

Reynaldo “Sonny” Rivera / Sculptor

1. Cover Letter

Call for Artist - Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – African Lion Sculpture

I am honored to submit my qualifications for the opportunity to create a sculpture of an African male lion to accompany the Police Memorial Wall outside the main entrance of the Los Alamos Police Station. The African Lion—a symbol of strength, courage, and guardianship—offers a powerful and fitting tribute to the officers who have served with distinction and sacrifice.

My approach to public art is rooted in a commitment to educate, uplift, and connect communities through sculpture. I strive to merge impressionism and expressionism into a naturalistic style that brings spirit and movement to form. My modeling technique is centered on creating visual harmony between faces, gestures, and narrative—infusing each work with presence, emotion, and meaning.

I aim to create public art that is not only visually compelling but also emotionally resonant and culturally relevant. My sculptures invite reflection and dialogue, evoking pride and a sense of shared identity. There is a quiet power in each of my works—a strength held in reserve, guided with purpose, and shaped by integrity.

With over 40 public art commissions completed over the past 35 years, I bring deep experience working with arts boards, selection committees, architects, engineers, and civic leaders at all levels of government. I am supported by a team of seasoned artisans whose craftsmanship and reliability have ensured that all projects are completed on time and within budget.

Thank you for considering my qualifications. I would be honored to contribute a lasting work of art to the Los Alamos community.

Warm regards,

Reynaldo “Sonny” Rivera
Sculptor

Reynaldo “Sonny” Rivera / Sculptor

Artist Resume

Reynaldo Rivera, a native of Mesquite, New Mexico, is the son of Natalia and Alexander Rivera, a World War I veteran. From an early age, Reynaldo showed a strong interest in drawing and painting, often depicting the people of his village and the horses on local farms—subjects that still inspire his work today.

At 17, Rivera enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving for four years and traveling the world. These travels exposed him to a variety of cultures and the great museums of Europe and Asia, experiences that would later inform his artistic vision. After completing his service, he established a successful career as a barber-hairstylist in Albuquerque. Yet, his passion for art remained strong. At the age of forty, Rivera chose to follow his first love and pursue formal art education.

He studied fine arts at the American Academy of Art in Chicago under the guidance of nationally recognized sculptor and painter Eugene Hall. He continued his exploration of sculpture at Columbia College. Rivera also refined his craft internationally, attending the Galleria Della Arte in Florence, Italy, and the San Miguel de Allende Institute in Mexico.

Rivera is known for his ability to integrate every element of a composition into a unified whole. His work blends impressionistic and expressionistic techniques, resulting in a distinctive, natural style. Each sculpture tells a compelling story and invites viewers into a meaningful emotional dialogue.

Early in his artistic career, Rivera committed himself to portraying individuals who have faced adversity and triumphed. His interactive artworks are designed to inspire pride within the community and foster emotional connections. He strives to create timeless landmarks—works of art that not only enrich their surroundings but also help people locate themselves in time and place, emotionally and geographically.

Rivera’s major public commissions reflect both historical and contemporary themes. Notable works include:

- *The Santa Fe Trail* for Saint Louis University, honoring families who journeyed west in search of a better life.
- A sculpture of *Medal of Honor recipient Capt. Raymond G. Murphy* for the VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, depicting Murphy heroically rescuing a fellow soldier.
- A *9/11 Memorial* for the City of Broomfield, Colorado, representing an Anglo man, a Black woman, and a Hispanic man—united in courage and compassion amidst the chaos of the World Trade Center attacks.

Rivera brings extensive experience in public art projects, collaborating with arts boards, selection committees, neighborhood groups, artists, landscape architects, structural engineers, and historians at city, county, state, and federal levels.

His works can be found in museums, botanical gardens, zoos, churches, universities, and private collections throughout the United States and Mexico.

Public Art Commissions (2003-2024): *partial listing*

Alamosa Park, Albuquerque, NM - 2024

A life-size crouching mountain lion atop a boulder about to spring forth in pursuit of its prey.

Alamosa County Courthouse, Alamosa, CO - 2022

A 4' x 6' bas-relief commemorating the Maestas case of 1914 for educational equality in Alamosa public schools, which depicts two youngsters crossing the tracks to attend the school closest to their homes.

Saint Louis University- Lay Center for Education and the Arts, Louisiana, Missouri - 2018

Twenty-five life-size sculptures commemorating The Santa Fe Trail (1830-1890) – *Westward Journey*. This monumental work of art portrays four mules pulling a Missouri wagon onto dry land. Up ahead, a trail boss surveys the safe crossing of the caravan (wagon, people, and livestock). The Trail Guide keeps the caravan on course, as the wagon driver traverses rough terrain. A mule whacker does his part to help the mules safely steer the wagon onto higher ground. A pioneer woman looks to see that her children are safe. Dogs are barking. A colt is romping. A cow and mare, tied to the back to the wagon are safe. Meanwhile, two cowboys on horseback are about to cross the river—to join up with the wagon train. Dedicated 2018.

Anderson-Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum, Albuquerque, NM – 2015

A larger than life-size sculpture depicting Sid Cutter, who founded the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in 1972. Dedicated 2015.

Pete Padilla and Manuel Mora Memorial Park, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM – 2015

A larger than life-size sculpture depicting two Marine's from Albuquerque's oldest neighborhood "Barelas", that died for our country during the Vietnam War conflict. Dedicated 2015.

Atrisco Heritage Academy, Albuquerque, NM – 2012

A life-size sculpture depicting the academy's Jaguar mascot, commissioned by the first graduating Class of 2011.

Rudolfo Anaya Elementary School, Albuquerque, NM – 2011

A life-size bust of New Mexico's native son, the world-renowned author Rudolfo Anaya.

Jim White, Carlsbad, NM – 2010

A 10' high bronze sculpture of Carlsbad Caverns cave explorer "Jim White" located at the entrance to the National Cave and Karst Research Institute, Carlsbad, NM.

Harry E. Kinney Civic Plaza, Albuquerque, NM – 2009

An 8' bronze sculpture of the late Mayor Harry E. Kinney, Albuquerque's first elected mayor.

Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, Albuquerque, NM – 2008

A 13' bronze sculpture depicting the late Captain Raymond G. Murphy, a Korean War Veteran, rescuing one of many men, which earned him our nation's most prodigious award, the Medal of Honor.

Rudolfo Anaya Sculpture Park: *Bless Me, Ultima*, Santa Rosa, NM – 2007

A larger-than-life bronze sculpture honoring Santa Rosa's native son, the world renowned author "Rudolfo Anaya".

Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, NM – 2007

A life-size bronze bust honoring the Albuquerque Museum Foundation's 2007 Notable New Mexican honoree "Author Rudolfo Anaya".

9-11 Memorial, Community Park, Broomfield, CO – 2006

Nine (9) life-size bronze sculptures honoring the victims of the "9-11" terrorist attacks (civilians, firefighters, policemen, & children); a tragedy that changed the very fabric of our culture. *Memorial Site*: 160' x 80'

Doña Ana Plaza, Doña Ana, NM – 2006

A 7' high bronze sculpture depicting the legendary Doña Ana distributing water to the community for village residents, livestock, and agricultural purposes along the Camino Real.

Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, NM – 2005

A 100' long bronze monumental sculpture commemorating the colonizer and first governor of New Mexico, Don Juan De Oñate, the soldiers, men, women, children, carreta, and livestock that made this journey in 1598 "La Jornada". (A collaboration with painter/sculptor Betty Sabo.)

Fire Station #20, Albuquerque, NM – 2004

Three (3) life-size bronze sculptures: a fireman testing a fire hydrant's water pressure is caught off guard by two young teens (a boy and girl) riding tandem—as they joyfully encounter the gushing water.

Palace of the Governor's New Mexico History Museum, Santa Fe, NM – 2004

A life-size bronze bust of the late Ambassador Frank V. Ortiz, which graces the facility's "Gran Sala".

Edward J. Lopez State Land Office, Santa Fe, NM – 2004

A full life-size bronze bust of the late Senator Edward J. Lopez.

Museum Hill, Santa Fe, NM – 2003

A 65' larger than life bronze monument commemorating The Santa Fe Trail (1830-1890) – *Journey's End*. This sculpture portrays six weary mules pulling a Connestoga wagon on its final approach into Santa Fe. A trail boss turns his horse and excitedly points down the trail towards the Santa Fe Plaza that awaits them. Meanwhile a young Spanish boy with his trusted dog runs out to greet the first of many wagons. On the opposite side: a Native American woman walking on the trail pauses and watches in amazement as a muleteer reaches down to pull up on the reins of the fallen mule beside him.

New Mexico Supreme Court Library, Santa Fe, NM – 2002

A full life-sized bronze bust of Supreme Court Justice Joseph Baca.

White River Valley Museum, Auburn, WA – 2003

Two larger than life-size bronze sculptures depicting "Big John" and his life-long friend "Mr. Ballard". A seated Mr. Ballard, with pen in hand, records the language & history of the Muckleshoot (a Northwest Native American Tribe) as retold to him by the elder "Big John" over a period of 50-years.

Juan Diego Catholic High School, Draper, UT – 2003

Bronze 9' high sculpture of San Juan Diego descending from Mt. Tepayac after seeing the vision of the Virgen De Guadalupe.



Description:

Two boys, a young girl, and her Chihuahua ride the family burro along the ditch bank, as a feisty mongrel barks at the dog, agitating the burro, which is about to buck them all off!

Title:	Mino y Los Niños
Year:	1996
Material:	bronze
Size:	7' x 3' x 9'
Location:	South Valley Library and Rio Bravo Senior Center, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$75,000.



Description:

This sculpture depicts the excitement and precision of a Barrel Racer in which a horse and rider attempt to run a cloverleaf pattern around preset barrels in the fastest time.

Title:	True Grit
Year:	2019
Material:	bronze
Size:	10' x 10' x 10'
Location:	New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, Las Cruces, NM
Budget:	\$125,000.



Description:

A family of bison descends into a rocky ravine. The bull leads, sure-footed and steady. Behind him, the cow slips on loose shale—as her back hoof skids before regaining her footing. The calf, trailing behind, breaks into a run, kicking up dust as it rushes to catch up. Together, they move on—wary, strong, and bound by instinct.

Title:	Cibolos Del Rio Grande
Year:	1990
Material:	bronze
Size:	Life-size
Location:	Rio Grande Zoological Park, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$57,000.



Description:

A mother bear and one cub stand atop a large boulder, while the other cub clammers up to join them—capturing the innocence and determination of youth facing nature’s trials.

Title:	Osos Del Cañon
Year:	1995
Material:	bronze
Size:	9' x 9' x 6' (life-size)
Location:	Bear Canyon Arroyo Open Space, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$45,000.



Description: (detail)

A trail boss on horseback oversees the safe passage of a Missouri wagon after a successful river crossing. This life-size bronze display includes 25 figures: mules, riders, a woman and children, livestock, and loyal dogs—capturing the grit, grace, and spirit of a journey west.

Title:	Westward Journey
Year:	2018
Material:	bronze
Size:	8.50' x 8.50' x 5' (life-size)
Location:	Lay Center for Education and the Arts, Louisiana, Missouri
Budget:	\$1,000,000.



Description:

Marine Captain Raymond G. Murphy, though wounded, courageously led the rescue of all his men, 'Leave No Man Behind', during the Korean War—heroic actions that earned him the Medal of Honor.

Title:	Captain Raymond G. "Jerry" Murphy Medal of Honor Recipient
Year:	2008
Material:	bronze
Size:	13' x 16' x 6'
Location:	The Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$200,000.



Description:

As you descend into this solemn space, three 20-ton monoliths rise before you, each etched with bas-relief depictions of the 9/11 crash sites and the victims' names engraved on the reverse. Accompanying them are three powerful bronze sculptures: a firefighter pausing in disbelief amid the rubble; three civilians fleeing the World Trade Center towers; and a police officer comforting a young girl.

Title: 9-11 Memorial
Year: 2006
Material: bronze
Size: Life-size figures; Memorial Site Dimensions: 160' x 80'
Location: Community Park, Broomfield, Colorado
Budget: \$450,000.



Description:

A crouching mountain lion poised atop a boulder, muscles tensed and eyes locked forward, moments before launching into pursuit of its prey.

Title:	Stalking Her Prey
Year:	2024
Material:	bronze
Size:	9' x 6' x 5'
Location:	Alamosa Park, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$40,000.



Description:

Sid Cutter, founder of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, perches on the edge of his balloon basket, waving to the crowd as his beloved labrador retrievers sit beside him—soon to hop out before liftoff.

Title:	Sid Cutter, Founder - Albuquerque Int'l Balloon Fiesta
Year:	2015
Material:	bronze
Size:	15' x 6' x 4'
Location:	Sid Cutter Pilot's Pavilion, International Balloon Museum, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$150,000.



Description:

A playful scene depicting a firefighter, testing the pressure of a fire hydrant, as he is caught off guard by two joyful teenagers—a boy and a girl—riding tandem through the sudden burst of water.

Title:	A Cool Friend
Year:	2004
Material:	bronze
Size:	6.50' x 11' x 8'
Location:	Albuquerque Fire Rescue Station 20 / Albuquerque Police Department Substation, North Domingo Baca Park, Albuquerque, NM
Budget:	\$75,000.

Professional References:

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Retired – 2024

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