

UC SANTA BARBARA

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## **BUILDING A BATH HOUSE, MAKING A DOCUMENTARY: HOW UCSB PROFESSOR FIKRET YEGUL HELPED MAKE NOVA FILM**

When producers of the Public Broadcasting System's popular program "NOVA" wanted to film the reconstruction of a Roman bath house, they sought out the world's leading authority to head up the project -- UCSB history of art and architecture professor Fikret Yegul.

"He is clearly the leading scholar on Roman baths and he is also an architect," said NOVA producer Nancy Linde.

"We couldn't think of a better combination of skills and ability to build our bath."

Yegul will discuss his experiences making the NOVA episode, aired nationwide last month, at a gathering organized by the UCSB Art Affiliates at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday March 14 in the UCSB Multi Cultural Center Theatre.

Cost is \$25 per person.

The Roman public bath was one of the most technologically advanced achievements of the ancient world.

For that reason, NOVA producers wanted to include it in a series called "Secrets of Lost Empires II" in which they asked modern scientists and engineers to duplicate the technological achievements of ancient peoples using only ancient means and materials.

Other projects involved building the roof of the Roman Coliseum, constructing an Incan rope bridge and carving and transporting the Moai stone statues of Easter Island.

Yegul, whose 1994 book *Baths and Bathing in Classical Antiquity* is recognized as a landmark contribution in its field, began the project on a former Roman site near Sardis, Turkey, in September 1998.

Seven weeks later the project was completed and Yegul and his colleagues celebrated with a celebratory bath.

"It was extremely exhilarating," he said.

Along the way, they had to solve a variety of construction problems, including improperly cured bricks, a leaky chimney and a shortage of natural caulking material.

In addition to making entertaining television, the program served Yegul and his fellow scientists as well.

"In projects like this, you learn things you could never learn by going to the library," he said.

"No one had ever done this kind of experiment before.

This is the first and only fully functional Roman bath anywhere in the world today."

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## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the

edge of the Pacific Ocean.