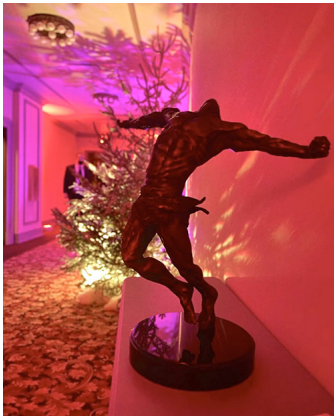


Local artist's sculpture of Christ finds home in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 29 April 2022 04:00



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Ever since childhood, Gallup native Lou Sandoval knew that God had a purpose for him.

Flash forward to Sandoval as an adult who has just walked out of “The Passion of the Christ,” a movie about the last 12 hours of Jesus’s life, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. Twenty-four hours later, an idea lights up his mind: a sculpture depicting Jesus as a “warrior champion.”

“We’ve never really seen a trophy statue of the greatest victory in the history of our species,” Sandoval said in an interview with the *Sun*.

With this idea in his head, Sandoval drove back home to Gallup to begin sculpting in his father’s workshop. Four months later, he emerged with a finished product, “RESURRECTION: NOW” — an emotional powerhouse of art in the form of a bronze sculpture of Christ as “a warrior king.”

That original sculpture is now privately owned, but Sandoval’s story with Jesus Christ doesn’t end there.

Sandoval’s first love isn’t sculpting: it’s acting. He arrived in New York in 2016, and it was there that Sandoval made a connection that would change the course of his life.

That connection was with a man named Craig Syracuse.

In 2016, Syracuse was working on his podcast “Walk in Faith.” Soon after meeting Sandoval, he invited him on his podcast, and it was there that the kindred spirits ended up talking for hours.

In January 2020, Syracuse became the Executive Director of the Opera House at the Emmaus Center, an arts center run by the diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y. Once he saw second sculpting of Jesus, “Invictus,” he knew he wanted something similar for the center.

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"There's just something unique about that depiction of Christ ... you can just see the heart and the emotion from Louie has kind of transferred into the statue," Syracuse said about the sculpture that depicts Christ in the first moments after his resurrection from the dead.

When speaking about Sandoval, Syracuse expressed how much the man's faith is a part of him.

"Louie is extremely religious [and] passionate," Syracuse said. "He's on fire for his faith [...] no other people are as outspoken as Louie, which I like a lot, because as we know —especially being an artist or living in Hollywood — sometimes there are repercussions for us being so outspoken about our faith, but Louie's not afraid of that."

Syracusa commissioned Sandoval for 50 more sculptures.

Big things are coming for Sandoval and the iterations of his sculpture. The Emmaus Center and Diocese of Brooklyn are working with him to see if they can get his sculptures to actors like Mel Gibson, who directed "The Passion of the Christ." One of them may even end up with the Pope at the Vatican.

Sandoval said he would also love to give one to Jim Caviezel, the man who played Jesus Christ in "The Passion of the Christ."

The original "Invictus," which Sandoval made in 2021, is currently in the Diocese of Brooklyn. It was unveiled at the grand opening of the Emmaus Center in December. It was also featured in the Diocese's Easter service that was streamed to Ukraine.

"The Monsignor wanted to use [the sculpture] as a symbol of triumph over oppression and tyranny," Sandoval said.

Sandoval vehemently expressed what an honor it was to have his sculpture used in that service.

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“When your work is being used for something as real and as important on a global level than just the promotion of your art and yourself — that goes beyond any satisfaction that a dollar amount can bring.”

By Molly Ann Howell

Sun Correspondent