

For Immediate Release

***Across the Spooniverse*, a New Exhibition at Mingei International Museum, Stirs Up Imagery of Family, Celebration, and Tradition**

Through more than 100 spoons, the showcase explores human creativity across regions and eras

Opens April 12, 2025

March 4, 2025, SAN DIEGO, CA — Around the world, spoons are essential implements that help us scoop, stir, mash, skim, cook, and eat. Some spoons come straight from nature—a gourd cut in half with its own built-in handle, for example, or a curved seashell. Others are carved of wood, bone, or horn, and some are made of fired clay, or hammered or cast metal. ***Across the Spooniverse***, opening at Mingei International Museum on April 12, 2025, presents over 100 spoons from across different eras and world regions, including examples from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

"Through exhibitions like our 2024 show, *Cups to Connections*, and now *Across the Spooniverse*, we reveal how everyday objects carry a shared significance across cultures," said **Jessica Hanson York**, executive director and CEO. "Generous hospitality and the community found in sharing a meal are universal experiences."

As objects of use, spoons are universally understood. *Across the Spooniverse* explores how each object is a reflection of a specific cultural context—from intimate traditions of home and family to community and celebratory preparations of food and drink and the spiritual gestures of giving thanks for sustenance.

Because of their role in the preparation and serving of food and drink, spoons are often cultural symbols of abundance and generosity. Sometimes the act of stirring, serving, or ladling is spiritually sacred. These spoons can bear visual references to the concept of blessing or a connection to the divine source of nourishment.

"These objects are both functional and brilliantly artful," said **Dr. Emily G. Hanna**, director of exhibitions and chief curator. "They symbolize concepts of abundance, generosity, and exchange. A spoon is so much more than a spoon!"

The design of each spoon reflects the work of a maker, a person often unknown to us, whose creativity inspires a sense of wonder. Some spoons on view in this exhibition are adorned with exquisite carvings of human and animal figures, while others are brilliant for their simplicity of form. Some show decades or even centuries of wear and use, and others are pristine. Contemporary spoon designs include an array of forms and materials, ranging from cast resin to mass-produced flatware hand-adorned with beads or precious stones.

This exhibition features spoons from Mingei's permanent collection, a selection of traditional spoons from the collection of Susan and Richard Ulevitch, and works by contemporary artists Erica Moody, Adam John Manley, and others.

Curators

Dr. Emily G. Hanna, Mingei International Museum's Director of Exhibitions and Chief Curator
Bruno Claessens, Independent Curator

Countries/Regions Represented in Across the Spooniverse

Afghanistan	India	Pakistan
Bissagos Islands - Guinea Bissau	Indonesia	Peru
Burkina Faso	Iran/Persia	Philippines
Cameroon	Ivory Coast	Romania
Canada	Japan	Russia
China	Java	Sierra Leone
Colombia	Kaniet Islands (Papua New Guinea)	Somalia
Côte d'Ivoire	Lapland	South Africa
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Madagascar	Sri Lanka
Ethiopia	Mali	Tanzania
France Polynesia	Mexico	Tibet
Gabon	Namibia	United States of America
Germany	Nigeria	Zambia
Ghana	Norway	Zimbabwe

Related Programming – *More information to come at mingei.org/whats-on*

Curator-Led Exhibition Tour

July 10, 2025 from 1:00pm - 2:00pm
Free for Mingei Members, \$10-15 for Non-members

Spoon Carving Workshop

July 26, 2025 from 10:30am - 1:30pm
Free for Mingei Members, \$10-15 for Non-members

[Download Media Images Here](#)

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ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM

Mingei International Museum, located in San Diego's Balboa Park Cultural District, celebrates human creativity through multicultural works of folk art, craft, and design. Inspired by the Japanese *mingei* (art of the people) movement, Mingei cares deeply about design functionality, handmade craft, and bringing out the creativity that lives in all of us. In addition to rotating gallery exhibitions and event programming, Mingei's gift shop, theater, education center, restaurant, and café are backdrops for finding inspiration and connecting with the community. As the presenter of San Diego Design Week and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures, and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

ABOUT THE BALBOA PARK CULTURAL DISTRICT

Located in the heart of San Diego, the Balboa Park Cultural District is home to a variety of arts and culture offerings. The 1,200 acre public park has been a hub for art, science, history, and culture since the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. The Cultural District includes Balboa Park's central mesa, particularly 17 museums, performing arts centers, gardens, and of course, the world famous San Diego Zoo. Thanks to organizations like the City of San Diego, Forever Balboa Park, the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, and staff members of various institutions, the Balboa Park Cultural District is a major tourist destination.

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