



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
San Diego Public Library

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Works Inspired by *Wizard of Oz* to Be Featured in Taylor Library Exhibition
Unusual Images by City's Best-Known Children's Art Teacher Can Be Appreciated by All Ages

SAN DIEGO – More than forty major works on paper by Joe Nyiri, San Diego's best known and most honored children's art teacher, and one of the city's most innovative fine artists, will be featured in a thought-provoking solo exhibition opening Sunday, June 14 at the Earl & Birdie Taylor/Pacific Beach Branch Library. The Taylor Library houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library system. Titled "Joe Nyiri: Recent Works on Paper from the *Wizard of Oz* Series," the exhibition will run through September 4.

Several events are being held in conjunction with Nyiri's exhibition. These include a reception for the artist on Sunday, June 14, from 1 to 4 p.m. and an artist's talk on Saturday, July 18, beginning at 1 p.m. Hands-on art-making experiences with Nyiri include two workshops for children and one for adults. No prior art experience is necessary. The children's art classes are scheduled for Wednesday, July 8, at 2 p.m. and Wednesday, August 5, at 2 p.m. as part of the San Diego Public Library's Summer Reading Program. This year, the theme of the Summer Reading Program is "Be Creative @ Your Local Library." The session with Nyiri for adults is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, at 5:30 p.m. as part of the Taylor Library's ongoing "Art in Your Heart" after-hours social mixers.

The exhibition, reception, and related events are free and open to the public. However, due to Nyiri's popularity, advanced sign-up is required for the children's sessions. Library and gallery hours are Mondays & Wednesdays, 12:30 to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Fridays, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m. For more information the public can call the library at (858) 581-9934.

Nyiri is one of the most creative and energetic forces on San Diego's art scene. Over the years, he has produced an enormously rich and varied body of work, perhaps only eclipsed by his reputation as a brilliant art teacher who has nurtured the creativity of the city's youth for more than fifty years. By his estimate, Nyiri has instructed more than 150,000 children. In terms of his

personal art, whether addressing issues as profound as the Holocaust, as Nyiri did in his last San Diego Public Library Visual Arts Program exhibition in 1998, or comparatively lighter fare such as the *Wizard of Oz* – the theme of his latest exhibition – Nyiri’s art is always ambitious, conceptually sophisticated, and technically inventive.

His *Wizard of Oz* series, in development for more than a decade and never before exhibited, consists of mixed-media works on paper inspired by the characters, objects, and places from L. Frank Baum’s immortal children’s novel, and also the 1939 movie starring Judy Garland. Nyiri’s fertile imagination, masterful drawing ability, and adventurous sense of color serve him particularly well here. With imagery ranging from whimsical to sinister, and abstract to representational, this artist’s contemporary interpretation of an American classic is a remarkable accomplishment.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A representative selection of high quality, full-color digital images is available on request from the library curator.

The San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program is a nationally recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The Joe Nyiri exhibition is the most recent of more than 125 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. The mission of the Program is to demonstrate the Library’s role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego’s mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional, and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of Central Library. For more information about the Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the library curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library’s Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org

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