



the new children's museum

news release

media contact

Kerri Fox

619 795 1524

301 404 8921 (cell)

kfox@thinkplaycreate.org

Toni Robin

858 483 3918

tr@trprsandiego.com

THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION *American Alliance of Museums Awards Museum for Innovative Art Installation*

May 12, 2017 — Downtown San Diego —The New Children's Museum, an arts-based children's museum known for its collaborations with contemporary artists, was recognized at the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) annual conference in St. Louis earlier this week. The Museum received the Special Achievement Award, Exemplary Innovative Practice for *The Wonder Sound*, artist Wes Sam-Bruce's immersive art installation that opened in June 2016.

AAM's Annual Excellence in Exhibition Competition recognizes outstanding achievement in the exhibition format from museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and other types of noncommercial institutions offering exhibitions to the public. There were six special achievement awards and one overall award distributed, selected from 32 applicants nationwide. The competition is the joint project of the Alliance Professional Networks (PNs): Curators Committee (CurCom), the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE) and the Education Committee (EdCom).

At the conference to accept the Special Achievement Award were Tomoko Kuta, Deputy Director and Megan Dickerson, Exhibitions Manager at The New Children's Museum.

"This award recognizes both Wes Sam-Bruce's amazing installation *The Wonder Sound* as well as The New Children's Museum's pioneering process of working with contemporary artists to create playful spaces," said Kuta. "It is incredibly rewarding to get national recognition for the work we do as a community of thoughtful and playful artists."

The Wonder Sound was a collaborative two-year project with artist Wes Sam-Bruce, the Museum and community centers throughout San Diego. Funded in part by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), *The Wonder Sound* is not just a structure, but a unique world with its own language, history and living beings. It is a work of art that kids (and adults) physically enter into, explore and discover. The community involvement came through two years of workshops held throughout San Diego, part of the Museum's signature outreach effort Mass Creativity. Workshop participants not only created art, but provided ideas, concepts, memories and stories that Sam-Bruce used as he conceptualized and designed *The Wonder Sound*.

"Our work proves that trusting your audience, thinking outside-the-box, and working collaboratively can create life-changing spaces," said Dickerson. "Working with artists and our community creates transformative experiences for kids and the adults in their lives."

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.

ABOUT AAM

The American Alliance of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. Representing more than 35,000 individual museum professionals and volunteers, institutions, and corporate partners serving the museum field, the Alliance stands for the broad scope of the museum community. Visit aam-us.org.