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Design Exhibition Traces Evolution of Skateboarding Do-It-Yourself Craft and Culture at Mingei International Museum

January 13, 2026, SAN DIEGO, CA — From November 1, 2026 – May 9, 2027, Mingei International Museum will present *Skate Craft: Do-It-Yourself Design in Skateboarding*, a special exhibition celebrating skateboarding's do-it-yourself ethos. Tracing the action sport's evolution from the early days of building ramps from found lumber to the handcrafted works of art seen today, *Skate Craft* will showcase the progression of skateboard design, safety gear, and skate apparel, alongside works by artists who embrace this DIY spirit by turning used boards into decor and accessories. The first show featuring skaters as designers and innovative creators, Mingei celebrates the impact of their ingenuity on Southern California craft and design.

Skate Craft is co-curated by Mayo Mendoza, a life-long skater and the facilities director at Mingei International Museum. Mendoza pitched his idea for an exhibition to the curatorial department in 2024, laying out his angle —the distinct connection between the ingenuity of skate culture and “Mingei,” which directly translates to “the art of the people,” a Japanese movement the museum was founded on. The curatorial team embraced his link between traditional folk art craft and design, and the skate community's do-it-yourself creation of gear, tools, apparel and art to meet the needs of a quickly growing new grassroots sport in Southern California. Mendoza was named guest curator in collaboration with Mingei curator, Guusje Sanders and they have spent the last year working on this special 2026 show.

“The folk art and do-it-yourself story of skateboarding hasn't truly been told,” Mendoza said. “At its core, skateboarding begins with the mind of a child — imagination, curiosity, and the impulse to make something with your hands. This exhibition celebrates skateboarding as a handmade, homegrown practice: boards shaped in garages, ramps built in backyards, and early innovations crafted from recycled lumber and old roller skates. It traces the evolution from these humble beginnings to design, industry, and global culture, while keeping the focus on form and function — what the object is, how it's made, and why it matters. By highlighting the handcrafted origins of skateboarding, we invite the viewer — skater and layperson alike — to see skateboarding not just as sport or industry, but as living folk art: inventive, resourceful, and rooted in creativity.”

Showing how skateboarding nurtures creativity, self-expression, and joy through artisanal craftsmanship, *Skate Craft* will be presented in five sections: boards, gear, obstacles, tools/machines, and repurposed boards. More than 130 objects will be on display to tell the craft story of the sport.

Some vintage items on display will include:

- Early folk art expressions of skateboarding constructed from wood, roller skates, and found objects
- Gonz's Pool Slide
- Grant Brittain, Jacey Gillette Crow and more

Work by the following contemporary artists will be included in the special exhibition:

- Nick Pourfard (Prisma Guitars) and Dalek Syndicate
- Christian and Benny Zenga, a.k.a. The Zenga Bros
- Woby Design - Ben Paik
- Tara Locklear
- Lia Holloran

"At Mingei International Museum, we showcase and engage with design that reflects the joy in making useful objects— *Skate Craft* is the quintessential representation of this ethos," said Jessica Hanson York, Executive Director and CEO. "10 years ago, we explored design in surf culture with our widely acclaimed show *Surf Craft*, and now, we are turning to the Southern California-born lifestyle and art form of skateboarding. With some of the most iconic names in the sport being San Diego natives and nearly 40 formal skate parks in the County, we're excited to lead our region in an investigation and celebration of its own culture. This is a show made of objects created by skateboarders for skateboarders"

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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.

Learn More and download media images: <https://mingei.org/exhibitions/skate-craft>

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