

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT Executive Department



MEETING DATE:	October 14, 2025
PROJECT:	Consideration of Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at New Riverside Barn Park to Michael McLoughlin (Fiscal Impact of \$65,000)
PROJECT MANAGER:	Chris Forster, MPA, CPFO, CGFM, Assistant Town Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Art Committee (PAC) voted unanimously to recommend the art commission designed by Mr. Michael McLoughlin titled Rabbit and Wren.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Art Committee was established in October 2023 to carry out the Council approved public art policy. The committee is responsible for making recommendations to Council on publicly funded public art or art to be placed on public property.

In May the PAC voted to create a Public Artist roster of pre-approved artists that may submit proposals on calls for public art. This Town of Bluffton artist roster consists of over 50 artists, local and national artists that work in a variety of mediums.

In Spring of 2025 the committee voted to put out a call for original pieces of work to be installed on Town property at New Riverside Barn Park.

DISCUSSION:

At the PAC meeting on July 29th, 2025, the committee reviewed proposals from ten artists. After a discussion the committee voted to proceed with requesting additional information from Mr. Michael McLaughlin. Mr. McLaughlin attended the August 26th, 2025, meeting and presented his background and proposal, and the committee voted unanimously to recommend his piece to Bluffton Town Council.

Mr. McLaughlin's piece is a bronze structure, approximately six feet in height, of a rabbit and wren in a playful stance. It will be placed on a concrete base in the ground, so it appears the artwork is flush with the ground.



Mr. McLaughlin, is based in Connecticut, but has been commissioned for several pieces of art around the country. As part of his research for our call for art, he visited Bluffton and met with members of the Bluffton Library, Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Bluffton Historical Preservation Society and Audubon South Carolina. He based his proposal on animals native to the area and to complement the natural design of the recently constructed New Riverside Barn Park.

NEXT STEPS:

Approve, approve with conditions or deny the recommendation to award the commission to Michael McLaughlin.

Attachments:

1. Recommended Art Proposal
2. Motion



Michael McLaughlin
Bronze Sculpture



“Gentle as a friend’s hand resting on
my shoulder”

“This summer sunshine”

-Issa

Say not,
'I have found the truth',
but rather,
'I have found a truth.'
-Kahil Gibran





Nature offers us the ability to change the way we view our world.

All communities are composed of separate branches

But collectively,

We all belong to the same tree.





We as viewers should discover the unexpected, finding content that applies to another part of our lives and thus, the art becomes a co-creation.





“Joys come from simple and natural things:
Mists over meadows, sunlight on leaves,
The path of the moon over water.”

-Sigurd Olson

Before I begin,
I would like to express a very special thank you
to the following for their generous help in my
research and extra long list of questions!

**The Bluffton Branch Library
The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce
The Bluffton Historical Preservation Society
Audubon South Carolina**

“Listen to the sounds around you.
It will teach you there are no soloists in nature,
only myriad voices singing in infinite chorus.”



The New Riverside Barn Park

The drawings contained within this sketchbook of concept proposals are intended to present the thought and sentiment I would strive to bring to YOUR unique sculpture/s

Sculpture is a journey we invent when we make it.





Bluffton, South Carolina



Home to



325 Bird species
116 Mammal inhabitants
Insects 12,500
Amphibians 142
Reptiles 118....

Pileated Woodpecker
Red, flying squirrels
Painted Turtle
Copperhead Snake

Black Bear
Brown Bat
Barn Owl
Leopard Frog
Beaver
So much inspiration!



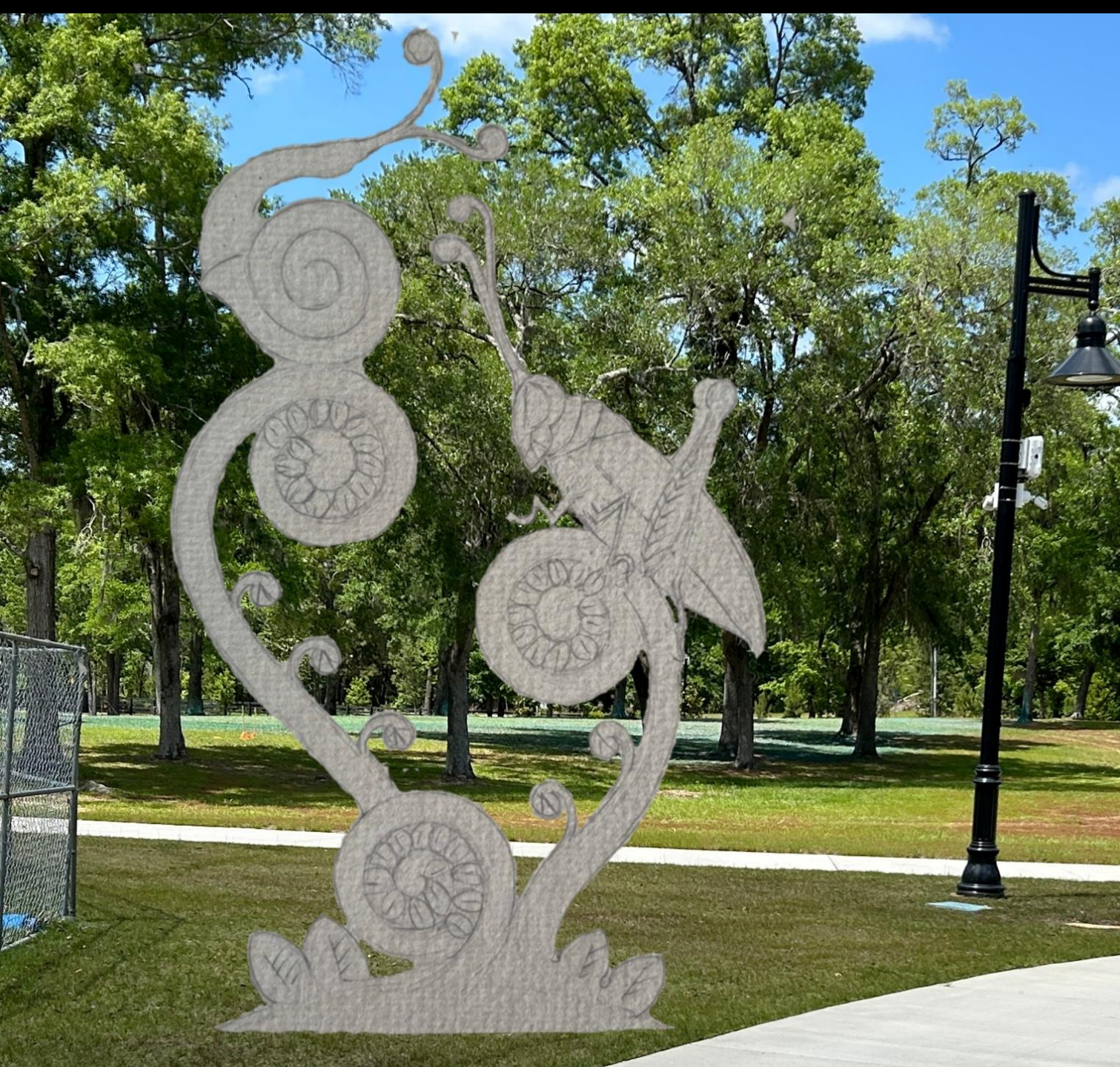


“Rabbit and Wren”

(Made of bronze or aluminum)

Total Height
6ft (bronze) or 7+ ft. (aluminum)



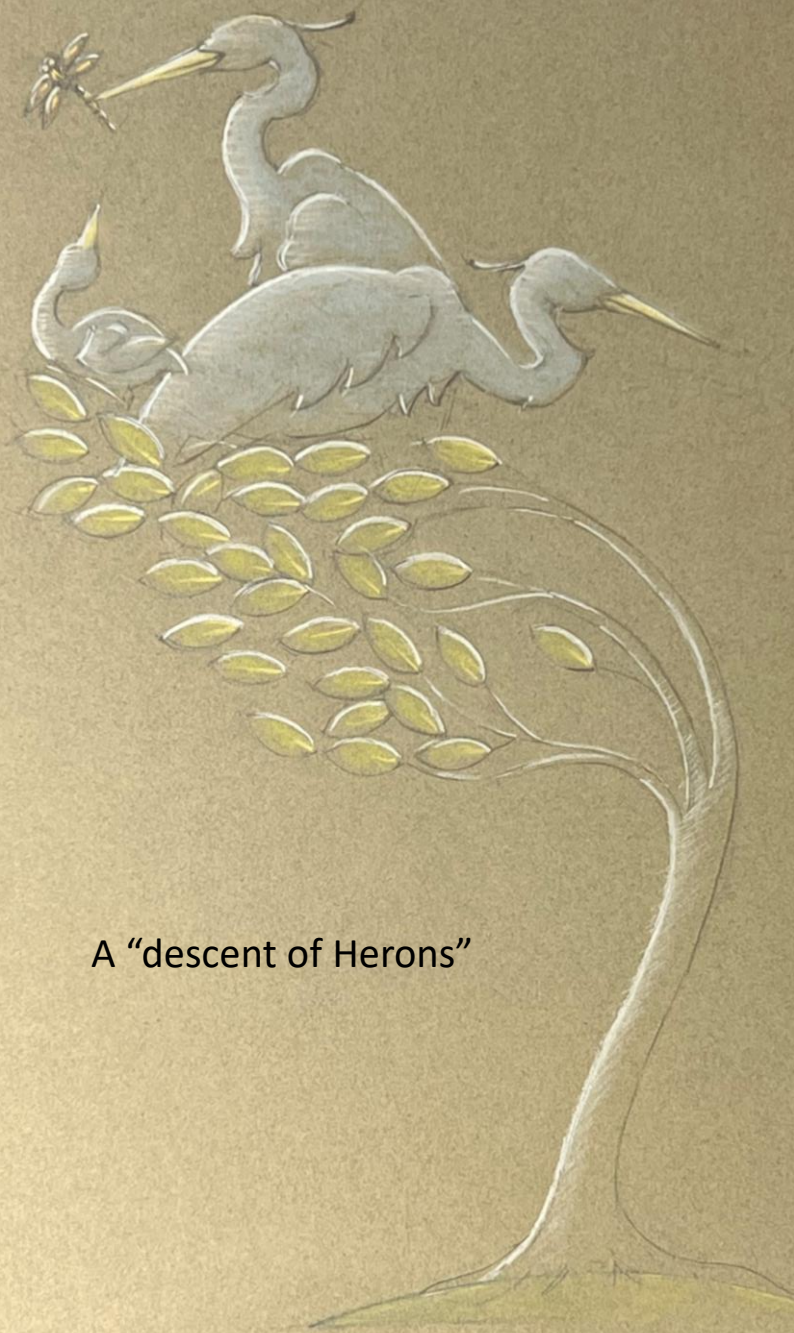


“The Conversation”

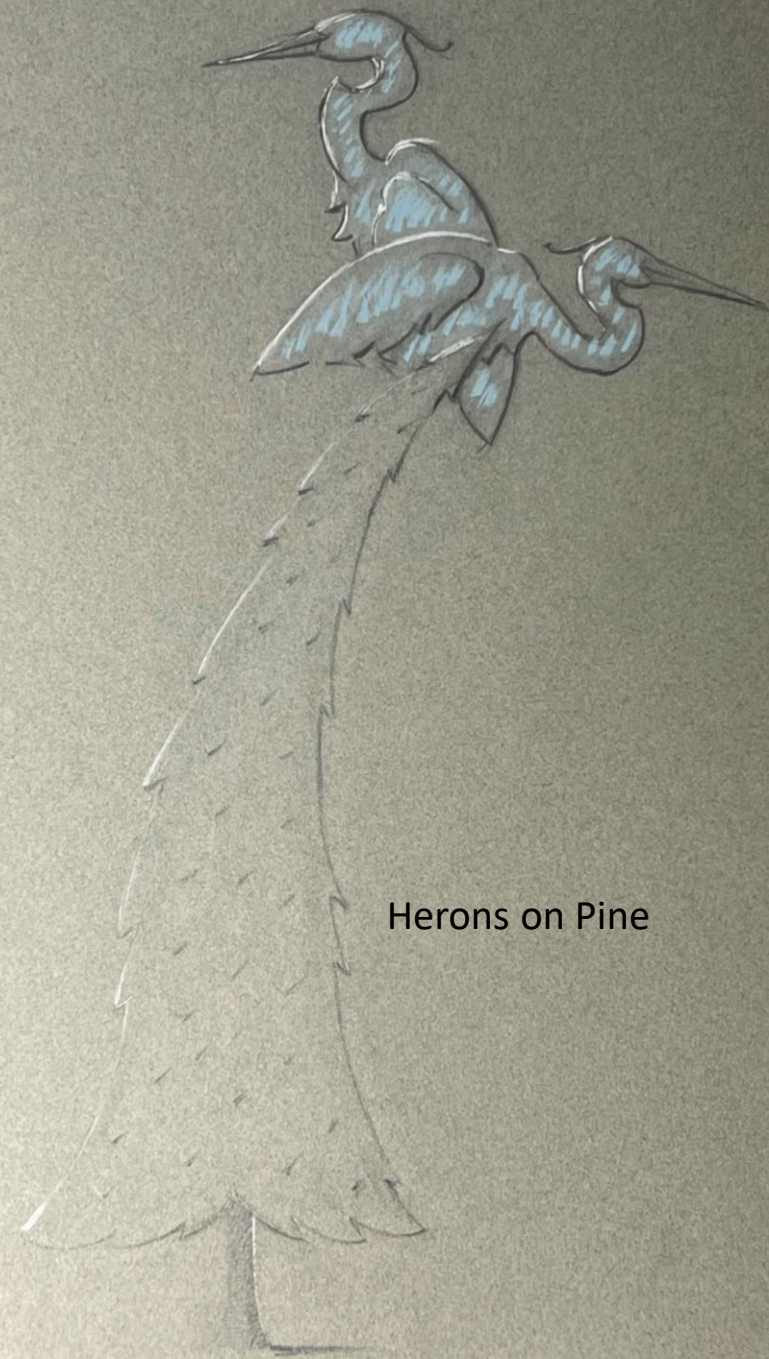
Snail & Grasshopper perched on fiddlehead ferns

Total Height
6ft (bronze) or 7+ ft. (aluminum)

- The next few slides present a couple alternative concepts that could easily be developed further.....



A “descent of Herons”



Herons on Pine



“Colloquy”

“Community Informed Art”

I would like to convey that I am always very receptive to suggestions/recommendations

Some of the most joyous projects are a direct result of this important ingredient.

If there is a certain flora/fauna that is especially meaningful, I am happy to discuss! MM





Color and Maintenance

The choice of Patinas can suggest the graceful appearance of aged antiquity. It also has the ability to make bronze appear rich, bright & iridescent



Our unique applications of traditional & contemporary finishes require little to no maintenance.



3 coats of exterior UV protective are applied upon installation.





I come from a construction background.(USAF Combat Engineer) For the past 20 years I have applied this unique life experience to our artistic endeavors. As a result, I can always be found “hands-on” in every aspect of installation/s.

There are occasions when we are mandated by state and local ordinances to seek out and subcontract with qualified companies that can assist us in these endeavors. Like any contractor or home-owner, we strive to seek those companies that have the ability to communicate well, provide the highest quality and value for the service. (Good references, insurance and credentials).



Belmont

Everdur Silicon Bronze Product 4951

With its pleasant color (and ability to accept a range of patinas) combined with good fluidity, low drossing, and a reasonable solidification range, Everdur Silicon Bronze is widely used in both industrial and creative applications. Everdur's balance of mechanical properties and corrosion resistance has led to its use in valve and pump parts, impellers, bells and a variety of other engineering applications. More recently, Everdur's excellent casting characteristics have resulted in it being the preferred Bronze for sculpture casting and in its wide acceptance for the jewelry caster as well.

Nominal Chemical Composition

Copper	95%
Silicon	4%
Manganese	1%



Typical Physical Properties

Unless otherwise stated, measured at room temperature, 68°F (20°C).

Property	U.S.	Metric
Melting Range (solidus/liquidus)	1550°F–1780°F	840°C–971°C
Pouring Range	1900°F–2250°F	1010°C–1235°C
Density	0.302 lbs/cu. in.	8.36 g/cu. cm.
Specific Gravity	8.36	8.36
Thermal Conductivity	16.4 Btu/ft./hr./sq. ft./°F	28 W/m/°K
Electrical Conductivity	6% IACS	6% IACS

Typical Mechanical Properties (test bar values – C80100)

Unless otherwise stated, measured at room temperature, 68°F (20°C).

Property	U.S.	Metric
Tensile Strength	55000 lbs/sq. in.	379 MPa
Yield Strength	25000 lbs/ sq. in.	172 MPa
Elongation in 2 in. (50 mm)	30%	30%
Brinell Hardness (500 kg. wt.)	85	85
Shear Strength	28000 lbs/sq. in.	190 MPa
Impact Strength Izod	33 ft. lbs	45 Joules

Continued

Belmont: *The Non Ferrous Specialists*

For maximum variety in non ferrous metals, alloys and shapes.

Custom shapes and compositions available.

Bronze?

Why “Silicon” Bronze in particular?

95% copper

4% silicon and

1% manganese.



This “modern” alloy recipe was formulated early in the 20th C by metallurgists seeking to meet the high demand for better quality castings intended for industrial and marine applications.



It contains good structural quality, finishes nicely and accepts patinas readily. It especially offers a high resistance to corrosion!



For 20 years we have been fortunate enough to operate our own studio foundry.



This important asset allow us to perform all stages of our creative and technical fabrications under one roof.

Project Budget



• Concept
Development

• Production

20%

70%

• Shipping

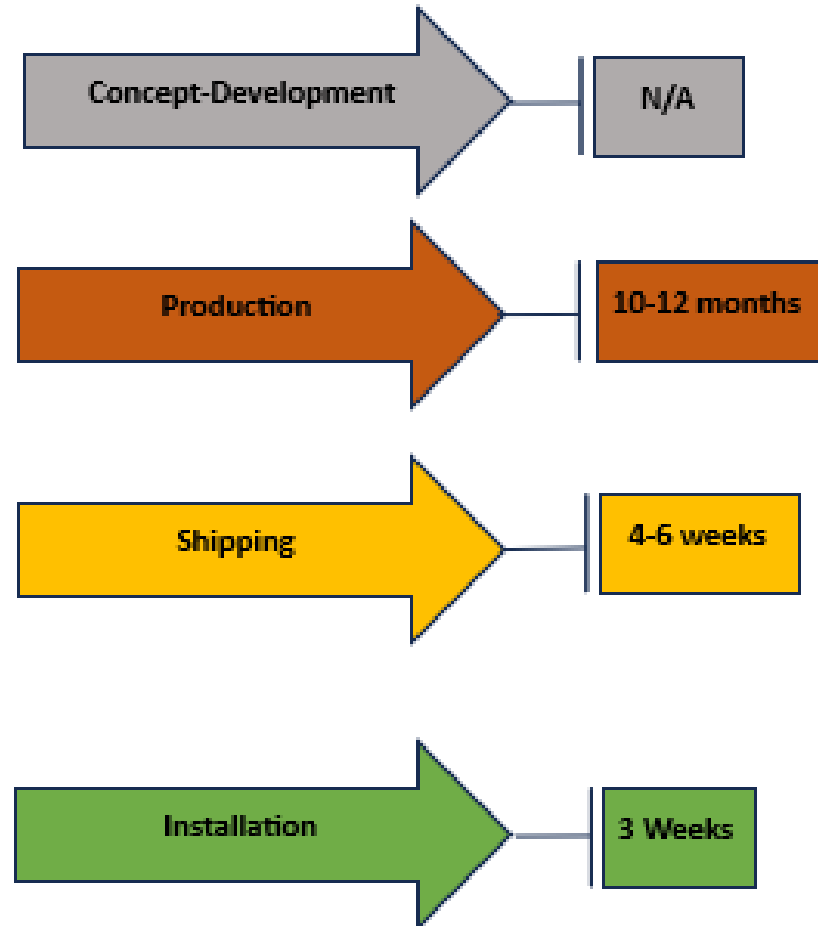
5%

5%

• Installation

Patterns	\$5,000.00
Insurance	\$2,500.00
Foundry Costs	\$30,000.00
Fabrication	\$10,000.00
Delivery	\$5,000.00
Installation	\$6,000.00
Engineer	\$1,500.00
Permitting	TBD
Incidentals	\$875.00
Taxes (sales) 6.35%	\$4,125.00
Total	\$65,000.00

Project Time-line



Project Duration-10-12 Months

Concept & Development- Through the discussion and use of visual materials (drawings/models) the parameters of the project, ie. scale, placement, estimated production schedule and projected requirements will be agreed upon. Administrative documentation is included

Production – The artist and team will create a full-scale prototype (plaster, clay wax or fiberglass) which will be delivered to the foundry for casting into the desired metal alloy. Upon completion there, the castings will be returned to the artist studio-workshop where fabrication, finishing and patina will be performed.

Shipping - Contracted freight handlers (or in some cases) the artist . Bonded, Insured DOT compliant 

Installation- Due to the scale-weight of the art work, it may be necessary to contract licensed riggers with specialty equipment to assist in installation.

NB: Liability Insurance, permitting, engineering certificates, custom fees and incidentals are calculated in “production”. All requisite supplies, materials and associated costs for site clean up are included in “installation”







Thank you so much for the opportunity to present our work. I am very honored and grateful for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out at any time for further information .



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<https://www.instagram.com/mjmsculpture>



<https://facebook.com/michaelmclaughlinbronzesculpture>



<https://www.youtube.com/@mjmsculpture>



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Professional References

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Reyna Ruiz
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Curriculum Vitae

2007-13 Adjunct Art Teacher at Washington Montessori
2002-05 Apprenticed with sculptor Juan Andreu, Valen
2000-02 Teacher Intern at Old Saybrook High School
1995-99 Attended Lyme Academy of Fine Arts
1994-99 Historic Preservation Artist NEC Museum

Exhibitions and Commissions

2024 Harlinsdale Bridge, Franklin, TN
2023 Old Lyme Public Library
2022 City of Eden Prairie, MN Commission
2021 City of Newport Beach, CA Invitational
2020 Devereux Gardens Commission
2019 Seffner-Mango Community Park Commission, FL
2018 Chester Gallery
2017 Mirada Fine Art, Denver, CO
2017 Aviara Park Commission, Carlsbad, CA
2016 University of CT EVS Museum -Gallery
2016 Bushnell Plaza, Hartford
2015 New Britain Museum of American Art -Permanent Collection
2015 CT Governor's Invitational
2014 Village Hall Commission, Palmetto Bay, FL
2014 Eisenhower Gallery, Martha's Vineyard, MA
2013 Piasio Commission, Princeton NJ
2013 Lea Hill Park Commission, Auburn, WA
2012 Mystic Aquarium Exhibit
2012 B&T Grounds for Sculpture
2011 Stojanovich Park Commission, Campbell, CA
2011 Slater Museum, Norwich CT
2010 Sills Commission, Watch Hill, RI
2010 Gleason Fine Art, Portland, ME
2009 Reeves-Reed Arboretum, Summit, NJ
2009 Haddad Gallery, Hudson, NY
2008 John Slade Ely House, New Haven
2008 Poets Park Commission, Santa Cruz, CA
2007 Duffy Elementary School Commission, Hartford, CT
2007 Lascano Gallery, Gt Barrington, MA
2006 Walton Rd Commission, Port St. Lucie, FL
2005 Sun Lakes Community Library, Sun Lakes, AZ
2005 CODA Gallery, Palm Desert, CA

Awards

2009 Weiss Sculpture Prize
2008 The Lyngne Prize for Metal Sculpture
2005 The New Alliance Award

Recommended Motion

Approval of Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at New Riverside Barn Park to Michael McLoughlin (Fiscal Impact of \$65,000)– Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

“I make a motion to Approve the Public Art Committee Recommendation to Award the Public Art Commission at New Riverside Barn Park to Michael McLoughlin.”