

# Learning through science, culture, and art at the Brooklyn Children's Museum

Butterflies, elephant bones, masks, and whirligigs dance in the sky... a green snake slithers up the stairs... a life-size mosaic juggler beckons visitors inside... It's all part of the new three-part outdoor sculpture by May & Watkins Exhibit Design Inc. at the entrance of the Brooklyn Children's Museum.

The materials used in the piece include steel, plastic, ceramic tile and cement, Chinese cooking woks, and the top of an old water tank. The eclecticism of the materials represents the diversity of the Museum's permanent collection, which includes 27,000 natural history and cultural objects from around the world.

"We approach each project from an artist's perspective, infusing the work with a sense of discovery and drama," says Carol May, who created the piece with her partner, Tim Watkins.

Exhibits, performances and programs that entertain as they enlighten are a tradition at the Brooklyn's Children's Museum. Founded in 1899, and still located at its original site, BCM is the world's first museum created expressly for young people. As the Museum approaches its centennial, it continues to fulfill its mission of helping children develop an understanding of and respect for themselves, their neighbors, and the larger world around them. The new May and Watkins sculpture captures this mission and spirit.

Inside the Museum, families can explore the unusual underground structure, which was built in the 1970's and was recently renovated. Visitors enter through an authentic trolley kiosk, then a neon-lit "people tube" with an indoor stream carries visitors through the multi-level exhibit spaces.

This is a Museum that tells children, "Please, do touch the exhibits!" Each exhibit has a variety of interactive components, allowing families to participate and explore. In the Music Mix studio, kids can play a steel pan and jam on a mini-stage. The Animals Eat exhibit features live toads, turtles and other creatures. Scholastic's The Magic School Bus Discovery Area: Bones, Bugs, and Beasts, showcases the complete skeleton of an Asian elephant. The Museum also offers six other creative exhibit areas where children can touch, look, and learn.

The Museum's Fall/Winter hours are Wednesday through Friday 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday and school holidays 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

BCM is located at 145 Brooklyn Avenue in Brooklyn at St. Marks Avenue and is accessible by subway, bus and car.

The Museum runs a free Trolley Express every Saturday and Sunday, leaving every hour from Grand Army Plaza and the Brooklyn Museum of Art, 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Suggested Museum admission is \$3 per person. The public is invited to call 718-735-4402 for more information.

