



the new children's museum

news release

media contact

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THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OPENS DOWNTOWN DESTINATION FOR SAN DIEGO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Museum features hands-on studio space, in-depth arts-based educational programs and installations by local and international contemporary artists including Ernest Silva, Gustavo Artigas, Tanya Aguiñiga, Diana Thater, Mark Mulrone, Amy Adler and Roman de Salvo.

New Museum home by local architect Rob Wellington Quigley is downtown San Diego's largest, public green building.

March 4, 2008—San Diego, California— The New Children's Museum celebrates the opening of its new home located in downtown San Diego's Marina District with a free, community block party on May 4th 2008. The Museum, an environmentally sustainable building designed by architect Rob Wellington Quigley, provides a dynamic, playful public space and community center for children and families—a place to experience exciting art exhibitions, hands-on studio projects, performances, birthday parties, in-depth classes, camps and educational programs. Across the street from the new building is a beautiful park, extending the museum visit outdoors with space for running, climbing, family picnics and a view of the trains and trolley going by.

The New Children's Museum opens just in time to meet an urgent community need, providing early exposure to the visual arts at a time when arts curriculum is increasingly cut from schools. And with a focus on sustainability, The New Children's Museum provides an environment that encourages active minds, healthy bodies and unstructured play.

"Our goal is to inspire children to think, play and create by providing accessible and meaningful art experiences," stated Rachel Teagle PhD, Executive Director of the Museum. "We are a unique hybrid of a children's museum and an art museum."

"The New Children's Museum will exhibit contemporary works of art for children and families," added Dr. Laurie Mitchell, President of the Museum's Board of Directors. "We approach contemporary art with a playful spirit, and take children's need for play seriously."

The Museum experience features innovative, provocative artworks that kids can touch, climb, or move (exhibitions); messy, hands-on art making opportunities (studios); and a variety of arts-based classes and camps (Arts Education Center). Rounded out with an organic café, unique retail shop, abundant seating, quiet space for parents and infants, and an outdoor park, the Museum provides a comfortable and engaging environment for the entire family to enjoy together.

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Located at 200 West Island Avenue, the Museum faces Harbor Drive and is well-positioned near the MTS Convention Center Trolley stop, Seaport Village and the Gaslamp Quarter, making it easily reachable to residents and visitors throughout the region.

HISTORY

The original Children's Museum opened its first facility in 1983 in La Jolla, and relocated to a downtown warehouse at 200 West Island Avenue in 1993. At that time, the Museum became Children's Museum/ Museo de los Niños San Diego. After nearly ten years in the warehouse space, the doors were closed in 2002 to break ground for a new building at the same site. The Museum has been operating "without walls" since then, providing community outreach activities for the past five years. Thanks to generous philanthropic support from the San Diego community, the now completed new facility, renamed The New Children's Museum, is ready to welcome visitors and celebrate its 25th anniversary.

OPENING EXHIBITION, *childsplay*

The New Children's Museum opening exhibition, titled *childsplay*, advances the Museum's pioneering legacy of commissioning established and emerging artists to create work that engages children. The exhibition's title is a reference to the art of Allan Kaprow, one of the most important artists to have made work for the Museum in the past. His approach to inciting a kind of installation art and performance piece that came to be known, in the late 1960s, as a Happening, serves as inspiration for all of the art in *childsplay*.

Kaprow blurred the boundaries between art and life, finding inspiration from daily objects and patterns and transforming them into participatory environments. Within these environments, unsuspecting viewers became privileged participants in actions that changed how they perceived the world around them. Like Kaprow's art, all the works in *childsplay* are springboards for experience, and an invitation to explore new ideas.

The Museum is proud to announce that local artist Brian Dick will re-interpret two installations Kaprow created with his sons—*Yard*, from 1961 and *No Rules, Except* from 2000—by merging them into a new project that celebrates the spirit of Kaprow's interactions. The new artwork explores Dick's commitment to recycled materials, and was inspired by the childish joy of jumping on the bed.

"Painting, sculpture, architecture, video, performance, sound, and street art are all part of our opening exhibition," said Teagle. "Our goal is to provide a dazzling, fun and direct answer to the question: how can contemporary art be meaningful to children?"

Other *childsplay* installations include:

Constructing Backwards, Gustavo Artigas

Mexico City based Artigas is a child at heart, using his art as a playful platform to provoke action and seriously investigate the resulting social interaction. For *Constructing Backwards* he videotapes groups of kids as they put together a model of the Museum, and then plays back their studious efforts sped up and in reverse, revealing children who are furiously destroying the Museum. His fun and constantly changing video captures poignant mainstays of childhood play—frustration, joy and group dynamics.

Experimental Cyclery, Roman de Salvo

Local artist Roman de Salvo's first professional commission came 11 years ago from the Children's Museum. His celebratory return to the Museum explores the simple mechanics of rudimentary cycles as well as the notion of how failure is often a necessary component of the creative process. His fleet of "Legways," a kid-powered take on the Segway Personal Transporter, requires investigative engineering to make them operate.

Harmonichaos, Céleste Boursier Mougnot

In a playful transformation of everyday objects, this sound installation turns vacuum cleaners and harmonicas into surprising instruments. French composer Boursier Mougnot will install his unique "instruments" throughout the Museum. The vacuum cleaners, each tuned to different notes on harmonicas, are activated by children's interaction, stimulating ad-hoc symphonies generated by visitor engagement.

The exhibition includes work from 19 artists, six of whom are from Mexico, continuing the Museum's ongoing commitment to function as a bi-national institution. Other artists featured in *childsplay*:

Tanya Aguiñiga
Maria Alós
Amy Adler
Lee Boroson
Jim Brown/Public
Alberto Caro
Maurycy Gomulicki
Mark Mulroney
René Peralta
Nick Rodrigues
Ernest Silva
Diana Thater
Zlatan Vukosavljevic
Writerz Blok

HANDS-ON STUDIOS

The Museum's studio spaces cultivate the creativity of children, inspiring them to explore a range of creative art and design activities with a wide variety of recycled and sustainable materials. Paint, clay, paper, wood, found objects and more will become the building blocks of each inventive studio project.

The studios respond to the ideas presented through the Museum galleries, and studio activities will allow children to create, design and produce elements that relate to their own interpretations of their exhibition experiences. The studios also support experimentation, free form expression and the notion that art can be anything you want it to be.

Facilitators will encourage children to work at their own pace and in relation to their individual abilities, creating a non-competitive space that sparks a greater involvement with the arts. Kids are invited to become an artist on view at the Museum by leaving finished projects on site for display, or they may take their work home.

Also, the popular and fondly remembered "Painted Truck" from the previous Children's Museum will be revived in the Woods Family Studio. This time around the obsolete vehicle is a Volkswagen Beetle, which will someday grow into a tank.

ARTS EDUCATION CENTER

Providing sustained, educational experiences in a classroom environment is central to the Museum's mission. The Arts Education Center will offer ongoing weekly art classes, after-school programs, summer camps, play dates, field trips, teacher training for arts instruction, parent seminars for in-home creative projects, and more. The center will provide thousands of students and families with access to in-depth arts classes and the opportunity to work directly with an artist. The center will also provide spaces to mission

aligned organizations and projects, as well as a resource library of art books accessible to young audiences. Learn more about Summer Camp schedules and other educational opportunities at www.thinkplaycreate.org.

THE GREEN MUSEUM

Visionary and award-winning architect Rob Wellington Quigley has created a dynamic space for children at the Museum, full of natural light and fresh air. His design signals the Museum's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The New Children's Museum is a dramatic, three-level, 50,000-square-foot building located on the north side of Island Avenue between Front and Union Streets. The Museum is a series of transparent, flexible spaces which visibly expose the building's construction and design.

The building includes a 17-foot concrete entrance bridge, angled saw tooth roof structure, tilt-up concrete panels, and a glass-enclosed elevator shaft that functions as a heating and cooling tower.

The new structure utilizes innovative, environmentally sustainable architecture and infra-structural practices, including recycled building materials, a passive air handling system, photovoltaic panels, water-saving devices, natural daylighting and convection cooling. The New Children's Museum is one of the first green museums in California.

The nationally recognized San Diego architecture and design firm Luce et Studio contributed significantly to the Museum's interior, while keeping true to the Museum's "green" commitment. Luce designed the administration area furniture, including desks made of recycled road signs and a conference table of recycled steel. The studio also created the front desk system and the environment for Gizmo Garage.

GIZMO GARAGE

The New Children's Museum has entered into a partnership that will house an original new store: Gizmo Garage. Created and designed by former teachers, the store will feature exciting toys and gifts that help kids think, play, create and take home the Museum experience. The store provides products that are environmentally friendly and made in the United States and Europe.

THE PARK

A vibrant public park compliments the building, designed by local landscape architecture firm Spurlock Poirier. Connected by crosswalk on the other side of Island Avenue, the brand new city park enhances the museum visitor experience as an outdoor place to picnic and rest, and a playground for children to run, jump and enjoy unstructured play. The park features unique elements including a reading circle, play structures for climbing and sliding, and a seating wall along the promenade.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PARTNERS

The New Children's Museum thanks lead corporate sponsors Cricket, Qualcomm and Kyocera, as well as founding corporate sponsors Irving Hughes and Cooley Godward Kronish LLP. Generous support for The Campaign for The New Children's Museum was led by an Anonymous donor, Joan and Irwin Jacobs, and the Maxwell H. Gluck Foundation. The New Children's Museum also thanks the National Endowment for the Arts.

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THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Hours: 9am–4pm

Open every day except Wednesday

Admission:

Adults and children \$10

Children under one year FREE

Museum Members FREE (family membership begins at \$75)

Seniors (65+) \$5 Military (w/ ID) \$5

MUSEUM INFORMATION: 619 233 8792

www.thinkplaycreate.org