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**THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM CELEBRATES MILESTONE YEAR**

New balloon sculpture by Jason Hackenwerth kicks off 10th birthday and 35th anniversary

December 28, 2017 — Downtown San Diego — The New Children's Museum in downtown has much to celebrate in 2018. This year the Museum will commemorate both its 35th year in San Diego and its 10th year as The New Children's Museum, an arts-based children's museum centered on contemporary art.

"This is such a special year for the Museum," said Judy Forrester, CEO and executive director. "We're celebrating the rich history this Museum has in San Diego - from its early days in La Jolla to the past 10 years in this building downtown. We've touched the lives of so many children and families, and we look forward to what the next 10 years will bring."

To kick off the milestone year, the Museum is welcoming back Jason Hackenwerth as an artist in residency in the Museum's Innovators LAB from January 7 – 15. During his eight-day residency, Hackenwerth will construct a giant latex balloon sculpture entitled *Crystal Cortex* that will span up to 50 feet from the bottom to the top that will be on display for three months. Hackenwerth will lead hands-on workshops for member families to introduce his practice. Museum visitors will be able to watch the balloon sculpture being built and slowly raised to hang in the atrium at the Museum's entrance.

Hackenwerth, famous for his larger than life balloon designs resembling animals, insects and other worldly creatures, received his MFA from Savannah College of Art and Design and his Bachelor of Fine Art from Webster University, St. Louis. His extraordinary work has been exhibited in dozens of museums around the world including the Solomon R. Guggenheim New York, The Victoria and Albert Museum London, and the National Museums Scotland. Hackenwerth's prior work for The New Children's Museum was for the 2009 Animal Art exhibition and included four sculptures: *Gilgamesh*, *Agartha*, *Venus* and *Quetzalcoatl* (pictures attached).

"We can't think of a better way begin our anniversary year than with one of the memorable artists from our past," said Tomoko Kuta. "Jason's colorful balloon structures are fascinating, and a great example of how to make contemporary art accessible and engaging."

According to Hackenwerth, *Crystal Cortex*, like the chrysalis which shrouds a transforming larva, is a symbol of metamorphosis. Its long translucent cloak is a reminder of our subtle nature and the rich fiery glow in the top is a reflection of our brilliant intelligence. *Crystal Cortex* will begin on the floor and grow to create a large upper voluminous form that will descend and

open into a cascading semicircular shroud-like wing that spans up to 50 feet from the bottom to the top.

The Museum is planning some additional surprises this year. Look for new installations by Brian Dick who created *No rules except...* (fondly called the “Mattress Room” by visitors) launching during the Museum’s birthday month (May). For a further nod to the past, the Museum is bringing back a vintage 1950s Dodge pickup truck, which will be parked on their Paint and Clay Patio to serve as a canvas for children to express themselves through paint.

Since reopening in 2008 in its Rob Quigley-designed building downtown, the Museum has welcomed over 1,500,000 people and grown in importance in the region. Over the past 10 years, the Museum has collaborated with over 100 artists from all over the world to create installations and programs for children of all ages, providing accessible and meaningful art experiences. Museum visitors are empowered to think, play and create through interactive installations, engaging art-making activities, participatory studios, in depth classes and educational opportunities.

A complete schedule of Anniversary events, installations and activities will be released in early 2018.

### **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.

The Museum opened in 1983 in La Jolla as the Children’s Museum/Museo de los Niños and reopened downtown as The New Children’s Museum in 2008. The Museum brings families together in a rich educational environment that fosters creativity — blending the best elements of children’s museums, contemporary art museums and community resources. The Museum collaborates with contemporary artists on an ongoing basis for large-scale thematic exhibitions, individual installations and educational programs for children.

To learn more, visit [thinkplaycreate.org](http://thinkplaycreate.org)

#### Key Dates

Residency Dates	Sunday, January 7 – Monday, January 15
Artist Reception	Thursday, January 11 @ 6-8pm (invitational only event)
Members-Only Workshops	Sunday, January 14