



the new children's museum™

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THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM LAUNCHES "ARTIST TALKS" SERIES
Five Local Artists Commissioned to Participate
First Speaker is Local Artist Katie Ruiz

SAN DIEGO – March 1, 2021 – The New Children's Museum will launch its new monthly series *Artist Talks: Reimagining the Power of Art + Play* on March 3, exploring play, art, healing, community, identity and the Museum's role in a post-COVID-19 world. The virtual series includes conversations with commissioned artists about their work, their process and installation plans for the Museum. The first five artists to be featured are **Katie Ruiz, David Israel Reynoso, Wes Bruce, Risa Puno and Andrea Chung**.

"The Artist Talks will provide an incredible opportunity to learn how we are collaborating with working artists to reimagine our spaces and programs for when we reopen," said Tomoko Kuta, Deputy Museum Director. "The first commission, a vibrant mural by Katie Ruiz, will act as a warm gesture of welcome for families returning to the Museum after our prolonged closure, and offer hope after such a difficult year."

Sherman Heights resident Katie Ruiz will be the first artist featured in the Museum's virtual series. Ruiz's talk is titled *Reimagining Welcome* and will be a discussion with Kuta on hope and plans for the new mural she is creating. The talk takes place March 3, 2021 at 6:00 pm PST via Zoom, and a recording will be available afterwards for viewing.

Ruiz's large-scale mural for the Museum is titled *Brian and the Bugs*, inspired by her new illustrated children's book *Brian the Wildflower*, which depicts the natural life cycle of a wildflower named Brian. Ruiz has already begun work on the mural on the Museum's main level, which visitors will see as they enter (no reopening date set). The Museum is working with Ruiz to engage the community through her whimsical Pom Pom Project, which will be the final element completing the colorful installation.
www.katieruizart.com/home/pompom

Ruiz is well known throughout San Diego and has shown work at the San Diego Art Institute, Oceanside Museum of Art, San Diego International Airport, MCASD Art Auction and Mesa College Art Gallery. Visual storytelling is at the heart of Ruiz's work and she is known for her "blanket paintings" in which figures shelter under colorful weavings inspired by her Xicana heritage and study of traditional Mexican textiles. Ruiz received her Bachelor's Degree of Fine Art from Northern Arizona University and her Master in Fine Arts from the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. She is currently on faculty with the San Diego Community College District and Athenaeum School of Arts. Website: www.katieruizart.com/ Instagram: [@katieruizart](https://www.instagram.com/katieruizart)

"This mural will be a visual story of interconnectedness inspired by my new book," said Ruiz, who draws on her Xicana heritage and personal story to tell visual tales of love and loss. "Flowers, butterflies, crickets and other insects from the story will be depicted in the mural, reminding us that cycles of life continue, even in the face of adversity."

Prior to starting work on the mural, Ruiz did a reading of *Brian the Wildflower* as part of the Museum's weekly virtual *Toddler Time at Home* program. The book is available for purchase in the [Museum's online store](#).

The Artist Talks Series is presented by the Museum's **Rain House Circle**, passionate advocates and dedicated donors committed to the Museum's practice of commissioning contemporary artists to inspire art and play for a better world. Learn more about the [Rain House Circle](#).

About the Artist Talks Series

The New Children's Museum's new virtual series *Artist Talks: Reimagining the Power of Art + Play* explores play, art, healing, community, identity and the Museum's role in a post-COVID-19 world. Each talk features a commissioned artist and provides insight on them, their work and the work they will be doing for the Museum in 2021. Learn more at thinkplaycreate.org/explore/artist-talks/.

Artist Talks Dates in 2021:

- **March 3: Reimagining Welcome with Katie Ruiz, 6pm PST**
- **April 14: Reimagining Playability with David Israel Reynoso, 6pm PST**
- **May 12: Reimagining Gathering with Wes Bruce, 6pm PST**
- **June (TBD): Risa Puno, Title + Date TBD**
- **July (TBD): Andrea Chung, Title + Date TBD**

About The New Children's Museum

The New Children's Museum (opened 2008) 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. Located downtown, the Museum collaborates with contemporary artists to design and create art installations and educational programs for children. 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 has been closed due to the pandemic since March 16, 2020 and has been providing virtual experiences and creative activities online ever since. The Museum has not set a reopening date set. To learn more, visit thinkplaycreate.org or follow them on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).