



the new children's museum

news release

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MAKE/SHIFT NOW OPEN AT THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

One-of-a-kind indoor playground offers children infinite possibilities to build and create

January 30, 2017 — Downtown San Diego — The New Children's Museum, an arts based children's museum, has opened **Make/Shift**, an indoor play space that builds on the age-old concept that children enjoy playing with the box as much as the gift that came in it.

Now open to the public, the 1,200 square foot installation consists of a collection of custom-made plywood furniture, fabric, cardboard boxes, ropes and other loose parts that can be shifted and remade by children and adults in infinite ways.

The inspiration for the latest installation from the arts-based children's museum came from the Adventure, or Junk playgrounds, that emerged after World War II in Europe and are still common in the UK and Scandinavia. On Adventure playgrounds, staff called Playworkers stock a yard with lumber, fabric, cast-off toys and other "loose parts," and then support children as they decide how and if to build and interact with the materials. These playgrounds offered children the opportunity to build, climb, destroy, swing, hide, etc.

"We used a design thinking process to ask ourselves how to create an *indoor* adventure playground that would offer children that same level of control over their play," said Deputy Director Tomoko Kuta. "After prototyping for the past several months with various shapes, sizes, fabric, materials and other loose parts, we believe **Make/Shift** will be a favorite among our visitors and members of all ages."

Unlike traditional playgrounds, the structures in **Make/Shift** are on wheels and can be rolled into a multitude of new formations. Wall panels with sturdy anchor points create opportunities for tent-making, and lots of cardboard boxes allow for large-scale fort building.

Concurrent with designing **Make/Shift**, the Museum trained their floor team in the tradition of "playwork," a practice that began in Europe along with the adventure playgrounds. Playworkers do not lead "activities," but rather observe the space and those in it, and make subtle changes to create an environment in which all children can play. Skilled and thoughtful about when and how they intervene, Playworkers are a key element of the new installation **Make/Shift**.

"The New Children's Museum is among the first children's museums in the country to train in the unique practice and tradition of playwork," said Megan Dickerson, the Museum's exhibitions manager. "Playwork allows our visitors and members to truly engage in child-directed play – play for play's sake."

Make/Shift is the second contemporary art installation conceived, designed and built entirely by the in-house Creative Team at The New Children's Museum.

ABOUT THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

The New Children's Museum is a new model of children's museum whose mission is to stimulate imagination, creativity and critical thinking in children and families through inventive and engaging experiences with contemporary art. Serving San Diego for 30 years, the Museum opened in 1983 in La Jolla as the Children's Museum/Museo de los Niños and reopened downtown in 2008. The Museum brings families together in a rich educational environment that fosters creativity — blending elements of children's museums and art museums. The Museum collaborates with contemporary artists on an ongoing basis, both for large-scale thematic exhibitions, individual installations and educational programs for children. The New Children's Museum is a non-profit institution funded by admissions, memberships and community support.

To learn more, visit www.thinkplaycreate.org.