UC SANTA BARBARA
THE Current

September 23, 2026
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Fall arts abound across campus and community

Far and wide on campus at UC Santa Barbara this fall, the arts have arrived across a spectrum of sights, sounds and movement. From Romeo and Juliet to metaphysical spirituality. From the creative art of hard science to the handcasted names of the deceased on a museum wall. There's plenty to take in, and much of it is accessible for free.

As always, UCSB's art offerings spill over into the surrounding community, as musicians, dancers and other performers take stages in downtown Santa Barbara. On campus and beyond, it all makes for a jampacked fall lineup.

AD&A Museum

The Art, Design & Architecture Museum opens fall with a pair of exhibits that resonate throughout California, one deeply woven with controversial current events, the other honoring the legacy of an influential Bay Area artist. A public reception for both exhibits — "Jackie Amézquita: Gemidos de la Tierra" and "Bonnie Ora Sherk: Life Frames since 1970" — takes place from 5-7 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26. Both shows are now on display.

Working with information obtained via the Freedom of Information Act and collections of earth from lands of the deceased, Guatemalan-born artist Jackie Amézquita handcasts and muralises the names of people who have died while in the

custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from 2003–2023.

A special activation of the artwork “Gemidos de la Tierra (Wailings of the Land/Soil)” takes place from 3–6 p.m. on Día de los Muertos (Nov. 1) outside the museum. Amézquita will be publicly adding new names to the work.

The museum’s Sherk show is the first major survey exhibition of the late artist, environmental educator and landscape planner, tracing her life in the public sphere and her lasting influence on performance artists. The exhibit includes newly transferred film and video, rarely seen photographs and related ephemera.

A restaging of Sherk’s 1970 street show “Snow Job” will include snow, snowcones, a score-writing workshop and a durational performance by undisciplinary artist and researcher Ajani Brannum. The free event takes place from noon–2 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 15, outside the museum. Formal attire is encouraged but not required. Also among Sherk events, curator Tanya Zimbardo will lead a talk through the exhibit from noon-2 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 16.

The Sherk and Amézquita shows will be up through Nov. 29. Entry to the AD&A Museum is free and open to the public Wednesday–Sunday, 12–5 p.m.

College of Creative Studies

With a very full October schedule, the newly arrived installation, Cosmic Synastry: Collective Codes and Personal Readings, takes over the gallery in the College of Creative Studies as part of the UCSB Metaphysical Spirituality Project.

Receptions, walkthroughs, discussions and a downtown Santa Barbara evening service with meditative music will complement Cosmic Synastry’s group exhibit on art and astrology and their impacts on the individual and the collective.

“I hope this exhibition can bring more attention to the growing popularity of spirituality and bring some of the Santa Barbara community to campus to learn about what we're doing,” said religious studies associate professor Joe Blankholm, who leads the Metaphysical Spirituality Project. “Cosmic Synastry is an impressive exhibition that explores a profound insight about what art and astrology share, and curators Vanessa Ayala and Lucy Bell have assembled a really talented group of

artists.”

Cosmic Synastry’s soft opening runs 4:30–6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 1 in the College of Creative Studies Art Gallery. What’s being billed as its “big sendoff” closing reception will begin at 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30.

Department of Music

Music lovers can look to the Department of Music for a steady stream of performances, from chamber, opera and choir to world, jazz and large ensembles. For more on the World Music Series (with free concerts at noon on Wednesdays in the campus Music Bowl), plus the Fall Concert and Corwin Chair concert series and more, visit the department’s full calendar.

How did Medusa get her snakes? Find out in a first-ever fall intensive production, “A Legacy of Stone,” a student-written, directed and scored musical featuring a live orchestra and, following the opening performance, an Ancient Greece-themed gala. Oct. 16–18, Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall.

Lawn chairs and blankets are recommended for listeners lounging on the Storke Tower lawn as guest musician Ekaterina Porizko, from Germany, presents a free carillon recital starting at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 25.

Closing out fall quarter, the department presents the UC Santa Barbara Gospel Choir student singers under the direction of music professor Victor Bell. Featuring traditional and contemporary gospel music, the show (free for UCSB students) begins at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 4 at Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall.

Department of Art

Taking place from 5–6:30 p.m. on Thursdays in Room 1101 of the Interactive Learning Pavilion (ILP), the department’s Visiting Artist Colloquium features talks with guest artists from a variety of disciplines, plus faculty and distinguished alumni. Free and open to the public, the speaker series runs through early December.

Visit the colloquium’s full calendar.

Department of Theater and Dance

The magnetic works of a pair of preeminent playwrights once again grace campus stages in October and November, presented by students and faculty in the Department of Theater and Dance.

Now in its 21st year performing stripped-down Shakespearean classics, the Naked Shakes student theater program presents the 16th-century tragedy, “Romeo & Juliet,” Oct. 16–24 at Studio Theater, directed by professor Irwin Appel. Admission is free.

Also free, running Nov. 12–15 in the Performing Arts Theater, lecturer Sara Rademacher will direct “All My Sons,” Arthur Miller’s 1946 criticism of the American Dream.

For more, including Fall Dance and the LAUNCHPAD reading series, visit the department’s full calendar.

IHC Platform Gallery

In conjunction with the Bodies Politic 2026–27 public event series, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center’s Platform Gallery is showcasing a dozen artists. Works include photography, digital and traditional painting and a scaled-down print of graffiti artist Dominic Fredianelli’s mural created during his IHC residency.

Free and open to the public, the exhibit’s opening reception is part of the IHC’s open house, 4–6 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 1, in the McCune Conference Room, Humanities and Social Sciences Building, sixth floor. The show runs through summer 2027.

Art of Science

Launched in 2014, the annual Art of Science competition challenges UCSB researchers — from undergrads to postdocs — to express their studies and discoveries through artful aesthetics. Winners are selected by a panel of judges and popular vote based on artistic and scientific merit.

Winning the People's Choice category for her image of a 34-day-old sunflower sea star larva, Hofmann Lab graduate student Ivanna Arrizon Elizarraras explained that environmental stressors can adversely impact these keystone predators. "By understanding how rising ocean temperatures affect sunflower sea stars, we can take informed action to protect our kep forests and support sea star recovery."

Winners and honorable mentions are on display through March 22 in UCSB Library's first-floor Mountain Gallery.

Carsey-Wolf Center

The Carsey-Wolf Center and the Pollock Theater are kicking off their fall screenings at noon on Saturday, Oct. 3, with SURFILMUSIC, a documentary chronicling UCSB alum Jack Johnson's evolution from surfer to filmmaker to world-renowned musician. For a post-screening discussion, filmmaker Emmett Malloy will join Alex Champlin, a film and media studies Ph.D. alum.

Starting at 7 p.m. on Oct. 8, director and UCSB alum (film and media studies, class of 1989) Frederick E.O. Toye will screen S2E1 of his post-nuclear retrofuturistic TV series "Fallout," and follow with a discussion moderated by Miguel Penabella, the center's assistant director.

"The Carsey-Wolf Center is excited to welcome esteemed alum and Emmy Award-winning director, producer, screenwriter and editor Fred Toye back to UCSB," said center director Ross Melnick. "His work on 'Shōgun' and many other series, including the upcoming 'God of War,' have made him one of the most sought after directors in Hollywood. We're honored to have him here to talk about 'Fallout' and his prolific career."

Both events are free and open to the public. Reservations are recommended as seating is limited. Visit the full Carsey-Wolf Center calendar.

UC Santa Barbara Arts & Lectures

Last but certainly not least, this season's Arts & Lectures lineup tracks true to its long history, starting in 1959, of showcasing compelling voices and beloved performers on campus and across the community.

On the arts front, multilingual Sweden-based guitarist José González will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26, at Campbell Hall. Touring his latest album, "Against the Dying of the Light," he describes his solo performances as "a reflection on humanity."

On Tuesday, Oct. 6 in downtown Santa Barbara, the Granada Theatre will host the Akram Khan Company, now on its final international tour. In "Thikra: Night of Remembering," choreographer Akram Khan unites a worldwide cast of female dancers from contemporary and Bharatanatyam traditions in a vivid meditation on ritual, ancestry and collective memory.

Visit the full A&L calendar.

"A&L belongs to our community," said Megan Bush, A&L's new Miller McCune Executive Director. "I believe wholeheartedly in the quality and breadth of our programming. This is a season meant to ask big questions, evoke moments of awe and open your heart and mind."

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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.