UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

April 13, 2021
Shelly Leachman

Creating Hope

Updated: May 5, 2021

If hope is a superpower, UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures is aiming to be the Avengers of cultural organizations.

With the unveiling of its new initiative, Creating Hope, the programming powerhouse seeks to inspire audiences and the community at large with shared experiences — online, outdoors, in schools, in theaters and other spaces — featuring thought-leaders, creative problem-solvers and arts visionaries.

The cornerstone of the initiative, which will serve as an umbrella for all A&L programming into 2022, is a keynote event as inspiring as they come: His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama. A free, virtual conversation between His Holiness and Pico Iyer will take place May 18 at 8:30 p.m.

Registration is not necessary. The event may be viewed via livestream on YouTube and on the A&L Facebook page. A recording will be available for unlimited replay on the A&L website. Note: Live events with His Holiness the Dalai Lama usually begin 15-20 minutes before the official start time.

“Our campus community is grateful to our supporters and Arts & Lectures for bringing us this uplifting programming series that will focus on nourishing our hearts and our minds,” said UC Santa Barbara Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “We look forward to the opportunity to hear a message of encouragement from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, especially at this challenging time, and to the hope and inspiration that each

of our guest speakers and performers will impart through their unique stories and talents.”

Said Celesta Billeci, Miller McCune Executive Director of Arts & Lectures, “Creating Hope programs will strengthen human connection, bridge our partisan divides, promote emotional well-being, joy and compassion and envision positive change. We can create hope — but only if we do it together.

“We have already announced multiple events in spring 2021 and our education programs are rolling out at the same time,” Billeci continued. “You could say that we’ve been wading into Creating Hope for a while now, as opposed to diving in with a big splash. But His Holiness is definitely a big splash, an international event! It’s a great honor for our community.”

Meant to serve the community as a bridge “from where we are now to where we want to be,” Creating Hope also will build on the robust educational component that has become customary with A&L initiatives.

“Arts & Lectures has a unique ability to bring together the wonder, the ideas, the creativity and, yes, the hope that we all need to come through this stronger than ever,” Billeci said. “For decades our mission has been to ‘educate, inspire and entertain,’ and this is certainly a time that calls for inspiration. But hope happens through education and entertainment, too. In recent years we’ve developed a vast web of community connections, working with local nonprofits, schools, agencies and corporations, as well as activists, thought leaders and influencers.

“As I’ve said before, we are living through a moment that calls for optimism, resilience, courage and vision — a tall order!” she added. “Creating Hope is how Arts & Lectures is answering the call.”

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.