

MEDIA RELEASE

Mingei International Museum Celebrates its 35th Anniversary with Distinctive Exhibitions, Events, and Programs Throughout 2013

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Mingei International Museum will celebrate its 35th Anniversary in 2013 with a broad range of signature exhibitions, events, and programs. In May 1978, Mingei International Museum of World Folk Art opened at University Towne Centre in San Diego, aspiring to further the understanding of art of the people (*mingei*) from all cultures of the world.

Thirty-five years later, the Museum remains unique in its dedication to this mission.

To highlight the Museum's growing and important collection, two new galleries will be unveiled in May 2013. One will showcase dolls and toys from the permanent collection, a fitting nod to the Museum's very first exhibition, ***DOLLS AND FOLK TOYS OF THE WORLD***; the other will display, on a rotating basis, significant selections of the Museum's important and large bead collection. In addition, the Museum's 10-foot, white and gold Dale Chihuly *Enlightenment* Chandelier is being moved from the Escondido facility to the Balboa Park Museum. Thanks to the support of Joan and Irwin Jacobs and the Legler Benbough Foundation, this splendid chandelier will be installed above the Barbara Joy Marriott-Wilcox Grand Staircase in February for all to enjoy.

This spring the Museum will host a celebration fundraising event on May 18, 2013, honoring local philanthropist and longtime Mingei supporter Audrey Geisel, along with Museum founder Martha Longenecker. This gala will feature dinner, international entertainment, silent and live auctions, and a playful theme.

"The year 2013 will be an exciting one as the Museum celebrates three and a half decades of growth and dedication to art of the world and art of the people," said Mingei director Rob Sidner. "We are thrilled to be presenting new exhibitions spotlighting southern folk art, premier local craftsmen, and the riches of the Museum's permanent collection." In addition, Mingei is developing an exciting calendar of programming and special events for the San Diego community, some in partnership with other local cultural institutions.

NEW EXHIBITIONS

BILL TRAYLOR - Drawings from the Collections of the High Museum of Art and the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts (February 2013 - May 2013)

Folk artist Bill Traylor (1854?-1949) is one of the best-known and most highly esteemed artists from the American south. This exhibition will feature more than 60 of Traylor's drawings, including human and animal figures in depictions of his memories of plantation life and in the urban landscape in Montgomery, Alabama. Traylor's drawings, sketched on cardboard and other found materials, feature images in which he often combines several figures with abstract constructions.

MENAGERIE - Artful Animals from the Permanent Collection (March 2013 – September 2013)

Drawn from cultures around the world, a veritable zoo of animals will be herded into Mingei International's upper level galleries this spring. Animals have been inspiring artists since prehistoric times. Ranging from miniature South American armadillos to monumental terracotta beasts from India, these artful animals have been selected from the Museum's growing permanent collection. Mingei's menagerie will include carousel animals from the United States and Europe, Finnish glass birds crafted by Oiva Toikka and a horse clad entirely with beads by Huichol Indians from Mexico. A monumental stone ram from Han Dynasty China will be joined by Japanese dolls shaped into delightful animal forms and Mola textiles from Panama featuring boldly colored birds and other creatures. This exhibition will celebrate the mystery and beauty of animals – both real and imaginary – as expressed by artists from around the globe.

ALLIED CRAFTSMEN TODAY (June 2013 – January 2014)

Founded in San Diego in 1947, the Allied Craftsmen have been a significant community of mutual support and inspiration, many of whose earliest members were featured in the Museum's 2011 exhibition ***SAN DIEGO'S CRAFT REVOLUTION - From Post War Modern to California Design***. Featuring current work of this group of 68 active members, this exhibition will demonstrate the continuing vitality of one of the nation's few remaining craftsmen's groups that proliferated in the post-World-War-II era.

CARL JENNINGS: California Artist-Blacksmith (August 2013 – Feb 2014)

Guest-curated by San Diego contemporary craft authority Dave Hampton, this exhibition will feature large forged works including gates, headboards, chandeliers, and free-standing sculpture of California artist-blacksmith C. Carl Jennings (1910 – 2003). Works by Jennings were featured in the Craft in America and California Design 11 exhibitions.

PLEASE BE SEATED - Art of the Chair (September 2013 –March 2014)

From woven mats to high-tech contemporary designs, this exhibition will reveal the never-ending quest to seat people comfortably, appropriately, and fashionably. Drawn from the Museum's permanent collection and from other institutional and private collections, the exhibition will present wide-ranging examples of seating from many periods and cultures.

AMERICAN QUILTS (ongoing throughout 2013)

CHILDREN'S DAY (May 2013)

2012-2013 ART OF THE PEOPLE - School Outreach Program student works (May - July 2013)

DAY OF THE DEAD ALTAR (November 2013)

CONTINUING EXHIBITIONS

TRUE BLUE - Indigo, Turquoise, Cobalt and Lapis Lazuli (August 2012 – February 2013)

For ages humans have mined the gems turquoise, lapis lazuli and cobalt and manipulated them to re-imagine the world in glass, enamel, ceramic glaze and striking adornment. Indigo is a fabled plant that since ancient times has dignified and enriched hand-made fabric and paper. ***TRUE BLUE*** celebrates these four natural materials and their combination with human emotion, technical skill and the spark of creativity. This exhibition of objects from Mingei's permanent collection features a broad variety of media from many different cultures.

MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC - *The Art of Musical Instruments* (November 2012 - July 2013)

Drawn from the collection of Mingei International Museum and other institutional and private collections, this exhibition draws the eye to the art of music making, sharing the beautiful form and design details of musical instruments, bells, gongs, rattles, whistles and noisemakers from cultures across the world. Visitors moving through the exhibition will also be able to listen to recordings of a number of exotic instruments.

EVENTS

35th Anniversary Celebration May 18

Join event co-chairs Susan Oliver and Susie Spanos at an exciting celebratory evening honoring the Museum's 35th anniversary - the places we've been and the places we're going - along with longtime Mingei patron Audrey Geisel and Museum founder Martha Longenecker. Enjoy cocktails and a silent auction under the stars followed by an internationally-influenced dinner, entertainment and a live auction, with all proceeds benefitting the Museum's education and exhibition programs.

Community Celebration Weekend June 8-9

Visitors are invited to experience the entire Museum free of charge. Be among the first to see the **ALLIED CRAFTSMEN TODAY** exhibition, explore the new bead and toy galleries, go on a family treasure hunt, or join a group tour to learn more about the Museum's exhibitions. Free admission for everyone, all weekend long!

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Cygnnet Theater Partnership February 2013

In February Cygnnet Theater will premiere August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean* for a three-week run, overlapping with the opening of the **BILL TRAYLOR** exhibition at Mingei International Museum. The two organizations will partner throughout Black History Month with reciprocal admission offers, a special theater night for Mingei members, and one program event at the Museum: a theatrical performance by one of the production's featured actors, Antonio TJ Johnson. Johnson's series, *Walking in the Shadows*, focuses on the lives of famous African American pioneers, with this particular performance focused on the life and work of artist and former slave, Bill Traylor (February 11).

Diwali Festival of Light October 2013

The San Diego Indian American Society and Mingei International Museum will celebrate the 6th annual Diwali Festival of Lights, featuring an extraordinary lamp lighting ceremony, dancing, and traditional foods from different regions of India.

ENDOWING THE FUTURE

A strong endowment will ensure that Mingei International Museum thrives in this community for decades to come. In order to preserve the Museum's collection, exhibitions and programming for future generations to enjoy, Mingei will launch a special campaign in 2013 to build its endowment. The goal is to double this fund from \$10 million to \$20 million over the next five years

through direct and legacy gifts. Mingei members and community arts patrons Alice & Doug Diamond said it best: “Even when we can no longer admire an exquisite piece of craftsmanship that so fed our spirit, we hope to sustain a financial relationship with Mingei so that the objects in the collection can nourish the next generation.”

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ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM

The Museum’s Founder and Director Emerita, Martha Longenecker, was a professor of art at San Diego State University who studied the art of pottery-making in Japan. As an artist craftsman, she became acquainted with and learned from the founders and leaders of the Mingei Association of Japan, who inspired her to carry the vision of mingei to the U.S.A.

Mingei International Museum’s inaugural exhibition was ***DOLLS AND FOLK TOYS OF THE WORLD***. Since then, Mingei has shared over 183 exhibitions covering a diverse range of cultures, themes, and media. These exhibitions have featured both unknown craftspeople and renowned artists, and everything from the tiniest Pre-Columbian bead to large-scale sculptures by Niki de Saint Phalle.

In August 1996, Mingei International Museum relocated to its current 41,000-square-foot facility on the Plaza de Panama in Balboa Park. The Museum’s collection now comprises more than 21,500 objects of folk art, craft and design from 141 countries. A non-profit institution funded by admission, individuals, and community support, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. Institutional support for Mingei International Museum is provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

www.mingei.org

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