

# Illustrator to speak at Tulsa events

To celebrate the vibrant work of illustrators, Tulsa City-County Library presents "Books to Treasure," an annual event promoting the beauty of children's literature and introducing the community to popular book illustrators.

Internationally recognized artist Rafael López is the featured illustrator for Tulsa City-County Library's 2016 "Books to Treasure." Lopez will speak, answer questions and sign copies of his books during a special visit November 4 at 7 p.m. at Hardesty Regional Library's Connor's Cove, 8316 E. 93rd St. This event is free and open to the public.

López grew up in Mexico City where he was surrounded by vibrant colors on murals painted by his heroes Diego Rivera, Rufino Tamayo and Carlos Merida. He would often travel an hour by bus to visit his library to read about art and culture from around the world. He studied at Art Center College of Design and after graduation traveled Europe and Africa filling up his sketchbook with inspiration as he immersed himself in local cultures. Currently he divides his time between studios in the colonial town of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and a loft in downtown San Diego where he works and lives with his wife and son.

López led the Urban Art Trail Project in 1997 that helped transform his East Village neighborhood in San Diego. The urban renewal project empowers community members to reclaim their neighborhoods by creating colorful murals, sculptures and art installations. He has since worked with hundreds of children, families and community members to create murals in San Diego, Los Angeles, Chicago and Seattle among other cities. These efforts are the subject of *Maybe Something Beautiful*, his latest illustrated book chronicling the effort to bring art into the streets so it is accessible to everyone.

In 2010, he was the recipient of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award given by the American Library Association to honor work that best portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in children's books. Written by Pat Mora, *Book Fiesta!* is filled with illustrations complementing Mora's text that is a celebration of El día de los niños/El día de los libros: Children's Day/Book Day.

This year he was awarded the 2016 Pura Belpré Award for his illustrations for *Drum Dream Girl*, written by Margarita Engle. The children's book was inspired by the childhood of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Chinese-African-Cuban girl who dreamed of being a drummer in a culture where only boys were allowed to drum.

He also created a series of five stamps in 2010 for the United States Postal Service featuring Latin Music Legends featuring Celia Cruz, Carlos Gardel, Carmen Miranda, Tito Puente and Selena. He also worked with the USPS. on stamps celebrating education equality and cultural awareness.

The Library of Congress selected López to create the artwork for the National Book Festival in 2012. He also was the honorary chair of California's Read Across America and frequently speaks at schools and libraries to promote reading and literacy.

"Books to Treasure" is sponsored by the Tulsa Library Trust through a grant from the Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation. The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation is providing one free copy of Lopez's *Tito Puente, Mambo King*, a bilingual picture book written by Monica Brown, to each second-grader in Tulsa County.

Previous recipients of the Book to Treasure award include: Derek Anderson (2015); Philip C. Stead (2014), Peter Brown (2013), Mo Willems (2012), Grace Lin (2011), Steve Jenkins (2010), Brad Sneed (2009), Jim Arnosky (2008), Floyd Cooper (2007), Lisa Campbell Ernst (2006), Janet Stevens (2005), Arthur Howard (2004) and Marla Frazee (2003). For more information call the AskUs Hotline, 918-549-7323, or visit, [www.tulsalibrary.org](http://www.tulsalibrary.org).

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