UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

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Keith Hamm

Student-made environmental documentaries to screen at SBIFF

The Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) has a long history of showcasing locally produced films and filmmakers alongside requisite works built on big budgets and bigger names. This year, the festival lineup includes a trio of documentaries by UC Santa Barbara filmmaking students.

The three student films, each one seeded in the region's coastal environment, will screen during the festival's Santa Barbara Documentary Shorts programming on Feb. 6–7.

Not Just Water

The 17-minute "Not Just Water" tracks community access to coastal recreation and education through the formative experiences of children enrolled in The Sea League nonprofit, headquartered in Goleta.

Filmmakers Tess McCormick, Audrey Engelsgjerd, Mia Sanguinetti, Kuba Naum and Junhao Tuo conceptualized and produced the film during the 10-week GreenScreen spring 2024 class — offered through the Department of Film and Media Studies and sponsored by the Carsey-Wolf Center. Taught by Chris Jenkins, the department's head of production, the hands-on curriculum teaches students how to represent and communicate environmental issues while teaming up to make a short film from start to finish in 10 weeks.

quwa'

During last summer’s 12-unit Coastal Media Project class — taught by Jenkins, environmental media instructor Ian Kellet and social scientist Summer Gray — student filmmakers Jonathan Coronado, Ryan C. Grant, Jade Ipiña and Catherine Scanlon explored the history of the Goleta Slough and the long-overlooked significance of the Chumash island, quwa’, that was once there. The 15-minute film features interviews with Chumash elder Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto and Marianne Parra, whose Chumash lineage connects to Santa Ynez, Goleta and Santa Barbara.

“The biggest challenge was finding and including the voices that are often ignored in discussions about the land's original ownership,” Coronado said. “Our determination motivated us to seek out these voices and represent them in an honorable manner.”

The Kelp We Breathe

Also during last summer’s Coastal Media Project, students Natalie Aymond, Jack Phillips, Taylor Ortiz and Tatum Davis teamed up on “The Kelp We Breathe.” The film takes a deep view of the dynamic beauty and ecosystem of the ubiquitous marine algae and the coastal cultures with which it’s interwoven.

For the complete screening calendar, visit sbiff.org.

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About UC Santa Barbara

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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.