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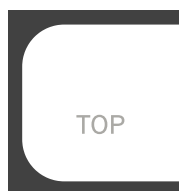
This must be Venice

**By Adam Tschorn**

Senior Features Writer | Follow

Photography by **Alon Goldsmith**

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(Alon Goldsmith / For The Times)

Take your kids on a magical, people-powered history lesson at the Venice Flying Carousel

Venice Family Ride

By Adam Tschorn

Artist [Robin Murez's](#) whimsical, human-powered merry-go-round is interactive public art at its finest, serving up a children's amusement-park attraction with a side of Venice history that parents will appreciate. Offering free rides to the little ones for just an hour each Saturday and Sunday (currently 11 a.m. to noon) from a temporary home along Linnie Canal, it can accommodate up to 15 kids, who choose from a handful of hanging swings, a chariot or one of eight animals, each lovingly hand-carved out of basswood by Murez. Among them are Robbie, an ostrich with a heart of gold (a nod to the ostrich farms of Abbot Kinney's day), Arielle, a cape-wearing lioness (an homage to the winged-lion symbol of Italy's Venetian Republic) and Paa'ar, a Tongva turtle whose presence references the original Indigenous inhabitants of the area. The mechanics of the machine itself, Murez says, reference the rides made by the Dentzel Carousel Company that could be found in Venice in the early 1900s.

Murez's kinetic history lesson, which eventually will have a permanent home in Venice's Centennial Park (she's currently gathering petition signatures to speed up the stalled process), delights approximately 30 kids (120 pounds max) each hour-long session. They're buckled onto Orson the duck, Joelle L'Escargot (a crown-wearing snail), Ribbon the unicorn or one of their carved companions for a brief ride propelled by the

artist (or a helper) who stands in the center energetically cranking what looks like a ship's wheel. "I've learned carousel etiquette," Murez said about how long each ride lasts. "It goes on for the length of one song, so that's about two minutes. I play a lot of Frank Sinatra, I play Brazilian jazz. I take requests." My request, no doubt shared by the local parents who bring their children two or three times a month to squeal with delight as they soar around the circle: Give the magical menagerie its forever home as soon as possible. In addition to the scheduled hour each weekend day, Murez's magical carousel is open by appointment for special events like birthday parties.

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