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## IMPACT AUSTIN AWARDS \$80,600 TO THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN



*High impact grant to enable greater arts access to Austin's underserved children and families*

**AUSTIN, TEXAS – JUNE 14, 2017** – The Contemporary Austin proudly announces it was honored at Austin City Hall this week as a 2017 Impact Austin Community Partner and recipient of its Culture Area grant in the amount of \$80,600. This high impact grant—the largest ever received for education programs in the museum's history—supports its SEEING SPECIAL THINGS program—a multiple-visit initiative offered to public elementary schools in Austin, integrating visual art into the classroom and enhancing student literacy, critical thinking, observation, and communication skills through museum visits, classroom discussions, artist workshops, and art making.

Honorable guests at the 2017 grants presentation ceremony include Austin Mayor Steve Adler, Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo, City Council members Alison Alter and Delia Garza, and Impact Austin

Founder Rebecca Powers. Others in attendance included members and leadership of Impact Austin, as well as leaders, volunteers and supporters of Austin area nonprofits.

The Contemporary Austin welcomes 60,000 visitors to the museum's two unique sites each year: Laguna Gloria on the shores of Lake Austin and The Jones Center in downtown Austin. The Contemporary Austin's SEEING SPECIAL THINGS program is an innovative visual arts education program for Title I schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD).

The grant from Impact Austin will allow SEEING SPECIAL THINGS to hire a bilingual Program Coordinator to ensure program quality and uniformity and connect with 1,300 AISD students in grades two through four for two years. Additionally, 35 teachers from AISD will participate in a professional development workshop at The Contemporary Austin each September, familiarizing themselves with the museum's two sites while learning how to incorporate arts learning into the classroom. Art shows at partner schools will also bring art access to a broader community than the museum currently serves, directly addressing the disparity in cultural access that Austin currently faces. More information about SEEING SPECIAL THINGS can be found at [thecontemporaryaustin.org/explore/for-schools](http://thecontemporaryaustin.org/explore/for-schools).

"Every day I witness the powerful impact original works of contemporary art can have in the lives of children who may otherwise never have the chance to see art in person, talk about art, create their own art, or work with professional artists," said Andrea Mellard, Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement at The Contemporary Austin.

"Impact Austin's generous support will empower our staff to expand SEEING SPECIAL THINGS, engaging thousands more underserved children and families in this extraordinary program and increasing access to the cultural life of our city."

"On behalf of our members, we are proud to award The Contemporary Austin with a 2017 Focus Area Program grant," says Lisa Apfelberg, acting executive director, Impact Austin. "Expanding the reach of Seeing Special Things ensures our children's access to the arts begins early and enriches the lives of students and their families across our city."

### IMPACT AUSTIN

Impact Austin is a 501(c)(3) public charity comprised of women seeking to transform lives in the Greater Austin area through high-impact and lifelong giving. Its only membership requirements are to be female and donate \$1,250 each year. Impact Austin combines the annual donations from members and awards large grants each year to local worthy causes selected by its members. Grant applications are accepted in each of the following areas: culture, environment, education, family, and health and wellness. In 2015, it also established a Catalyst Grant that is awarded to organizations to improve their infrastructure and sustainability. Learn more at [www.impactaustin.org](http://www.impactaustin.org).



**THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN**

The Contemporary Austin reflects the spectrum of contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, education, and the collection. The museum has two distinct yet complementary locations, the Jones Center in downtown Austin at 700 Congress Avenue, and Laguna Gloria, a fourteen-acre site on Lake Austin at 3809 W. 35th Street, which is home to the Driscoll Villa, the Art School, and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria. Since its inception in 2013, the museum has also been building its Museum Without Walls program—an initiative that brings art to visitors in new ways and in diverse venues throughout Austin. More information at [thecontemporaryaustin.org](http://thecontemporaryaustin.org).

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**IMAGES:**

(Top) An elementary school class lines up before their Seeing Special Things visit at The Contemporary Austin - Jones Center. Photo: Brian Fitzsimmons.

(Bottom) Children ponder Tom Friedman's sculpture Looking Up, 2015 at the Contemporary Austin - Laguna Gloria during a Seeing Special Things tour. Artwork © Tom Friedman. Image © The Contemporary Austin. Photograph by Brian Fitzsimmons.