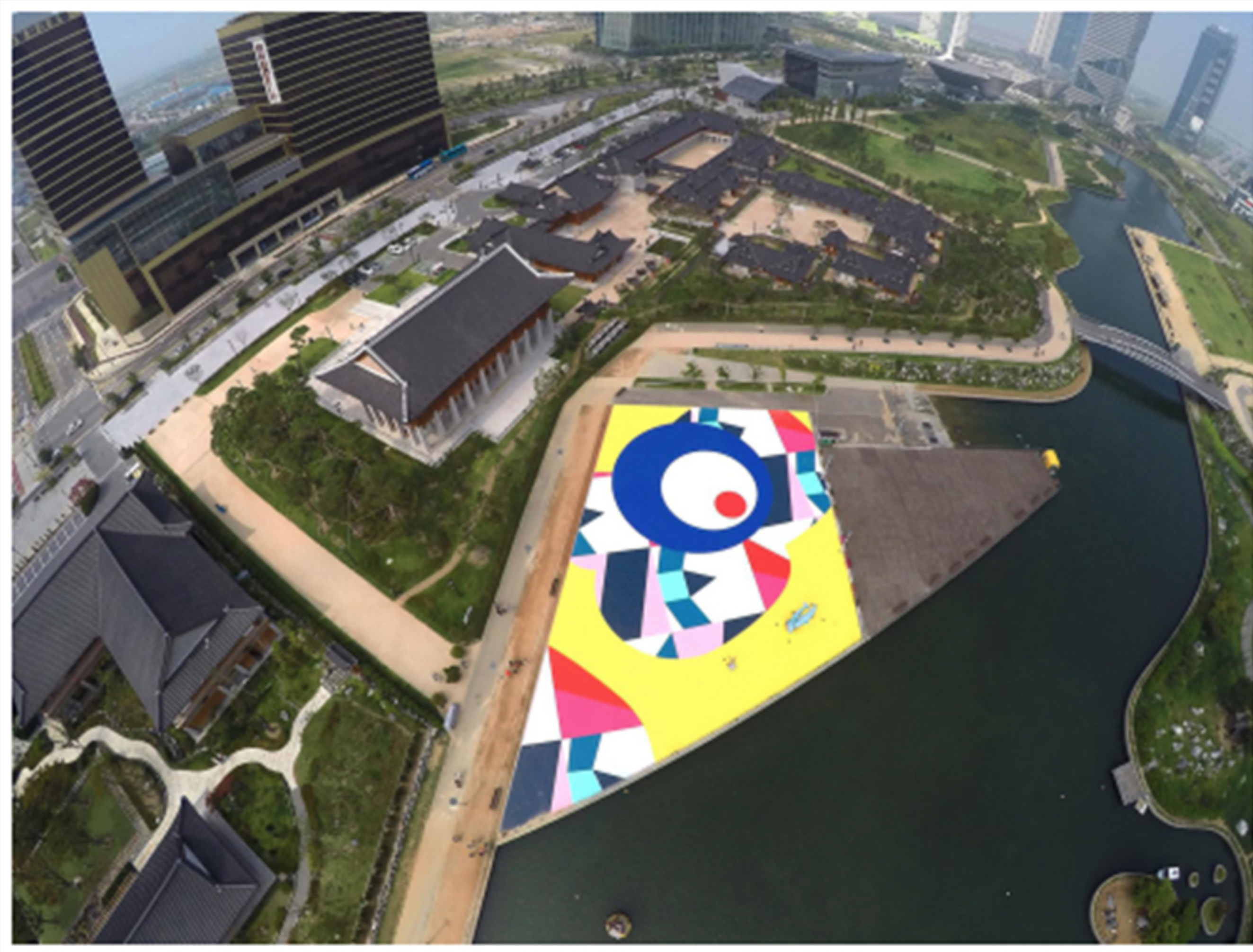
My first public art commission was to paint a bridge in Camden, North London. I didn't apply for the commission - it came quite unexpectedly through contacts I made. I was curating a project space and running community workshops in the neighbourhood. In truth, most of my commissions have come through networks and introductions. I don't think I've ever been successful applying to things without being recommended or shortlisted.

In terms of failures, I feel as if I'm failing all the time - opportunities come and go, you make big / small mistakes, you learn, you get back on your feet. An old tutor of mine once told me that artists should, 'Fail, fail and fail again.'



What's the least true stereotype about art school? And perhaps, the "most" true stereotype?

Art schools are not as rock and roll or 'bohemian' as the stereotype suggests. Most artists I know are incredibly disciplined and dedicated when it comes to working. Of course there are the parties and private views but that's all part of the business and the socialising.



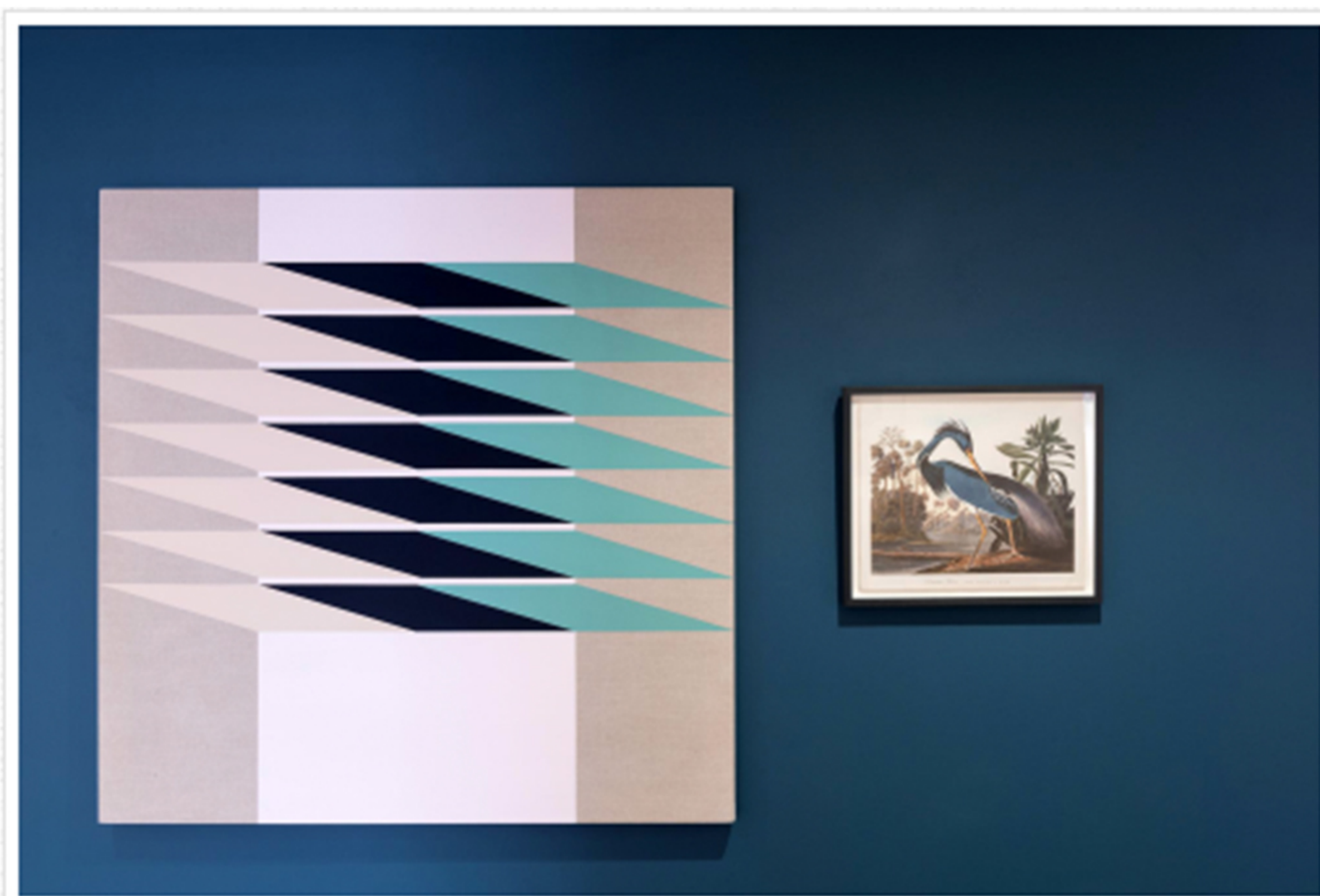
Could you share a few dream places you'd like to work or perhaps a few ideas that have been mulling around in your head as of late?

This past year, I recently completed my first international public art commission in Songdo, South Korea. Being Indonesian, I would love to create a public artwork in Indonesia - either in the capital city of Jakarta or on the island of Bali where I am from.

With regards to ideas mulling around my head, lately I've been thinking about a mosaic floor pattern for an outdoor pool - somewhere warm, surrounded by palm trees. The floor would be made up of glazed and iridescent tiles - I'd love to see how the water refracts against the pattern.

If you could have a meal with any one (or two) artists who are no longer alive, who would it be? And what are you eating for this meal? And where?

I would have a meal with American artist Sol le Witt (1928-2007) and Balinese artist Nyoman Lempad (1862-1978). Although Lempad's work is figurative, you can see how his background as an architect has influenced the way he draws. For me, both artists share a quality of line that sits confidently in between two and three dimensions. For our dinner, we would eat Balinese food, drink fresh coconuts and sit in Lempad's garden in Ubud, Bali.



Do you have any favorite books on art you could recommend? Or perhaps ones you return to from time to time?

Anything and everything by Dave Hickey and David Batchelor. My copy of 'Chromophobia' by Batchelor is well thumbed and sits on the armchair of my studio

Last question: Cranberry or sage?

Neither - a Balinese relish with chillies, shallots, coconut and lime.

To learn more about Sinta's current projects, please visit her [website](#).

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