



# PUBLIC ART

## DENVER ARTS & VENUES

### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

#### National Western Center South Platte River Bridges Public Art Project

**Budget: \$1.5 million USD (for two bridges)**

**Eligibility: Open to local, national, and international artists**

**DEADLINE:** Monday, November 4, 2019; 11:59 P.M.MST

#### Introduction

The City of Denver's Public Art Program seeks to commission an artist or artist team to create original works of art for the two South Platte River Bridges connecting the new National Western Center campus and Elyria Swansea neighborhoods with the Globeville neighborhood. The public art budget is \$1.5 million USD for both bridges. The art selection panel may commission one or more artists for this project.

#### National Western Center (NWC)

The National Western Center is a reimagined campus nearly doubling the grounds which have housed the National Western Stock Show for more than 110 years. The new campus will be a vibrant, dynamic, and accessible educational and entertainment environment in the heart of Denver that celebrates Colorado's western heritage and solves global issues through research and collaboration.

<https://nationalwesterncenter.com/about/what-is-the-nwc/>

#### National Western Center River Bridges

Two new bridges will cross the South Platte River into the western boundary of the NWC at Bettie Cram Drive and 51st Avenue and enhance the gateway approaches to the site from the west, and gateways into the neighborhood from the site. These bridges offer unique opportunities to create immersive experiences. Two-dimensional, three-dimensional, lighting designs, and architecturally integrated works are some of the options for art integration. These bridges will also serve to connect western neighborhoods to the open spaces along the South Platte River. The bridge over Bettie Cram Drive will give visitors direct access to the site and connect to what is envisioned to be the NWC "Main Street" following through the site and connecting across to the eastern neighborhoods. The bridge at 51st Avenue is the NWC gateway that most visitors will use to access the site and will intersect with National Western Drive. It will connect directly into a major underground public and event parking for the site and its programming activities.

#### Globeville and Elyria Swansea (GES) Neighborhoods

Denver's Globeville and Elyria Swansea neighborhoods are located on either side of the future National Western Center, near the South Platte River. In addition to the river, major physical landmarks in the neighborhood include the Denver Coliseum, I-70, the Nestle Purina pet food facility, and Swansea Elementary School. In the mid-19th century, the area was highly valued by industry and commerce because of the flat terrain and proximity to the South Platte River and rail. It was the epicenter of agribusiness in the region for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and after 113 years is still home to the annual National Western Stock Show every January. With industry in the area, especially smelting and meat-packing, came settlement and housing. Industry, railroads, and housing grew together over the years. Although the smelters are now gone, and the meat-packing industry is much-diminished, a strong industrial presence remains today, as does an established residential community with a significant supply of workforce housing. Strong community cohesion and civic pride bolster the neighborhoods even when challenged with quality of life issues. Many significant changes are on the

neighborhoods' immediate horizon, including new commuter rail transit stations, changes to I-70, and the new vision for the National Western Center.

### **Project Themes and Goals**

The art selection panel members have set forth specific goals and parameters for this public art project with the hope of creating unique and inspiring works of art for the diverse communities that border the site and the many visitors that will enjoy the National Western Center. Works that demonstrate an authentic connection between human activity and the land, and tell the story of the place - historically, agriculturally, socially and ecologically - are encouraged, as are projects that include direct community involvement. During the master planning phase of the NWC redevelopment, extensive efforts were made to document the history of the place; all this research will be made available to the selected artists or artist teams. Works that reflect these guiding principles, aspirations and mission of the NWC—solving global challenges through innovation--as outlined in the NWC Master Plan and other documents that articulate the vision and mission of the revitalized, year-round, center for arts, entertainment, education, research and events are encouraged. The art selection panel is searching for artists who can research and reflect a deep understanding of the site and the vision for its future in order to create works of art that are relevant to the community and are timeless and forward-looking.

Some important themes for the project:

- Community/ Ethnic History of the GES Neighborhoods/Social impact/Culture/Reflects Past, Present, and Future
- Connection/Gateways/Access/Porous Borders/Arrival Experience/Inviting/ Crossroads of Rural and Urban
- The Natural World/The River/The Land/The Sky
- A Local, Regional, National and Global Campus

The selection panel is open to artwork in **materials that are suitable for permanent outdoor display**. The selected artist or artist team will have access to selected historic artifacts and salvage materials from the site that can be repurposed for art. Artists are asked to be mindful and respectful of the bridges' functionality, users of all ages and abilities, the National Western Center's initiatives and goals, and the neighborhood and surrounding communities. For more information please visit: <https://nationalwesterncenter.com/background-documents/year/public-art/>

### **Maintenance & Durability**

All applicants are expected to consider the issues of long-term conservation and maintenance of public art, along with time and budget. These projects are located in the public realm and will therefore be exposed to weather and physical stresses, as well as be subject to vandalism. Artworks should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional conservator prior to the submission of a final proposal. Artist proposals will be reviewed by the City of Denver's Public Art Committee to ensure conformity with city standards of maintenance and durability, as well as ADA (Americans with Disabilities act) standards. All finalists are expected to stay on budget and to complete work in an approved time frame.

### **Eligibility**

This project is open internationally to artists regardless of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation, or mental or physical disability. **The art selection panel is particularly interested in artists who can demonstrate a deep understanding of the area's history, landscape, and surrounding neighborhoods. Artists will be expected to engage with the surrounding communities in the GES neighborhoods to help inform the art design process.**

### **Diversity and Inclusiveness**

Denver Executive Order No. 101 establishes strategies between the City and private industry to use diversity and inclusiveness to promote economic development in the City and County of Denver and to encourage more businesses to compete for City contracts and procurements. The Executive Order requires, among other things, the collection of certain information regarding the practices of the City's contractors and consultants toward diversity and inclusiveness and encourages/requires City agencies to include diversity and inclusiveness policies in selection criteria where legally

permitted in solicitations for City services or goods. Diversity and Inclusiveness means inviting values, perspectives and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds, and integrates diversity into its hiring and retention policies, training opportunities, and business development methods to provide an equal opportunity for each person to participate, contribute, and succeed within the organization’s workplace. “Diversity” encompasses a wide variety of human differences, including differences such as race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical disabilities, appearance, historically underutilized and disadvantaged persons, as well as social identities such as religion, marital status, socio-economic status, lifestyle, education, parental status, geographic background, language ability, and veteran status.

### **Budget**

The budget for this commission is \$1.5 million USD. These funds come from the City of Denver’s 1% for Public Art Ordinance [DRMC 20-85] resulting from the construction of the National Western Center Complex. The contract amount is inclusive of all costs associated with the project including, but not limited to: the artist’s design fee, other consultation fees such as structural engineering consultation, insurance (including Colorado Workers Compensation), tools, materials, fabrication, transportation, permits, installation, any building or site modification required, travel to and from the site, per diem expenses, project documentation, contingency to cover unexpected expenses, and any other costs. For all work performed on city property, prevailing wage requirements will be applied. The art selection panel reserves the right to commission one or more artists for this project.

### **Timeline**

(Except for online application deadline, timeline is subject to adjustments)

Monday November 4, 2019; 11:59 P.M. MST	Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)
December, 2019	Finalist Selection
February, 2020	Artist Selection and Notification

### **Project Selection Panel**

The National Western Center Bridges Selection Panel is comprised of 12 voting members and additional non-voting advisors. The selection panel is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria, providing guidance on this request for qualifications, reviewing applications, selecting and interviewing finalists, and identifying an artist or artist team for the commission(s).

### **Selection Process**

Between three to five artists or artist teams will be selected as finalists. Those selected will receive more specific information regarding the site and have the opportunity to meet with site representatives, the design team and public art staff. Finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare and present a proposal in person. The selection panel will review the proposals, interview the finalists and recommend an artist for the commission. The panel reserves the right to split the budget if more than one artist is selected to implement separate projects. The final recommendation of the selection panel will be presented to the Public Art Committee, the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, and the Mayor of Denver for final approval. All decisions of the City and County of Denver are final.

### **Materials to be Submitted**

*Please read this section carefully. Incomplete applications will NOT be considered. The applicant’s name must appear on all materials submitted.*

All materials must be submitted online, via the CaFÉ™ website ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)). There is no application fee to apply or to use the CaFÉ™ online application system.

**Digital Images**—In order to be considered for this project, the applicant must electronically submit six digital images of **previously completed** artworks through the CaFÉ™ system. Artists who wish to submit kinetic, sound or media works must submit a complete CaFÉ™ application and will have the opportunity to upload up to two video files.



Instructions on how to format images to CaFÉ™ specifications can be found at <https://www.callforentry.org/uploading-images-audio-and-video-files/>. Assistance in using the CaFÉ™ system is available here: <https://www.callforentry.org/artist-help-cafe/>. If an artist does not have access to a computer, they may call 720-865-5563 to make arrangements to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues offices.

**Statement of Interest**—Please submit a statement outlining your interest in the National Western Center Bridges Public Art Project and why it is of special interest to you (5,000 character maximum) via CaFÉ™.

Please be sure to address these specific issues:

- Describe your interest in the National Western Center and/or the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Describe your experience in working with similar complex projects with various stakeholders. If you lack this experience, please describe how you would approach the variety of stakeholders on this project – the NWC site users and GES neighborhoods, specifically.
- How does your past work inform how you would approach a project such as this? Please address your preferred materials and artistic process.

**Résumé**—Submit a current résumé (no more than two pages) via CaFÉ™ that highlights your professional accomplishments as an artist. Please name your résumé file accordingly: *Last name.First initial* (i.e. *Smith.J.PDF*). Résumés that are more than two pages will not be downloaded. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé with one page per team member.

**Survey**—All Applicants will also be required to fill out a short demographic survey that will be sent via Survey Monkey to the email on file from the CaFÉ™ application.

Please direct all questions about the project to Brendan Picker at [Brendan.Picker@denvergov.org](mailto:Brendan.Picker@denvergov.org) or 720-865-5563.



Rendering of the future National Western Center Main Campus and South Platte River Bridges. For more information on the National Western Center, please visit: <https://nationalwesterncenter.com/>