

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

April 4, 2017

Jim Logan

Creativity Unbound

Books speak to us, and in a new exhibit of artists books at the UC Santa Barbara Library, that voice is distinctly female.

“A Powerful Voice: Nurturing Creativity — Female Book Artists at the College of Creative Studies” will showcase the talents of UCSB students, alumni and faculty with nearly 30 works that range from the avant-garde to the wildly abstract.

“This show exposes the intimate power of women’s voices through book arts,” said [Danelle Moon](#), director of Special Research Collections and the curator of the exhibit. “Female students are exploring what it means to be a young woman growing up in the 21st century through this unique creative medium.”

“A Powerful Voice” opens with a public reception April 6 from 5 to 7 p.m. in Special Research Collections on the library’s third floor. The exhibition will continue through Aug. 11.

The exhibit was borne of a conversation between Moon and [Linda Ekstrom](#), an instructor in the College of Creative Studies (CCS) and noted artist. They agreed the time had come to highlight the works of CCS students in the [Book Arts](#) program. But where?

“The students don’t have a lot of opportunity to showcase their work because the CCS space is small and without a studio for that purpose,” Moon said. And so she conceived of the idea to present the works in the library’s [Special Research Collections](#) gallery, which is designed for exhibiting unique and rare materials.

Moon, who collects artists books for the library, thought the exhibit could use some heavy hitters, too. So in addition to Ekstrom, she included CCS faculty member Harry Reese, instructor Sandra Liddell Reese and CCS alumnae [Carolee Campbell](#) of Ninja Press and [Mary Heebner](#), all of whom enjoy national renown and whose works are already in the library's collections.

Moon noted that CCS, true to UCSB's commitment to interdisciplinary studies, gives its students multiple avenues to express themselves.

"The other part I love about CCS's Book Arts program is that it's very interdisciplinary," Moon said. "And so a lot of the students are not art or humanities students; they're science students. So you see this interesting intersection of the sciences with the humanities and art in these books."

Consider Mona Luo, who earned bachelor's degrees in art and biology from UCSB. Her work, "Invisible Cities," is a nod to the book of the same name written by Italo Calvino. In it, a young Marco Polo describes wondrous cities to Kublai Kahn. The book is often used to teach students how to think creatively. In Luo's piece, the four walls of a city contain "doors" that unfold to reveal titled sketches of city scenes.

A number of other works are also inspired by "Invisible Cities." CCS alumna Linda Cabrera contributes two pieces, "Clifton's Cafeteria" and "The Church on the Corner," that play on the meaning of place in two buildings in Los Angeles that were of special significance to her growing up.

The exhibit takes some inspiration from the words of Johanna Drucker, one of the country's most acclaimed book artists: "The women who make books out of the materials of their lives and imagination establish a balance that gives voice to their own issues on their own terms," she said in 2007.

"It's all about feminism and the female influence in our current political time," Moon said, "but it's also going to be a really playful exhibit."

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.