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## Press Release

### **Mingei International Museum Partners with San Diego Favorite Urban Kitchen Group for Innovative On-Site Dining Experiences**

#### ***CRAFT CAFÉ (Opening September 3) and ARTIFACT (Opening mid-October)***

**San Diego, CA, August 13, 2021**—Mingei International Museum and Urban Kitchen Group announced their partnership with two new dining venues at the newly transformed Museum. Reopening September 3 after a comprehensive 3-year renovation, Mingei will now be home to **CRAFT CAFÉ at Mingei** and **ARTIFACT at Mingei**. Both will be located in the free and welcoming Commons level, a new “living room” for Balboa Park featuring cutting-edge design, exhibitions and dynamic artist installations, all rooted in Mingei’s mission to celebrate folk art, craft and design from around the world.

The two venues are the latest addition to pioneering restaurateur Tracy Borkum and Executive Chef Tim Kolanko’s CUCINA family of restaurants. Beloved in the San Diego region since opening the iconic Kensington Grill, Borkum is known for presenting exceptional food and superior service in imaginatively designed environments, including CUCINA urbana, CUCINA sorella, and CUCINA enoteca Del Mar, Newport Beach and Irvine. Urban Kitchen was also recently named a food partner at the San Diego Symphony’s new Rady Shell at Jacobs Park.

“The addition of these two dining experiences emphasizes our commitment to creating a lively public gathering space within the Museum” said Rob Sidner, Director and CEO of Mingei International Museum. “Through this partnership with locally based Urban Kitchen Group, visitors will be able to enjoy delicious, sustainable culinary creations aligned with our mission, all without leaving our gloriously transformed building.”

Opening September 3, CRAFT CAFÉ will serve museum guests, park visitors and neighborhood residents daily grab-and-go breakfast and lunch from 8:30 am to 5 pm. CRAFT will offer specialty coffee, tea and smoothies; pre-made salads and bowls; made-to-order egg dishes and paninis; house-made and locally sourced pastries; and assorted artisan snacks and beverages including gluten-free and vegan selections.

The full-service restaurant, ARTIFACT, will feature craft cooking inspired by ancient methods, spices and botanicals. A quarterly pre-fixe menu crafted by Tim Kolanko, Executive Chef, Urban Kitchen Group, and Jeff Armstrong, ARTIFACT’s Chef de Cuisine, will be a nod to Mingei’s changing international exhibitions in

an environment filled with functional, innovative art and design. Aligning with CUCINA's commitment to convivial, communal dining, the visual and social focus of the restaurant will be a [30-foot reclaimed wood bar counter](#) crafted especially for ARTIFACT by local company Tule Peak Timber. ARTIFACT will open in mid-October 2021 for lunch and dinner service, with internationally inflected menu items ranging from Wagyu steak with lapsang souchong, shiso oil and maitake to Apicius chicken with garam, honey, dill and root vegetables.

“ARTIFACT and CRAFT are the perfect new additions to the CUCINA family,” said Tracy Borkum, Owner and Principal, Urban Kitchen Group. “Art and design have always gone hand-in-hand with great food in our restaurants. Having the opportunity to curate and share dining experiences inspired by Mingei’s artwork and philosophy in a remarkably designed new environment is an absolute dream come true.”

“The architectural design for ARTIFACT and CRAFT CAFÉ melds art, design and the craft of intriguing materials as the setting for enjoying fine foods prepared by Tracy’s talented team,” said principal architect Jennifer Luce, LUCE et studio. “We have woven a spatial story with a patinated steel back-bar, brass bar taps, old growth California walnut surfaces, Swiss Vals stone tables and furnishings that express classic modernism from many decades of design tradition. The aesthetic is tied intrinsically to Mingei’s mission of authenticity and Urban Kitchen Group’s tradition of ‘making’ foods that feed the mind, body and soul! This partnership is thrilling to bring to life”

Another highlight of ARTIFACT’s decor will be artist and activist Claudy Jongstra’s installation [Truth & Beauty in Black](#), a newly commissioned, 30-foot-long handmade wool tapestry. Visible throughout the free Commons level, the work will provide a warm, softening element to the space, as well as acoustic dampening to produce just the right level of sound for ARTIFACT diners.

Soaring over both ARTIFACT is architect Jennifer Luce’s ceiling installation *Suspended Refrain*, a stainless steel canopy stretching the length of the Commons level. Referencing the cut paper of a player piano roll, the 125-foot artwork is comprised of five ribbons, digitally dye-cut punched to authentically render the song “What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?”

#### **ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM**

Located in San Diego’s Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves, and exhibits “Art of the World, Art of the People,” including folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Established in 1978 by potter and professor Martha Longenecker, Mingei honors anonymous craftsmen from ancient times to contemporary designers. The Museum opens a window on the great world, revealing similarities and distinctions of individuals and cultures through enduring expressions of human creativity. The Museum also provides the opportunity for an ever-increasing number of people of diverse ages and backgrounds to explore and express their own creativity. A nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and regional support, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year.

[mingei.org](http://mingei.org)

## **ABOUT URBAN KITCHEN GROUP**

Tracy Borkum's collection of CUCINA restaurants are known for combining the flavors of Italy with the organic freshness of Southern California. CUCINA's from-scratch menus, include shareable portions of luxurious house-made pasta, innovative pizza, cleverly crafted large plates, an elevated selection of antipasti, dolci, and a signature cheese and salumi program.

Urban Kitchen Group's environments evoke a modern Italian kitchen-meets-charming bohemian eatery, complete with open kitchens, large alfresco patios, communal seating, spacious bar areas and intimate table settings. These carefully curated emporiums draw inspiration from a myriad of different elements, including natural materials, free-spirited gardens, vibrant patterns, whimsical lighting and bold graffiti-style art installations. Urban Kitchen Group is wholly committed to sustainable and local farming, organic practices, fair trade and upholding a dynamic and diverse work environment.

[Urbankitchengroup.com](http://Urbankitchengroup.com)

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ARTIFACT and CRAFT CAFÉ photos: <https://airtable.com/shrCrY1Vk6shxIS5G>

Mingei Transformation photos: <https://airtable.com/shr2YkVrBReSnWZzs>

A video overview of the transformation is available [here](#)