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Contact: Twania Brewster

(312) 735-6595

TwaniaB@chicagochildrensmuseum.org

CHICAGO ARTIST HEBRU BRANTLEY'S ICONIC 'FLYBOY' TAKES RESIDENCE AT CHICAGO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ON NAVY PIER'S SOUTH DOCK TO MARK THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHILDHOOD FOR ALL

GIFTED BY THADDEUS AND EMILY WONG OF @PROPERTIES BRANTLEY'S NARRATIVE-DRIVEN, IMMERSIVE ART-MAKING EXPERIENCE IS FEATURED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE CHICAGO'S CHILDREN MUSEUM

Chicago, IL (May 7, 2022) — Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) dedicated Hebru Brantley's *The Great Debate*, the aviator glasses-wearing 'flyboy' statue today to mark the importance of childhood for all at a ceremony attended by Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Commissioner Erin Harkey, State of Illinois leaders, Hebru Brantley, and community members.

"The 'Flyboy' stands at the Chicago Children's Museum door as a constant reminder that childhood is a critical moment which should be filled with child-centered opportunities for vibrant, play-filled experiences to realize every child's potential," said Chicago Children's Museum President and CEO Jennifer Farrington.

The 16-foot 'flyboy', which stands at the South Dock entrance of the museum on Navy Pier, was created by Hebru Brantley, a world-renowned, Chicago artist known for his iconic characters, Flyboy and Little Mama. Titled *The Great Debate* is Chicago's latest public art installation. It looks upward and southward in a heroic stance summoning all to contemplate the notion of dreaming the impossible.

The statue was commissioned by Chicago Children's Museum and made possible by a gift from Thad Wong and Emily Sachs Wong of @Properties. Their transformational gift of nearly one million dollars realized a vibrant, child-centered art programming within the museum, including the [Art Studio space](#), and the new art installation outside of the museum.

"As a native Chicagoan, I am excited to have created a little corner of the world for the young visitors of the Chicago Children's Museum," said artist Hebru Brantley. "My hope is that in these spaces, you will feel free to immerse and express yourselves in all sorts of creative ways. From an early age, I always loved comic books, anime, and art. However, growing up in Bronzeville, we did not have the access to artistic expression that is such a staple of Chicago culture today."

“As a kid, a place like the Art Studio - a space where your imagination can soar, where you are provided the guidance, inspiration, and supplies to ‘fly’ with your creations, would have been one of my favorite places to be,” added Brantley.

The Hebru Brantley-inspired interior space features [The Kirby’s Clubhouse](#) environment offering an opportunity for children to make the space their own by telling their own stories and making and displaying their own art within it. Designed to feel like a special clubhouse scaled just for children, a large-scale 2-dimensional art featuring Flyboy featured on the wall gives Flyboy a presence in the space alongside the visiting children. Three-dimensional clouds, vintage toys, playful objects, and street signs are embedded in the structure to evoke a sense of nostalgia for parents, caregivers, and older children.

“We have been going to the museum almost every weekend with our children for a decade. During each of our visits, the Art Studio was always an attractive stop,” said Thaddeus Wong. “So, in our opinion, the Art Studio should continue to be a center for inspiration to attract more kids and help them to use their imagination.”

“Hebru’s body of work is just the artistic vision to represent Chicago and the imagination of all of its children,” said Emily Wong.

About Chicago Children’s Museum

The mission of Chicago Children's Museum (CCM) is to improve children’s lives by creating a community where play and learning connect. CCM is dedicated to young children and the important adults in their lives. Play-filled experiences, including more than 15 interactive exhibits and daily programming, tap into how kids learn, and engage from ages 0-10 to develop the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. CCM aims to deliver at least one-third of its total annual attendance to low-income or underserved community members. For more information, please visit www.ChicagoChildrensMuseum.org.

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