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‘Women of Impact’

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpation on the part of man toward woman.”

So states the Declaration of Sentiments, a document signed by 100 attendees of the nation’s first convention for women’s rights. Meeting in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, the women advocated for equality in the family, education, moral standing, jobs and religion. Though great progress has been made over in the ensuing 170 years, women around the world continue to navigate issues of equality, civil liberty and autonomy.

In partnership with the Art, Design & Architecture Museum (AD&AM) at UC Santa Barbara, the project impactmania will celebrate the anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention with its inaugural exhibition, “Women of Impact.” The exhibition focuses on women’s contributions to society and celebrates female drivers of cultural, social, and economic impact. An opening reception will take place Thursday, July 19 — the date of the Seneca Falls Convention — from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the museum. Admission is free and the public is invited.

impactmania is an online platform launched at UC Santa Barbara that functions as a repository for original content, including interviews with contemporary thought leaders, both nationally and internationally.

The reception also will introduce impactmania's new book, "Women of Impact," which features an international roll of 130 women of various backgrounds. The book highlights their individual initiatives and endeavors and their impact on the world. More than 20 of the women will be on hand to discuss their work, with a question-and-answer session following as time permits.

"We expected to present a panel with four women from the book, but then we heard back from 23 women who said they would travel in on their own time and at their own expense for the project launch," said Paksy Plackis-Cheng, impactmania founder and a senior fellow of research media at UC Santa Barbara. "Women are flying in from all over the country and as far as Brazil, China, the Netherlands and New Zealand. We'll provide the community with an opportunity to hear from these women about the work they do and the resulted impact from their work."

According to Plackis-Cheng, her vision for impactmania is to make visible the contributions of impact makers in the world, and to connect current with next-generation change makers.

"I have seen that even basic understanding of how much we contribute to society is not covered by the overall media," she said. "I am stunned by how many incredible significant contributions women are making in terms of making our lives safer, communities stronger, and healthier. We have to rethink true value and power."

Plackis-Cheng added that the exhibition, panel, and reception are also important catalysts for discussion, harnessing the power that comes from gathering together diverse individuals to share their experiences, work, and perspectives.

"The value of the women gathering is that we start dialogues and meet those who are working on meaningful projects," Plackis-Cheng said. "Let's offer up our thoughts, work on potential solutions, and collaborate with others who are currently driving cultural, social, and economic impact. The book and presentation is all about making visible what is hidden in our communities all across the world. We need to start bringing people together from different disciplines, experiences, and backgrounds to tackle complex societal issues."

The exhibition, book and panel discussion are part of the "Women of Impact" project. The project in turn is part of an impactmania/AD&AM internship program whereby students created canvasses and a video loop for the exhibition.

The exhibition continues through September 2, 2018. The museum is open 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesdays and Friday through Sunday, and from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursdays. More information about the exhibition is available at http://www.museum.ucsb.edu/news/event/691.

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.