

# Elmhurst Art Museum plans major exhibit by rising artist Sentrock

Shaw Local News Network

To cap the Elmhurst Art Museum's yearlong celebration of its 25th year of inspiring the community, it will present the first solo museum show of Pilsen-based street artist Sentrock, who seeks to uplift and empower youth through his murals and educational projects.

The multimedia exhibition will feature new work by the rising artist that reveals for the first time the origin story of his distinctive Bird City Saint character, which appears in more than 20 prominent murals in Chicago and other cities, according to a news release. "Sentrock: The Boy Who Wanted to Fly" will be on exhibit from Sept. 9 to Jan. 15. Dynamic programming will include an artist reception celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, workshops and talks with the artist and an exclusive pop-up shop.

Joseph Perez, best known as Sentrock, is a self-taught street artist who creates large-scale, colorful public mural works. He views street art as a gesture of compassion for his community and a powerful form of expression that encapsulates his Mexican-American background, upbringing and history. With spray can in hand, he developed his work from graffiti writing to



Image provided courtesy of Sentrock

A major exhibition, "Sentrock: The Boy Who Wanted to Fly," will be displayed from Sept. 9 to Jan. 15 in the Elmhurst Art Museum.

his now highly stylized and recognized street art featuring the Bird City Saint character, which wears a bird mask. He describes the signature mask as a means of an individual's personal expression, strength and hope.

For the exhibition, Sentrock pres-

ents a new signature mural in the galleries, as well as animated video projections, a 10-foot-tall sculpture, a life-size birdhouse installation, paintings and works on paper that reveal narratives about the Bird City Saint character and its origins in the artist's

biography. Presented across numerous galleries, the exhibition will explore the dreams of a little boy living in an urban environment, the importance of his Mexican-American community and why the boy has a bird mask.

Sentrock gives back to the Latin American community through educational and mentor projects with local youth, as well as food and clothing drives in his neighborhood and other endeavors. His recent projects include a summer youth workshop with Apple, collaborations with the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Bulls, plus brand ambassadorships with Chicago Fire, Footlocker and others. His murals have been commissioned by the city of Chicago, Chicago Design Museum, Chicago Public Libraries, National Geographic and the Chicago Fire. More than 20 of his murals appear throughout Chicago and in other cities such as Detroit, Miami, New York, Phoenix and Los Angeles.

"On the occasion of our 25th anniversary, we are thrilled to host the first solo museum show by Sentrock and continue our commitment to supporting exceptional artists from Chicagoland," Elmhurst Art Museum Executive Director John McKinnon said in

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the release. “We are excited for audiences familiar with Sentrock and his Bird City Saint character to learn of their compelling origin stories and for others not familiar to get a wonderful introduction to the rising young artist as he translates his work to museum galleries for the first time.”

Registration is required for exhibition-related programming, which is free with museum admission unless otherwise noted.

### Artist Reception: “The Boy Who Wanted to Fly”

**7 p.m. Sept. 16:** The museum celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month with an artist reception for the opening of Sentrock’s first solo museum exhibition. There will be food trucks, music, wine and desserts selected by the artist and his studio.

### Family Day and workshop led by Sentrock

**1 to 4 p.m. Sept. 17:** Families are invited to create artwork inspired by Hispanic culture, led by exhibiting artist Sentrock and his studio. The artist, who uses a bird mask in his work, will help participants design their own masks and learn about traditional masks made in Mexico. For thousands of years, masks have been used in Mexico as a well-established part of ritual life in a form of folk art used in dances and ceremonies. No registration is required. The event is free for children.

### Conversation with Sentrock

**1 to 2:30 p.m. Oct. 1:** The museum hosts a conversation about the local art scene with Chicago-based artist Sentrock and Sara Phalen, co-founder of the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage. The conversation will be moderated by host Zach Grand.

### Artist talk: Rafael Blanco

**1 to 2 p.m. Oct. 29:** “Be Bold. Be Elmhurst” reads the large-scale mural in

Elmhurst by Rafael Blanco, originally from Spain, and an assistant professor at Elmhurst University. In tandem with the museum’s exhibition by Sentrock, Blanco discusses his public artworks, including the mural in Elmhurst, and themes of identity, human expression and diversity and inclusion.

### Pilsen Public Art Tour

**1 to 2 p.m. Nov. 12; Cost is \$15:** Walk through Pilsen with guide Luis Tubens and get the larger meaning behind the artwork in Chicago’s capital of Mexican culture. With a perspective rooted in more than 15 years of experience in the neighborhood art and sociopolitical worlds, the tour weaves the history of Pilsen with vibrant, large-scale murals and lived personal experiences.

### Sentrock pop-up shop

**1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 3:** The museum releases limited-edition artwork and exclusive merchandise by Sentrock at a special pop-up shop. In-person only; museum members receive early access at 1 p.m.

### Family holiday party

**1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 17:** The museum invites families to celebrate the holidays with hot cocoa, cookies, a visit from Santa and hands-on art activities inspired by “Sentrock: The Boy Who Wanted to Fly.” Families will make piñatas and papel picados influenced by Hispanic customs for the holiday season. The party also includes a special holiday display at the McCormick House.

### About the Elmhurst Art Museum

The Elmhurst Art Museum is at 150 S. Cottage Hill Ave. in Elmhurst. On the museum’s campus is the McCormick House, a single-family home designed in 1952 by Mies van der Rohe, one of the famed architects of the 20th century. The McCormick House is one of only three residences designed and built by him in the U.S. and one of only two open to the public.

For more information, call 630-834-0202 or visit [elmhurstartmuseum.org](http://elmhurstartmuseum.org).

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