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## **ICA San Diego Opens Its First Exhibitions of 2025 “On Healing” Season**

*Season Kicks Off with Artists-in-Residence Ethan Chan and David Peña in January, and afra eisma in February*

**San Diego, Calif. (January 14, 2025)** — The Institute of Contemporary Art San Diego (ICA San Diego) premieres the first exhibitions of its new “On Healing” exhibition season with works by Artists-in-Residence Ethan Chan and David Peña opening in January, and multimedia artist afra eisma’s first solo U.S. show in February. Both exhibitions launch with a free public *C You Saturday!* celebration event featuring artist talks, food and music. It’s all part of ICA San Diego’s year-long exploration of the ways artists address the various socio-cultural wounds revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Ethan Chan and David Peña**  
*Heavy as Ghosts*  
ICA San Diego/North in Encinitas

**January 18 - June 27, 2025**  
**C You Saturday! Exhibition Celebration**  
**Jan. 18 from 4 to 7 p.m.**

*Heavy as Ghosts* is the first exhibition to result from ICA San Diego's locally-focused artist residency program. San Diego-based artists Ethan Chan and David Peña were selected by a jury of art professionals as ICA San Diego's 2024 Artists in Residence. Each was awarded six months of free studio space, a stipend, materials budget, and a joint exhibition at ICA San Diego/North. Over the course of the past year, both artists worked with the ICA San Diego's Curatorial team to produce a body of work engaged with our season-long exploration of healing.

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 affects and reflects on people who don't necessarily fit the conventional American stereotype." Chan focuses on the causes and effects of loneliness and social isolation—sentiments Chan felt acutely during the waves of Anti-Asian racism brought on by the pandemic.

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.

The *Heavy as Ghosts* opening celebration (Jan. 18) will include a durational performance by Chan in which he reenacts his father's behavior on a typical day off from work, as well as a panel discussion on grief featuring Peña and guests Mira Masukawa, LMFT, Founder, San Diego Grief Counseling; and Selena Jong, certified death doula.



**afra eisma: hush**

**ICA San Diego/Central in Balboa Park**

**February 15 - June 1, 2025**

***C You Saturday!* Exhibition Celebration**

**Feb. 15 from 4 to 7 p.m.**

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 her exhibition at ICA San Diego/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.”

Additionally, eisma will host a conversation and speed friending event on Monday, February 17 at The Soap Factory (2995 Commercial St., San Diego). The post-Valentine’s evening of art and connection features eisma in conversation with ICA San Diego curator Jordan Karney Chaim about themes, inspirations, and processes behind her work. Following the talk, guests will participate in a lively

speed friending event designed to spark conversations and forge new connections. The free event will run from 6 to 9 p.m.

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

**2025-2026 EXHIBITION SEASON**  
**ON HEALING. ICA** SAN DIEGO