

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Art, Design & Architecture Museum Showcases the Work of MFA Students

The work of seven artists completing their Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees at UC Santa Barbara will be on display at the campus's Art, Design & Architecture Museum beginning May 25. The group show, titled "Inside Out," is the culmination of the graduate students' two-year MFA program.

Reflective of the diverse nature of contemporary art, the show will include film, video, painting, graphic design, installation, assemblage, and sculpture. The exhibition will be installed in the museum's galleries and sculpture garden as well as in an adjacent exhibition space.

An opening reception will take place on Friday, May 24, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the museum. The event is free and open to the public.

The artists showcased in the upcoming exhibit include Alex Bogdanov, Ryan Bulis, Sterling Crispin, Alison Ho, Tristan Newcomb, Chris Silva, and Erik Sultzer.

Bogdanov's piece involves turning his space over to another artist who will be chosen by a computer randomizer. After conducting an open call for artists, the computer will select the winner, who will receive a \$1,200 honorarium and the opportunity to debut his or her artwork. Bogdanov removes himself from the physical artwork but frames its presentation in a unique form.

Bulis, whose thesis project is a complete renovation of the museum sculpture garden, will create a garden filled with topiaries and lawn ornaments for the MFA installation. "I felt the need to engage a space that wasn't as pure as the white walls of the museum's interior," said Bulis. His work is meant to "tease out the histories of these novelty objects, while questioning human attitudes toward nature, eugenics, physiognomy, and social hierarchy," he said.

Crispin's installation features a 3-D printed object that represents the flight pattern of a drone as it interacted with the artist, as well as a video projection of their movement. The work is designed to "use technology in a humanist way," explained Crispin. "The piece is trying to suss out the relationship between our bodies and these new bodies [drones] that are coming into the world." In a tangible form, Crispin's piece poses the question, "How does the drone see the world?"

Alison Ho's work uses the dozens of achievement certificates she has received to form a narrative about personal experience and the construction of identity. "My work is confessional, using details from my life to examine broader themes of Asian American identity and playing with the notion of public versus private," said Ho. " 'The Award Project' is an installation of 83 awards that I received throughout my childhood, hung chronologically, alongside a letter from my dad." The letter, she explained, exposes another layer of depth to the awards, opening conversations about expectations, education, and family dynamics, especially those between Ho and her father.

Newcomb will be screening selected scenes from his full-length surrealist puppet movie titled "Jesus Hates You Now" with select props and promotional materials. "My motivation for the movie is to assault orthodox religious belief in the most entertaining way possible: wicked puppets who claim theocratic powers," said Newcomb. "With every religiously motivated act of violence perpetrated on civilians, the need to erase orthodox religious beliefs for the sake of human development becomes more and more clear. So I have deployed [Jim] Henson-like sensibilities against the infection of religious absolutism in modern life."

Silva's work features digitally enhanced serio-comedic instructional videos that teach viewers how to make contemporary art along with the finished canvases featured in the videos. "Essentially the idea is based around virtual and physical labor," said Silva. "My thesis is based around artistic labor and creative capital and what that means. What makes one moment in creativity more monetarily valuable

than another?" Silva explores this question through performance, painting, and video media.

Finally, Sultzer, of Santa Barbara's Center for Imaginative Cartography and Research, will use printed texts and images along with textile patterns and a faux stage set to create a participatory space wherein audiences can observe the aesthetic and political connections between seemingly disparate objects. "My general interests are broad," said Sultzer. "Aesthetic experience, history, individual and collective politics, communication, fermentation, autonomy, theater, the artist-as-character, et cetera. I generally work with temporary, large scale installations with materials that are salvaged, repurposed, or reused."

The exhibition continues through June 16. The Art, Design & Architecture Museum is open from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Admission is free.

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