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UCSB Scholars to Discuss Ties That Bind Religion and Art

Art and religion have traveled through history arm-in-arm in frequent symbiosis.

While religion has used art to tell its stories of faith, redemption, and salvation, artists have used the commissions paid by religious benefactors to keep poverty at bay while creating their own images of heaven and earth.

The alliance of art and religion goes on today, one of the latest examples being the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

Richard Hecht and Linda Ekstrom of the University of California, Santa Barbara will discuss the continuing relationship between art and religion in "The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and the Powers of Contemporary Religious Art," at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 3 in the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall (21 East Constance Ave., Santa Barbara). The talk is part of the UCSB Affiliates Spirituality and Culture Series.

Admission is \$8 for UCSB Affiliates and Chancellor's Council members and \$10 for all others. Advance registration is recommended and can be made by calling the UCSB Office of Community Relations at 893-4388.

Hecht, a professor of religious studies at UCSB, and Ekstrom, a lecturer in the College of Creative Studies, maintain that the link between religion and art is every bit as strong today as in the past.

At the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, the architects and artists have created new views of the human quest for transcendence, proving, according to Hecht and Ekstrom, that artists continue to be powerful visionaries of the relationship between the human and the divine.

Hecht and Ekstrom have taught a course on religion and contemporary art for several years and are currently completing a book, "Saved from Matter:

The Religious Cultures of Contemporary Art."

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.