

# Artist toys with visitors at Liberty Station



Nico Meyer's "Toying With Light" art installation. (Courtesy photo)

By **Laurie Delk**

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**I**n the near perfect climate of San Diego, outdoor art brings creativity to locals around the county. Bringing playful and interactive art to the San Diego art scene this holiday, Arts District Liberty Station kicks off its fourth annual Illuminate the Season event with a new installation in Legacy Plaza (which has an annual visitation to the plaza topping 100,000 people) by local artist Nico Meyer.

This year's large-scale, interactive piece *Toying with Light* invites the public to play with movement and light, blurring the line between artist and viewer. Meyer, a structural engineer and artist, explores the beauty of pattern and form in his piece, which lights up on Nov. 30.

PACIFIC spoke with Meyer during his work on the installation to find out more about his inspiration, artistic influences, and the patterns we all create in our brains.

## **How did you go from structural engineer to artist?**

I'm still currently a structural engineer, I wasn't sure an art degree would pay the bills (laughs). Recently in last four to five years, the transition to art was largely looking at public art and seeing if I could build large scale.

## **What was the inspiration for *Toying with Light*?**

The main inspiration was I wanted to make a large scale kinetic sculpture, but that can get costly. I realized you can create a kinetic work with a static object and moving lights. The holidays are about getting together and creating things whether it's gingerbread houses or lights on a tree. I wanted to foster that creativity; people coming together to explore building in a community environment. I purposefully made it interactive, so you can change the lights and movement. With enough people standing around it triggers sensors to create more intense light and movement.

## **What are the dimensions?**

It's nine feet tall and seven foot wide.

## **How does it work?**

It can be triggered by a single person and there will be sensors all around it. If multiple sensors are triggered, it will create something different. I don't want to say much more, because I want people to discover what they can do with it.

## **You've said, "Our brains are pattern-making machines." How do we as humans make patterns?**

I think it's a fundamental thing we do. We categorize so we can talk about them. It can be the source of bad behavior, stereotyping and breaking down, to things we can understand to two competing ideas. It's so easy to get stuck in patterns, but you can get people to pay attention that they are creating patterns.

## **When you are creating are you logically looking for those patterns or is just inspiration?**

My style is built on patterns. I have an engineering mindset, so I go into it with a pattern in mind.

## **Which artists or art movements have inspired you and your work?**

M.C. Escher, his work is mathematically driven. Also the Bauhaus movement, making forms that follow function, with ordinary objects made artistic.

## **What does it feel like to know your work will be seen by over 100,000 people during the holiday season?**

It's really exciting; I'm a little nervous (laughs). We all make things in our little environment, so it's an honor to see your work in this environment.

## **Where else can San Diegans find your work?**

*Context of Awareness* is in downtown Vista, adjacent to Mother Earth Brewing, on 137 Main St., and *Stranded Heart* is on El Paseo in Palm Desert, in front of the Tesla dealership.

# Toying with Light

**When:** Nov. 30 through Jan. 6, 2019

**Where:** Legacy Plaza, near the Dick Laub NTC Command

**More info:** [njmeyerart.com](http://njmeyerart.com)

**Social:** @nicomeyer (Instagram)

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