



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2010

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### **MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM TO CLOSE ESCONDIDO GALLERIES**

Mingei International Museum today announced that it will close its Escondido museum galleries on West Grand Avenue to the public on June 26, 2010. While the galleries and museum store will cease operations, the facility will continue to be used as a fulfillment center for Museum publications and for archival and related storage uses. As a gesture to the Escondido and North County Inland communities, the Museum will be open free of charge through the end of June, featuring the current exhibition RITE AND RITUAL — Ceremonial Art Across Cultures. Fee-based Second Saturday programs for the three months will take place as scheduled.

In making the announcement, Mingei International Board Chairman Frances H. White stated, "This was a difficult decision for the Board of Trustees because of our six-year commitment to establishing a strong cultural presence in downtown Escondido. However, due to the uncertainty of the current economic climate and lack of sustained patronage, we felt it was necessary to close the galleries and store in order to fulfill our fiduciary responsibilities to the Museum as a whole."

White further stated that the trustees and senior staff will assess options for appropriate future uses of the facility but that the Museum has no plans to sell the building.

Museum Director Rob Sidner added, "We are grateful to the Escondido community, Mayor Lori Holt Pfeiler, the City Council and downtown businesses for the support and appreciation they have demonstrated to Mingei International. We will continue to maintain an aesthetic presence on Grand Avenue by exhibiting objects from the Museum's collections in the display windows."

"During the past six years we have offered 16 exhibitions of international folk art, craft and design to thousands of visitors," said Charlotte Cagan, the Museum's

Director of Marketing & Planning who oversees the Escondido facility. “Through generous support from La Jolla Bank and others, we have held monthly free admission days and sponsored cultural festivals, school programs and hands-on workshops for residents and families throughout North County.”

Mingei International Museum – Escondido opened to the public on December 5, 2003. Its wide-ranging exhibitions have featured Arts of Mexico, Origami, Folk Art of Central Asia, Toys and Horses from around the world, Dale Chihuly and Niki De Saint Phalle. Its Second Saturday programs have featured performances, demonstrations and workshops on world music, kite-making, paper-folding and the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

Free admission will be offered from April 2 through June 30 during the Museum’s regularly scheduled hours, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Second Saturday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, visit the Museum website, [www.mingei.org](http://www.mingei.org).

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