



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ICA San Diego Announces “On Healing” 2025/2026 Exhibition Season
Year-Long Event Explores New Ways to Heal through the Arts, and Features
California Premieres for Several Artists

San Diego, Calif. (September 4, 2024) — From January 2025 through January 2026, the Institute of Contemporary Art San Diego (ICA) will transform into spaces for healing. Each year, ICA focuses its exhibitions on a central theme for a cohesive exploration of our world. Its forthcoming season, entitled “On Healing,” celebrates our connection to others and finding new ways to heal through the arts.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only devastated physical and mental health, but also highlighted the deep political and socio-cultural wounds that continue to damage and divide the American body politic. “On Healing” considers healing from a variety of perspectives including physical and mental health; networks of care; spiritual healing; healing practices of past, future, or fictional societies; and healing as a process or journey.

The season will feature five unique exhibitions spanning works from seasoned artists, to those who have recently graduated from our regional arts programs. The shows will be held across the museum’s two campuses - ICA North in Encinitas and ICA Central in Balboa Park, and will each be celebrated with free *C You Saturday!* launch events.



Ethan Chan and David Pena
ICA North in Encinitas
January 18 - July 27, 2025

***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration (Jan 18)**

This two-person exhibition features the work of ICA San Diego's 2024 artists in residence, Ethan Chan and David Peña. Over the course of the past year, Chan and Peña each produced a body of work in response to healing; in the case of Chan, healing from the loneliness and isolation intensified by the pandemic, and for Peña, healing from grief after the loss of his grandfather.

Ethan Chan works in sculpture, performance and installation. "Examining my love for kitsch, cookie-cutter aesthetic, and plastic objects, I aim to place my work at the intersection between globalism and Americana," says Chan. "Growing up traveling back and forth between the Midwest and different parts of East Asia, the work references my identity as an Asian American mutt and my relationship to objects of Americana, highlighting how our culture as Americans affect and reflect on people who don't necessarily fit the conventional American stereotype." Chan's work highlights the isolation and segregation often experienced by people of color in the United States—an American experience made even more apparent during the pandemic. Chan states that his "goal is for the body of work to conceptually highlight American loneliness and to better understand the kind of social responsibility that all artist's carry."

David Peña's work engages questions of generational healing and care through his Mexican-American identity. "I reflect on my various cultural orientations, investigating my family history, what is lost over time, where I come from, and what I want to intentionally carry into the future. My current work explores the life of my Abuelo Encarnación, a welder for NASSCO (National Steel and Shipbuilding Company) in Barrio Logan, San Diego, who welded the front yard fence to our family home." Peña's work considers resilience in the face of loss and grief and explores how we carry on links to ancestral cultures even after our elders, our links to those cultures, have passed on.



Afra Eisma
ICA Central in Balboa Park
February 15 - June 1, 2025
***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration (Feb 15)**

Through art making, Dutch artist Afra Eisma processes her own personal trauma and creates spaces for visitors to do the same. Vibrantly colored weavings and stuffed sculptures combine with handmade ceramic elements to form new worlds where aliens, insects, and humans gather. Mythological beings and dreamlike places blend with body parts to create safe spaces for the full range of emotional expression. For Eisma, her artistic practice is one of healing through feeling.

For her exhibition at ICA Central—her first solo exhibition in the United States—Eisma is designing an experience inspired by the healing properties of breath. As Eisma explains, “Breath is a tool in becoming more present; it’s a healing power for our nervous system, a bridge between body and mind. Breath is a bodily function that we have the power to control, or we let it take control of us.”

Eisma will design an immersive, multi-media installation with audience participation in mind. Her participatory, tactile installations will blow, heave, and gasp, reinterpreting the sounds, sensations, and act of breathing. Breath is an indicator of life and can be quite intimate. This exhibition draws attention to breathing as an accessible tool for healing, a hallmark of many wellness practices, it is a proven

stress-reducer, resetting the link between body and mind.

NEXTGEN 2025
ICA Central in Balboa Park
June 21 - August 31 , 2025
***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration (June 21)**

The annual NEXTGEN exhibition, juried by a panel of art-world professionals, celebrates emerging artistic voices and highlights the innovative work being produced across the San Diego and Baja California region. Through NEXTGEN, ICA provides local emerging artists with exhibition opportunities and professional development, while highlighting the strength of our creative community.



Las Hermanas Iglesias
ICA North in Encinitas
August 16 - December 27, 2025
***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration (Aug 16)**

Since 2005, sisters Lisa and Janelle Iglesias have collaborated creatively as Las Hermanas Iglesias in addition to their individual studio practices. Their work often considers the interconnected social systems that govern not only human behavior but our survival as well. Working collaboratively with other family members as well as the public, their projects and installations find a balance between multiplicity, deep empathy, and play.

The exhibition at ICA North expands upon the sisters' own navigations of fertility, pregnancy, loss, and birth during the COVID-19 pandemic. These difficult years made disturbingly clear the high stakes of healthcare access, childcare costs, lack of paid leave, and the fight for reproductive justice in the United States and abroad. Their campus-wide exhibition at ICA North will consider both personal and collective healing journeys experienced in the wake of the pandemic.



Ruben Ulises Rodriguez Montoya
ICA Central in Balboa Park
September 20 - January 31, 2026
***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration (Sept 20)**

Ruben Ulises Rodriguez Montoya (b. 1989, Parral, Chihuahua, MX) is a multidisciplinary artist and myth-maker whose work centers around anthologies and social issues concerning border culture, abjection, adaptation, and mestizaje.

Rodriguez Montoya uses silicone and cast-off materials--salvaged from landfill-adjacent deserts near his childhood home in New Mexico, or the streets and markets of Mexico City where he currently lives. In his vision of the future, we are given a chance to heal from the wounds we suffer today: environmental destruction, racism, violence. Rodriguez's sculptures and installations are animistic, interdependent systems—part sentient being, part machine propelling us toward a

more just and more enlightened future. Drawing on Mesoamerican cosmology, Rodriguez views his sculptures as Nahuales, shape-shifting beings that oscillate between human and animal states. "They are stand-ins for the human body," he says, "used to explore how violence erases and eradicates communities of color. In this future apocalypse, processes of decay, regeneration, and shapeshifting for protection and survival graft new meaning upon our understandings of an ecosystem."

Updated information about each *C You Saturday!* event, as well as artist podcasts, and membership opportunities can be found at icasandiego.org.

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About the Institute of Contemporary Art, San Diego

ICA San Diego is a living laboratory for expanding the transformational power of art to build vibrant communities. Founded in 2021, yet built on over 100 years of combined experience, our programming is cutting edge yet accessible; daring and thoughtful; challenging and inviting. Our exhibitions, installations, commissions, classes, and workshops reflect ICA San Diego's commitment to engage the issues of the moment and provide a space for the community to come together and consider the world in which we live. ICA San Diego welcomes everyone to gather, learn, question, and experience the new. There is no admission fee to visit our exhibitions, and donations are welcome. To help ICA San Diego reduce barriers to contemporary art, visit <https://icasandiego.org/donate/>.

ICA San Diego / Central is located at 1439 El Prado in Balboa Park.

ICA San Diego / North is located at 1550 S. El Camino Real in Encinitas.

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