UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

July 6, 2018
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Spectrum Turns 61

Spectrum, a literary magazine published by students in UC Santa Barbara's College of Creative Studies, published its 61st issue in the spring quarter. Founded in 1957, it's the longest-running literary magazine in the University of California system and has published work by luminaries such as William Carlos Williams, Raymond Carver, Samuel Beckett, Alex Otolani, Jervey Tervalon and Chris Lauer.

Spectrum is run entirely by undergraduate student editors with guidance from a faculty advisor. It's produced during the three-quarter "Literary Publishing" series, which is offered by the CCS Writing and Literature major each year. This year, the journal's staff was led by editor-in-chief Kailyn Kausen, web editor Talia White and fiction editor Belle Machado (all CCS Writing & Literature '20). The publication is the culmination of countless hours of work, often late into the night.

"The students involved in Spectrum did a wonderful job on this year's issue of the journal," said Kara Mae Brown, CCS Writing & Literature Program coordinator and Spectrum's faculty advisor. "The journal is one of the most significant educational opportunities that CCS offers to all students on campus who want to pursue careers in writing or publishing. It really helps them understand how writing is produced outside the classroom. Plus, it's a lot of fun to make a magazine!"

The journal didn't have a specific theme this year, but Kausen knew what she wanted. "We've always strived to show a variety of voices, voices that might not be heard elsewhere," she said. "This year we expanded that to include a spectrum of forms and genres as well, like comics or hybrid form. We want people to try us out,

to submit to us things that they don’t know where they belong and see if we want it — because if it doesn’t fit anywhere else for being too weird or too out there, that’s exactly what we want to see.”

The editors wanted to include works that may not get published in other literary journals. “We want experimental works, stories with strange subjects, poems with non-traditional subjects, and more; anything from sheet music to blueprints to whatever creative project someone can throw at us,” Machado explained. “We want to see something new and unique.”

To help the journal head in this direction, the Spectrum website was also re-designed. White, the web editor, worked to give the site a fresh new look, adding a blog that includes posts from the editors as well as literary and art submissions.

Each year, Spectrum receives more than 100 submissions, and the staff has to decide on how to review each piece. The current edition’s selection process was unique. “We took a very democratic approach to put this literary journal together,” Machado said. Every piece sent into us was reviewed by two people, who would give it a ‘yes’ or a ‘no,’ and any pieces with mixed decisions were then read by the entire publishing team.” From there, editors and staff held a meeting with an open discussion on each piece that received a majority vote of ‘yes’ to decide the journal’s final lineup.

The cover image of the 2018 issue was created by artist Michelle Nguyen. “She immediately stood out as an exceptional artist, and in particular the image we used for our cover was very moving to many of us,” said Machado. “The detail of the tears on his cheeks was incredible, and the emotion was very clear.”

Being involved in Spectrum is an excellent opportunity for CCS Writing & Literature and other UCSB students to learn by doing. “I’m incredibly grateful for the continuation and progression of this literary journal,” Machado said. “It has such a long history full of amazing writers and stories, and I feel blessed to now be a part of that history.”

The journal’s staff, many of whom are first- or second-year students, immediately put what they learned in the classroom into practice. “Spectrum played a large role in shaping my education this past year,” White said, “and will only continue to do so.”

Many of the publication’s staff and editors, including Machado and White, would like to make publishing their career. Running Spectrum, they said, gave them valuable insights into the publishing realm that are relevant to future careers. “I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to get practical experience,” White said. “Already, it has helped me get a summer internship with Catamaran Literary Reader.”

To learn more about Spectrum, to submit work or to purchase this year’s copy, visit https://spectrum.ccs.ucsb.edu/.

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.