

MILAGRO CINEMAS

Milagro Cinemas Art Installation Project Proposal for Funding:

Proposal Summary

Milagro Cinemas is seeking a \$50,000 grant from the City of Norwalk to support the creation of multiple public art installations, both interior and exterior, for our newly remodeled theater. This funding request represents 50% of the projected total cost of the initiative. Our project aims to enrich the cultural landscape of Norwalk by highlighting achievements in cinema and art, and celebrating Latino cultural heritage. Through these public art installations, we aim to foster a stronger connection with the local community, enhance the aesthetic appeal of our venue, and contribute to the city's cultural and economic vitality.

By integrating works from renowned artists, including a large-scale mural by internationally acclaimed muralist Robert Vargas, our theater will serve as a cultural hub where art and cinema converge. This initiative aligns with our mission to provide a premium movie-going experience while also acting as a catalyst for community engagement and cultural appreciation. The proposed art installations will not only beautify our theater but also create a dynamic space in our lobby, open to the public and free of charge that reflects the diverse, artistic and cultural heritage of Norwalk.

We believe that this project will significantly contribute to the city's cultural infrastructure, attracting visitors and fostering local pride. The grant will enable us to realize our vision of transforming Milagro Cinemas into a landmark destination for both movie enthusiasts and art lovers, celebrating the vibrant artistic spirit of Norwalk and its community.

About Milagro Cinemas: A Cultural and Community Hub

Milagro Cinemas brings premium movie entertainment to the communities we serve. Founded by acclaimed filmmaker [Moctesuma Esparza](#), Milagro isn't just named for miracles—it's a testament to the power of perseverance and community transformation through the joy of cinema.

Born from Esparza's childhood tradition of weekly movie outings with his father, Milagro Cinemas looks to revive the transformative power of shared cinematic experiences. Our state-of-the-art theater features cutting-edge technology, including 4K Laser Projection, Dolby Atmos Immersive Sound, 100% luxury recliner seating, and D-Box cinematic motion seats. We

complement this premium viewing experience with an expanded movie-going menu, including beer and wine, curated for local tastes and preferences.

Milagro Cinemas is more than just a premium movie experience; we're a cultural hub where communities come together. Our independent theater chain is dedicated to being an active and positive presence in our community, partnering with local businesses and schools, supporting nonprofit organizations, and contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of the cities we call home.

About Moctesuma Esparza: Founder of Milagro Cinemas

Moctesuma Esparza, an acclaimed film producer, entrepreneur, and philanthropist, is known for his significant contributions to the entertainment industry.

Esparza's career includes producing over 50 films, such as "Selena," "The Milagro Beanfield War," "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez," "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge," and "Gettysburg," earning three Academy Award nominations. Several of his works have been inducted into the U.S. Library of Congress Film Registry. Beyond filmmaking, Esparza remains actively engaged as Chair and Co-Founder of the Los Angeles Academy of Arts and Enterprise Charter School, nurturing the next generation of creative talents.

Born and raised in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, Esparza's roots run deep in the city he continues to champion. A proud UCLA Bruin, father of four, and grandfather, he embodies community values in his work, making a lasting impact on the entertainment industry and diverse audiences.

Community Engagement History:

Moctesuma Esparza has a longstanding commitment to community engagement, demonstrated through his previous theater exhibition company, [Maya Cinemas](#). He developed and operated six theater locations, five in California and one in Nevada. [The Maya Community Foundation](#), an initiative of Maya Cinemas, is dedicated to enriching the lives of people in the communities served by the theaters, focusing on educational opportunities and community development.

The Maya Community Foundation Initiatives:

- Backpack Giveaway Program: Distributing school supplies to local students in need.
- Scholarship Programs: Awarding scholarships to local students and hosting red carpet events to celebrate their achievements.
- Weekly Screenings for Developmentally Disabled Children: Providing free entry for children and reduced rates for their caretakers.
- Community Events and Fundraisers: Regularly organizing events that benefit various community groups and causes.
- Wounded Warrior Events: Hosting free screenings for veterans to honor their service.

Milagro Cinemas Art Installation Project Overview

Objective: To commission several art installations and murals that celebrate artistic expression, cinema and Latino heritage and contribute to the aesthetic and cultural landscape of Norwalk. We have engaged three renowned artists known for their work in public art and cultural representation as well as a collaboration with the renowned [Museum of Latin American Art \(MOLAA\)](#) in Long Beach, which will include a partnership celebrating rotating exhibits including an exploration of technology and innovation

Interior Installation: The centerpiece will be a monumental portrait titled "A Father's Gift" by world-renowned artist Robert Vargas. Inspired by Esparza's childhood tradition of weekly movie outings with his father, this mural reflects the strong bonds of family and the cultural experience of shared movie-going. Vargas, known for his mixed-media portraits and murals, is a leading force in the revitalization of Downtown LA's art scene. His work for Milagro Cinemas promises to be a visual testament to the transformative power of shared cinematic experiences in Norwalk.

About Robert Vargas

Robert Vargas is an internationally renowned artist from Los Angeles. Known for his mixed-media portraits, murals, and live events, Vargas has painted murals worldwide, from his native Boyle Heights neighborhood to Paris. He attended the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and an Honorary doctorate from ArtCenter College of Design. One of Vargas' most ambitious projects is "Angelus," a work-in-progress on a 14-story building in downtown Pershing Square, set to break the Guinness World Record for the largest mural completed by a single artist. He has revitalized the Downtown LA art scene, with his recent mural of L.A. Dodger Shohei Ohtani on the Miyako Hotel in Little Tokyo. In recognition of his contributions, the City of Los Angeles declared September 8 as Robert Vargas Day in 2021 and designated the intersection of First Street and State Street as Robert Vargas Square. Vargas' work is celebrated for bridging cultures, giving back to the community, and inspiring the next generation of artists.

Exterior Installation: The exterior art project will feature a grand super graphic installation that prominently displays the word "Milagro." This visually striking landmark will be a collaboration between esteemed muralists Jose Ortiz and Wilmer Reyes. Their combined artistic expertise will bring a dynamic fusion of traditional artistic craftsmanship and contemporary aesthetics to the exterior of Milagro Cinemas, creating an iconic cultural hub in Norwalk.

About Jose Ortiz:

Jose Ortiz is a muralist born and raised in Tapachula, Mexico. Influenced by his father, a renowned muralist, Ortiz discovered his passion for creating canvases and bringing artwork to life in 2014. Since then, he has had the opportunity to travel and work for numerous well-known restaurants and businesses, sharing his artistic vision with a wider audience.

Through his art, Ortiz has experienced the profound beauty of his gift, transforming spaces and captivating audiences with his vibrant murals. Currently residing in Santa Ana, California, Ortiz continues to share his artistic talent with the world, contributing to the rich tapestry of public art and leaving a lasting impact on every project he undertakes.

About Wilmer Reyes:

Wilmer Reyes is a talented muralist and sign painter based in Los Angeles, specializing in hand-painted signs, gilding, installations, and murals. He believes in the unmatched quality, charm, and soul of hand-painted letters—an artistry that only the human hand can achieve. This philosophy is evident in his meticulous work.

Wilmer trained under renowned instructors Doc Guthrie and Carlos Aguilar at Los Angeles Trade–Technical College, the last remaining sign school in the United States. Under their mentorship, he honed his craft and developed a deep appreciation for hand-painted signs. He furthered his studies in fine art at UCLA and Cal State Los Angeles.

Of Honduran descent, Wilmer has built a reputation for exceptional craftsmanship and artistic integrity. His work can be seen throughout Los Angeles, including at the Southern California Curling Center in Vernon. His recently opened studio in Boyle Heights keeps him connected to the community that has continuously supported him. Wilmer's dedication to traditional craftsmanship brings a vibrant, human touch to public art in Los Angeles, infusing life and character into every space he transforms.

Art Gallery Collaboration: The Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA):

Milagro Cinemas is excited to announce a prospective partnership with [Museum of Latin American Art \(MOLAA\)](#), the nation's leading museum of modern and contemporary Latin American art and culture. This collaboration will lead to the creation of a bi-yearly rotating exhibition celebrating the cinematic arts and innovation and technology. These art installations will establish the foundation for a partnership with MOLAA that will lead to the curation of a public art gallery within the movie theater, utilizing over 80 feet of devoted hallway display space. This space will be used for satellite installations featuring works from MOLAA, local artists, and technology and innovation displays.

This initiative will celebrate the history and cultural significance of Latino cinema and encourage new creators with interactive installations that inspire young adults. By integrating these art displays, we aim to foster educational opportunities and engage the community of Norwalk

through culturally enriching events. MOLAA is dedicated to expanding knowledge and appreciation of modern and contemporary Latin American and Latino art through its collection, ground-breaking exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural events. The projected cost for this ongoing initiative is currently planned to launch in the fall of 2024.

Detailed Budget Breakdown (estimates)

PHASE I:

- **Interior Art (Mural and Portrait Wall): \$70,000**
 - Artist fees
 - Materials and supplies
 - Installation costs
- **Exterior Art (Super Graphic): \$10,000**
 - Artist fees
 - Materials and supplies
 - Installation costs
- **Preparation and Reconfiguration Costs: \$20,000**
 - Surface preparation
 - Wall reconfiguration
 - Electrical work (lighting to highlight the murals)
- **Total Project Cost: \$100,000**
- **Funding Requested: \$50,000** (50% of total cost)

PHASE II:

- **Art Gallery Collaboration and partnership with The Museum of Latin American (MOLAA):** Projected cost TBD
 - Curation of exhibits
 - Artists fees
 - Surface preparation
 - Wall reconfiguration
 - Electrical work (lighting to highlight the installation)

Project Significance and Impact

Cultural Enrichment: These art installations will celebrate the contributions of Latino artists to Hollywood, serving as a source of inspiration and pride for the local Latino community. This aligns with our mission to highlight and celebrate Latino heritage through art and cinema.

Community Engagement: By involving local artists and creating public art, the project will foster community pride and engagement. The murals will become a focal point for community gatherings and events, reinforcing our theater's role as a cultural hub.

Economic Benefits: Enhancing the visual appeal of Milagro Cinemas will attract more visitors to Norwalk, benefiting local businesses and contributing to the city's economic development. The murals will serve as a unique attraction, drawing tourists and art enthusiasts to the area.

Educational Value: The project will provide educational opportunities for local students, young adults and community members to learn about public art, the mural-making process, technology and innovation and the contributions of Latino artists to Hollywood.

Implementation Plan

Timeline Phase I:

- **Preparation Phase (1 week):** Surface preparation and finalizing designs.
- **Mural Creation (1 month):** Artists work on-site, with regular progress updates and community engagement activities.
- **Completion and Unveiling (1 week):** Final touches, lighting installation, and a grand unveiling ceremony coinciding with our theater's grand opening July 31st, 2024.

Community Involvement: We will actively involve the community throughout the project by hosting open studio days and documenting the process, and Q&A sessions with the artists during a public unveiling of the art. Local schools and community groups will be invited to participate and learn about the mural-making process. Milagro Cinemas represents Esparza's vision for the future of movie theaters and community engagement.

Next Steps

We aim to begin the mural project immediately upon securing funding, with a target completion date to coincide with our grand opening. Your timely support will ensure we meet this goal and provide the community with a stunning new public art cultural landmark.

Conclusion

Milagro Cinemas is dedicated to creating an exceptional cinematic and cultural experience for the Norwalk community. These art installations will significantly contribute to our mission and foster a deeper connection with our community. We kindly request the City of Norwalk's support through a \$50,000 (50%) contribution towards this project.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Moctesuma Esparza
Milagro Cinemas
moctesumae@milagrocinemas.com

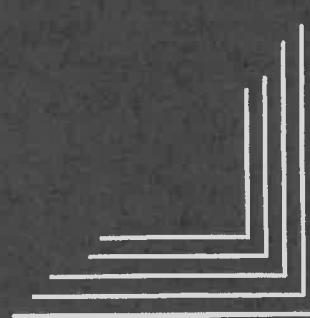
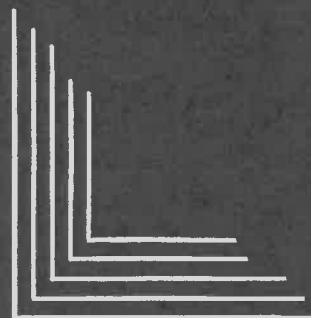
Exhibit A Concept for "A Father's Gift"

Exhibit B Works by Jose Ortiz and Wilmer Reyes and rendering of Super Graphics on exterior of Milagro Cinemas building



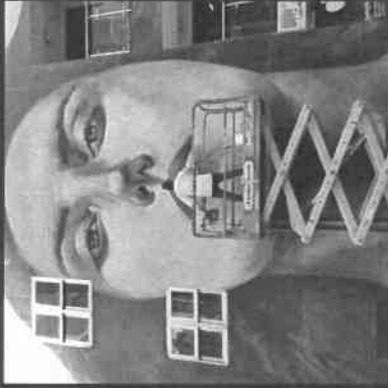
MILAGRO CINEMAS

Exclusive Sponsorship Opportunity:
Exterior and Interior Mural
Projects at Milagro Cinemas



THE ARTIST: ROBERT VARGAS

- Internationally acclaimed Los Angeles muralist
- Notable works:
 - Shohei Ohtani mural at Miyako Hotel, Little Tokyo
 - "Angelus" mural - set to break Guinness World Record for largest single-artist mural
- Achievements:
 - Honorary doctorate from ArtCenter College of Design
 - September 8 designated as Robert Vargas Day in Los Angeles
 - Intersection of First Street and State Street named Robert Vargas Square



Milagro Cinemas, founded by acclaimed filmmaker Moctesuma Esparza, is set to launch a state-of-the-art theater experience in Norwalk.

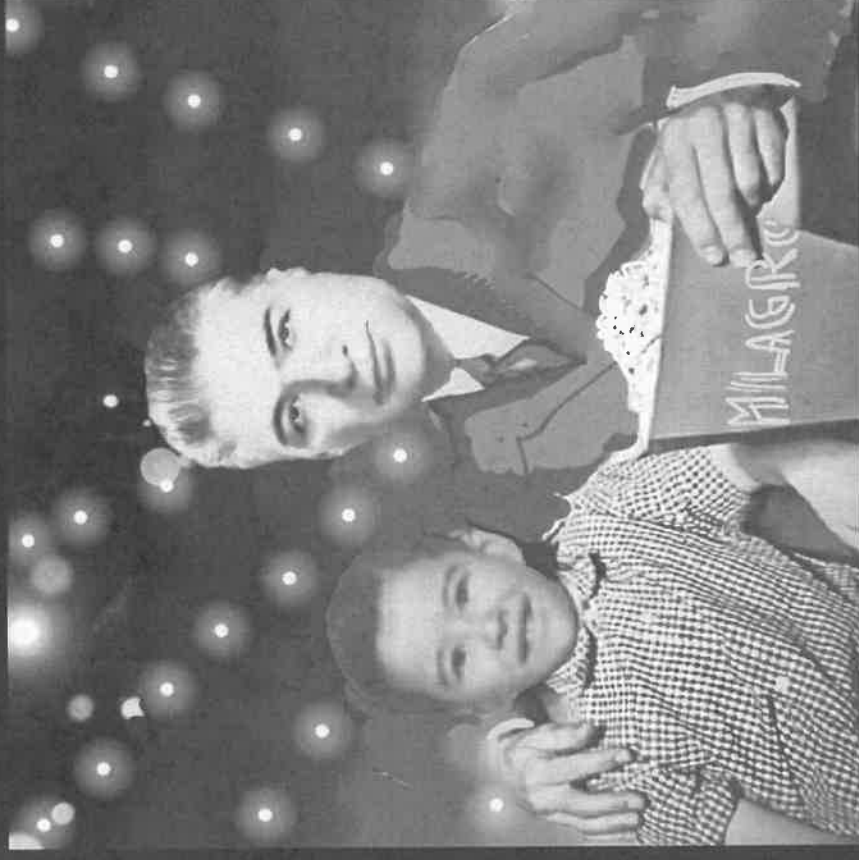
This premium entertainment venue offers a unique opportunity for brand visibility and community engagement through the sponsorship of a landmark mural by renowned artist Robert Vargas.

Key Opportunity Highlights:

- High-traffic location in a new, cutting-edge cinema complex
- Association with a celebrated artist and cultural icon
- Exposure to a diverse, entertainment-seeking demographic
- Support for local arts and community development

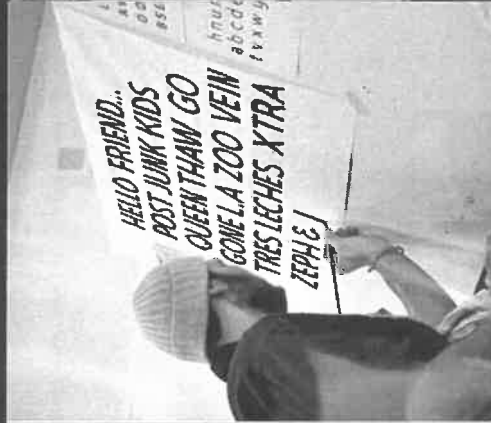
The Artwork: "A Father's Gift"

- Dimensions: 16 ft x 25 ft
- Location: Prime visibility in Milagro Cinemas' lobby
- Artist: Robert Vargas, internationally acclaimed muralist
- Inspiration: Celebrates the transformative power of shared cinematic experiences

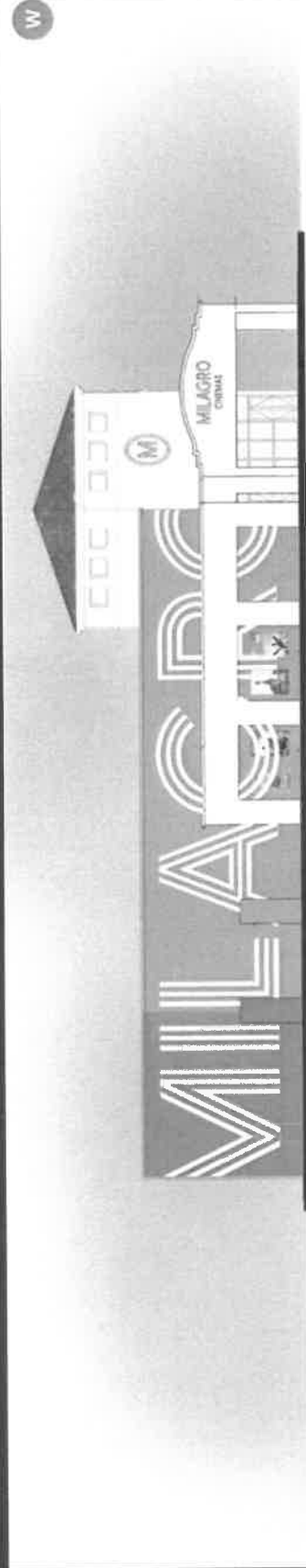


THE ARTISTS: JOSE ORTIZ & WILMER REYES—

- Exterior Installation: The exterior art project will feature a grand super graphic installation that prominently displays the word "Milagro." This visually striking landmark will be a collaboration between esteemed muralists Jose Ortiz and Wilmer Reyes. Their combined artistic expertise will bring a dynamic fusion of traditional artistic craftsmanship and contemporary aesthetics to the exterior of Milagro Cinemas, creating an iconic cultural hub in Norwalk.



Milagro Cinemas Art Installation Project
Exterior Graphic Art Renderings



A
SOUTH ELEVATION



B
EAST ELEVATION