BY SETH COMBS

One great thing about this season, be it Thanksgiving or the December holidays, is that when family comes to town, taking them to one of San Diego’s many stellar museums seems like a no-brainer. What’s more, it gives a chance to see all those exhibitions we’ve been promising ourselves we were going to visit. There’s also a bonus offering: The museum gift shops are a fantastic place to get some holiday shopping done, and the institutions below offer some great items from local and international creatives alike.

1. Here, ‘Kitty’
The recently reopened Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (700 Prospect St.) has continuously had one of the best gift shops, offering a variety of unique gift options from local artists. Case in point: The Bunny Kity plush set and accompanying children’s book from local artist David “Persue” Ross. If the cute Bunny Kity looks familiar, it’s because Persue has been creating murals with the titular character all over the city for decades and has recently expanded into writing books about the importance of believing in one’s self. Bunny Kity Plush set; $50. shopmcasd.com. “The Origins of Bunny Kity” book; $20. shopmcasd.com

2. Clay-ful art
The Mingei International Museum’s gift shop (1439 El Prado) has always been something of a work of art itself, offering distinctive textiles, jewelry and pottery. Artist Socrates M. Medina, of Tijuana-based design studio Perro y Arena, recently arranged an artist-in-residence stay at the museum, and some of his pieces are for sale at the shop. The inimitable tiles, clay and woven sculptures are inspired by the flora and fauna of Baja California and would look perfect on any mantle or bookshelf. Perro y Arena prints and sculptures; Prices vary. mingei.org

3. Oh, deer
The San Diego Museum of Art (1450 El Prado) has plenty of seasonal items, but we’re particularly partial to the Abrazo Style Folk Art Reindeer. A limited release only available during the holidays, each one is different and distinctive thanks to the company’s commitment to handmade products crafted by folk artists in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico. Abrazo Style Folk Art Reindeer; $35.95. sdmart.org

4. Pieces of Panca
Paola Villaseñor, who goes by the artist name Panca, is known for her vibrant pop-surrealism and bizarre characters. Her recent exhibition at The New Children’s Museum downtown (200 W. Island Ave.) also yielded some fantastic gift shop items, such as a cute face mask and the “El Mas Alla” puzzle and pencil kit. Panca “El Mas Alla” Puzzle; $10.99. thinkplaycreate.org. Panca “El Mas Alla” Pencil Kit; $9.99. thinkplaycreate.org

5. Tee it up
The Museum of Photographic Arts (1649 El Prado) recently let four local artists take over their Instagram account. One of them, local photographer and community advocate Delana Delgado, channeled the energy from her takeover into a limited edition T-shirt that’s now on sale at the MOPA gift shop. A collaboration with fellow artists and designers Michelle Rubano and Vincent Chenté Torres, the “Valiosx” tee, with its gold heart-earring frame and lowrider culture pics, is an iconic way to show some cultural pride. “Valiosx” T-shirt; $50. shop.mopa.org

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