

Young Art on the Brinks

ON VIEW AT UCSB'S AD&A MUSEUM, THIS YEAR'S CROP OF EIGHT MFA STUDENTS, ONCE AGAIN DELIVERS, WITH ART AT ONCE INNOVATIVE, THOUGHTFUL, EDGY, AND SENSES-GRABBING.

By **Josef Woodard**,
News-Press Correspondent

"Temporary Clash: Graduate MFA show"

When: through June 2

Where: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB

Hours: noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday

Information: 893-2951, www.museum.ucsb.edu

By now, we've grown accustomed to the annual humble art/idea fest that is the UCSB MFA Thesis Exhibition can be something of a cerebral circus, along with its deeper messages and conceptual fiber. The practicalities of the annual event—often one of the most intriguing art events of the season in town, for various reasons—revolve around a public forum and transition moment for young artists moving beyond a certain, presumably into the professional, MFA in hand and on c.v.

Thanks to the energy and pluck of youth, mixed with the demands of creating and honing a personal aesthetic in the University's MFA pro-

gram (a more highly regarded program than in years past), the goods and ideas can be freshly provocative to outsider eyes. On first impression through deeper consideration of the show, this year's group—Maiza Hixson, Madeleine Eve Igon, Adam Jahnke, Kayla Mattes, Elisa Ortega Montilla, Andrew Morrison, Echo Theohar and Christopher Anthony Velasco—serve up plenty of movement, color, texture, contexts gone wild and social awareness.

The show delivers on all the fronts we expect of it. Here, the definition of MFA—Master of Fine Arts—might also be extended to include the qualifications of "fun" (in a loaded way) and "fearless" art.

Each artist is given a dedicated corner or area of the museum space in which to work, sometimes using that space to installation-minded ends. Mr. Jahnke's corner, close to the entrance, seizes our attention through its inventive use of unexpected objects to unconventional ends. A bicycle has been transformed into art-making object, with a fitted paint-dispenser and stenciled tires and ready to make its mark, as illustrated in the video "Infinity Painting #2," showing the art-bike in action.

His striking junk sculpture "The Table," suggesting a micro-Mayan temple married to a nuclear reactor, is comprised of colored electric exten-

sion cords, nestled on Astroturf and with a hum of dread beneath its gaudy color scheme.

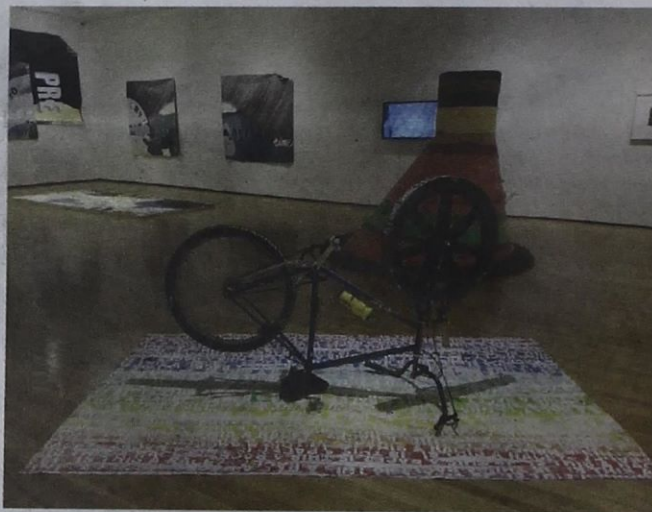
Ms. Igon's art nook is given over to her large, loose and jangly variation on the collaging theme, from discrete collages to an entire wall—"wall collage"—sparsely splashed with detritus and minimalist charm. Letters and fragmented allusions creep into her art, whether the Hollywood sign in her diptych "LA girlbrain room" or the doubly-intended phrase "ABOUT time," in "tm."

More primal associations, to shape, texture and object-relations, are embedded in Ms. Montilla's constellation (or menagerie) of sculptures, called "Remiendes." Combining metal structures, second-hand textiles (read retooled and repurposed lingerie and hosiery) and pine sculpture, the artist has assembled a personal sculpture garden which seems ritualistic and vaguely archeological. One can also find a certain Dr. Seuss-ian character in this goopy, integrated community of art objects.

The museum's back gallery is given over to a pair of distinctly different artists. Multi-media and programming-oriented artist Echo Theonar's "Stand 1" is a cagy, varied display. Video/computer graphics, seemingly surreptitious government documents, a war room strategy board—blended into a jumbled convergence of info, coated (and coded) with implications of life in the post-9/11, drone warfare era.

Christopher Anthony Velasco's "Fresh Donor" series heeds a much simpler plan, at least on the surface. Altered and half destroyed Polaroid sources are then re-photographed and somehow convey an allegorical sense of medical calamity and disorder, through singed, melted and otherwise SNAFU-ed images.

To take in the work and larger artistic ethic of Andrew Morrison, proceed outside. On the right side of the museum's façade, beneath the placards reading "Art," "Design" and "Architecture" (the basis of the AD&A Museum acronym), the artist shows one of his murals. But it is a subdued model, without the extroverted intensity and pictorial density often marking the medium. Mr. Morrison, whose work incorporates mural-making, video documentary, social activism and indigenous people's rights, makes an impact here through relatively subtlety of means and scale. The museum mural ambiguously depicts a Native American ceremony, with a gray scale palette and in an impressionistic style, while maintaining a vibrant expressivity. The mural's power is half-harnessed by the its very understatement of its effect.



COURTESY PHOTO

In another corner of the main gallery, we get a taste of the socially tuned-in sensibilities of Ms. Hixson, whose time as an MFA candidate included a run for the mayor of Santa Barbara. Her 6 x 6 foot mock-"tiny house" sculpture here, "How to San Losiento (Mi Casita Es Su Casita)," in varying states of finish and scrap-piness, is ostensibly for sale and up for auction for the low price of under \$30,000. She takes aim at the exorbitant real estate/rental market in Santa Barbara, while also questioning the murky mix of cultural histories in the area, between Mexican, Spanish and imperialist forces.

Ms. Hixson also shows a loud, fiery painting, "Fire/birds of Paradise," slyly cross-stitching the visual charm of an exotic blossom and the peril of incendiary outbursts, a brand of angst in the news in these parts over the past year-and-a-half.

Spot fires, it so happens, also pop up as visual motifs in the fascinating and "against type" fabric art of Kayla Mattes, whose centerpiece is called "Firewall," a term of multiple meanings. Fire itself is a character in the

large, complex pictorial mesh of the piece, along with the implied issues of security in the word "firewall," soft-to-the-touch bricks, a gaggle of little yellow sad (and barfing) emoticon faces and references to modern questions both anguishing and trivial—such as the phrase "will Moviepass survive?" Ms. Mattes puts the metaphorical pin pain in what is presumably the comfort craft of needlepoint, and other fabric crafty techniques. On another wall, she shows fabric signs, as if protest rally-ready posters, consisting simply of corporate Twitter responses to flashpoint moments in the Trump era, from Skittles, Tic-Tac and TIKI brand products, the latter disavowing any connection to Charlottesville's neo-Nazi TIKI-gang. The art's ironically plush surfaces do anything but soft-peddle the underlying message of social concern.

With this piece, and others in the Museum, young artists are finding personal routes to expressing what it means to be an artist in this historical moment, to be alive, alert, fired-up, and now with MFAs in the back pocket. ■

MOBY DICK RESTAURANT
A SANTA BARBARA TRADITION FOR OVER 40 YEARS

Now serving two spectacular seafood towers, Captain Ahiki Feast and Poseidon's Platter.

OPEN DAILY FROM 7 AM TO 9 PM • 7 DAYS A WEEK
229 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara • mobydick.com • 805.965.0549

all evidence that the story was made up by sore losers in the Democratic Party to discredit his unlikely victory.

But he appeared to acknowledge reality in his tweets Thursday, a day after Mr. Mueller had publicly warned of "multiple systemic efforts to interfere in our election" and urged Americans to do more to protect future elections.

In the midst of angry posts about Mr. Mueller's investigation, Mr. Trump wrote, "I had nothing to do with Russia helping me to get elected. It was a crime that didn't exist."

Reporters and Democratic lawmakers immediately seized on the head-snapping phrase "helping me

as after posting them, suggesting he had misspoken. But then he reposted them, fixing a misspelling of the word "accusation," but leaving the phrase "helping me get elected" intact.

So did he really mean it? Later, talking to reporters on the South Lawn of the White House, Mr. Trump was asked to clarify in person.

"Russia didn't help me at all," Mr. Trump said, returning to his old talking point. "Russia, if anything, I think, helped the other side."

There is no evidence that Russia tried to help Mrs. Clinton's campaign.

Mr. Trump didn't stop there. He raised prior claims that Mr. Mueller had a conflict of interest because

clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so," Mr. Mueller said Wednesday at the Justice Department, hardly a vote of confidence.

Mr. Trump also confirmed a Wall Street Journal report that the White House tried to keep the John S. McCain, a Navy destroyer, "out of sight" when he toured Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan, on Tuesday. The president said he did not direct his aides to conceal the warship's name, but seemed unbothered that they did.

"John McCain, I wasn't a fan, but I would never do a thing like that," Mr. Trump told reporters. "Now, somebody did it because they thought I didn't like him. OK? And, they were well-meaning, I will say. I didn't know anything about it."

Mr. Trump remains furious at House investigations of his finances and businesses, and apparently by the growing number of Democrats, including several running for president, to start impeachment proceedings. He described impeachment as a "dirty, filthy, disgusting word."

Much of Mr. Trump's newest frustration stemmed from Mr. Mueller's statement Wednesday. Saying he didn't intend to speak again on the matter, Mr. Mueller reiterated that his report did not exonerate Mr. Trump on obstruction charges and said that he declined to weigh in on whether Mr. Trump committed a crime only because Justice Department rules prevented it.

Mr. Trump's campaign manager, Brad Parscale, blamed the confusion

unprofessional!"

But it's hard to say it was just a typo. If anything, it's a reminder that Mr. Trump's unfiltered tweets, often written while watching Fox News, can be hard to interpret. Administration officials have at times called them official policy while former chief of staff John F. Kelly insisted that the only way to perform his job was to ignore them.

Not only are they rife with spelling and grammatical errors, they often veer toward political commentary or momentary reactions to news and opinion segments.

When asked to explain how seriously to take the tweets last year, deputy press secretary Hogan Gidley said, elliptically, "You know by the result."

say census citizenship
tion was designed
to GOP wi

erson
The Trump ad-
ealed evidence
to add a ques-
ship to the 2020
intended to help
favorable elec-
ording to immi-
groups that sued
over the ques-

student
dent
"wou
the D
to Re
White
Mr
write
Depa
part
cite
it wo
acco
Th
by th
Unio
ficial
the o
the le
Furn
speci
Juc
a hea
5.
Re
the T
lieve
could
tions
elect
zen
popu
Op
ship
able
migr
from
out c
be sl
That
crati
rese
al ai
Tru
Rep
cou

majority Su-
to issue a fi-
d of June on
can be added
s census.
notified the
e new docu-
l at the court
on. They did
Court to take

include the
Discrimina-
Make The
ed of Hofell-
me to light
North Car-
can-drawn
being chal-

nt represen-
tions were a
rail the Su-
leration of
ks forward
er detail to
ons in its fil-
erson said.
S. District
locked the
lowing the
Court ap-
that rul-
ment.
ay's filing,
in a 2015

ART

Young Art on the Brinks

ON VIEW AT UCSB'S AD&A MUSEUM, THIS YEAR'S CROP OF EIGHT MFA STUDENTS, ONCE AGAIN DELIVERS, WITH ART AT ONCE INNOVATIVE, THOUGHTFUL, EDGY, AND SENSES-GRABBING.

By Josef Woodard,
News-Press Correspondent

"Temporary Clash: Graduate MFA show"
When: through June 2
Where: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB
Hours: noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday
Information: 893-2951, www.museum.ucsb.edu

By now, we've grown accustomed to the annual humble art/idea fest that is the UCSB MFA Thesis Exhibition can be something of a cerebral circus, along with its deeper messages and conceptual fiber. The practicalities of the annual event—often one of the most intriguing art events of the season in town, for various reasons—revolve around a public forum and transition moment for young artists moving beyond a certain, presumably into the professional, MFA in hand and on c.v.

Thanks to the energy and pluck of youth, mixed with the demands of creating and honing a personal aesthetic in the University's MFA pro-

gram (a more highly regarded program than in years past), the goods and ideas can be freshly provocative to outsider eyes. On first impression through deeper consideration of the show, this year's group—Maiza Hixson, Madeleine Eve Ignon, Adam Jahnke, Kayla Mattes, Elisa Ortega Montilla, Andrew Morrison, Echo Theohar and Christopher Anthony Velasco—serve up plenty of movement, color, texture, contexts gone wild and social awareness.

The show delivers on all the fronts we expect of it. Here, the definition of MFA—Master of Fine Arts—might also be extended to include the qualifications of "fun" (in a loaded way) and "fearless" art.

Each artist is given a dedicated corner or area of the museum space in which to work, sometimes using that space to installation-minded ends. Mr. Jahnke's corner, close to the entrance, seizes our attention through its inventive use of unexpected objects to unconventional ends. A bicycle has been transformed into art-making object, with a fitted paint-dispenser and stenciled tires and ready to make its mark, as illustrated in the video "Infinity Painting #2," showing the art-bike in action.

His striking junk sculpture "The Table," suggesting a micro-Mayan temple married to a nuclear reactor, is comprised of colored electric exten-

sion cords, nestled on Astroturf and with a hum of dread beneath its gaudy color scheme.

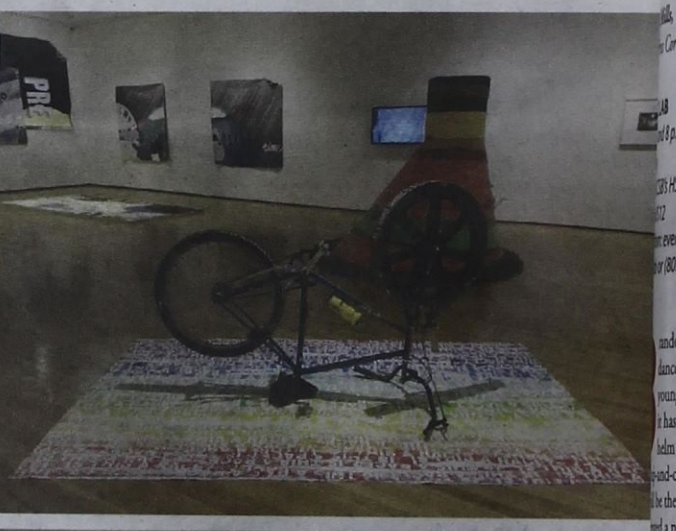
Ms. Ignon's art nook is given over to her large, loose and jangly variation on the collaging theme, from discrete collages to an entire wall—"wall collage"—sparsely splashed with detritus and minimalist charm. Letters and fragmented allusions creep into her art, whether the Hollywood sign in her diptych "LA girlbrain room" or the doubly-intended phrase "ABOUT time," in "tm."

More primal associations, to shape, texture and object-relations, are embedded in Ms. Montilla's constellation (or menagerie) of sculptures, called "Remiendes." Combining metal structures, second-hand textiles (read retooled and repurposed lingerie and hosiery) and pine sculpture, the artist has assembled a personal sculpture garden which seems ritualistic and vaguely archeological. One can also find a certain Dr. Seuss-ian character in this goofy, integrated community of art objects.

The museum's back gallery is given over to a pair of distinctly different artists. Multi-media and programming-oriented artist Echo Theonar's "Stand 1" is a cagy, varied display. Video/computer graphics, seemingly surreptitious government documents, a war room strategy board—blended into a jumbled convergence of info, coated (and coded) with implications of life in the post-9/11, drone warfare era.

Christopher Anthony Velasco's "Fresh Donor" series heeds a much simpler plan, at least on the surface. Altered and half destroyed Polaroid sources are then re-photographed and somehow convey an allegorical sense of medical calamity and disorder, through singed, melted and otherwise SNAFU-ed images.

To take in the work and larger artistic ethic of Andrew Morrison, proceed outside. On the right side of the museum's façade, beneath the placards reading "Art," "Design" and "Architecture" (the basis of the AD&A Museum acronym), the artist shows one of his murals. But it is a subdued model, without the extroverted intensity and pictorial density often marking the medium. Mr. Morrison, whose work incorporates mural-making, video documentary, social activism and indigenous people's rights, makes an impact here through relatively subtlety of means and scale. The museum mural ambiguously depicts a Native American ceremony, with a gray scale palette and in an impressionistic style, while maintaining a vibrant expressivity. The mural's power is half-harnessed by the its very understatement of its effect.



COURTESY PHOTO

In another corner of the main gallery, we get a taste of the socially tuned-in sensibilities of Ms. Hixson, whose time as an MFA candidate included a run for the mayor of Santa Barbara. Her 6 x 6 foot mock-"tiny house" sculpture here, "How to San Losiento (Mi Casita Es Su Casita)," in varying states of finish and scrapiness, is ostensibly for sale and up for auction for the low price of under \$30,000. She takes aim at the exorbitant real estate/rental market in Santa Barbara, while also questioning the murky mix of cultural histories in the area, between Mexican, Spanish and imperialist forces.

Ms. Hixson also shows a loud, fiery painting, "Fire/birds of Paradise," slyly cross-stitching the visual charm of an exotic blossom and the peril of incendiary outbursts, a brand of angst in the news in these parts over the past year-and-a-half.

Spot fires, it so happens, also pop up as visual motifs in the fascinating and "against type" fabric art of Kayla Mattes, whose centerpiece is called "Firewall," a term of multiple meanings. Fire itself is a character in the

large, complex pictorial mesh of the piece, along with the implied issues of security in the word "firewall," soft-to-the-touch bricks, a gaggle of little yellow sad (and barfing) emoticon faces and references to modern questions both anguishing and trivial—such as the phrase "will Moviepass survive?"

Ms. Mattes puts the metaphorical pin pain in what is presumably the comfort craft of needlepoint, and other fabric crafty techniques. On another wall, she shows fabric signs, as if protest rally-ready posters, consisting simply of corporate Twitter responses to flashpoint moments in the Trump era, from Skittles, Tic-Tac and TIKI brand products, the latter disavowing any connection to Charlottesville's neo-Nazi TIKI-gang. The art's ironically plush surfaces do anything but soft-peddle the underlying message of social concern.

With this piece, and others in the Museum, young artists are finding personal routes to expressing what it means to be an artist in this historical moment, to be alive, alert, fired-up, and now with MFAs in the back pocket. ■

MOBY DICK RESTAURANT
Now serving two spectacular seafood Towers, Captain Ahab's Feast and Poseidon's Platter.
OPEN DAILY FROM 7 AM TO 9 PM • 7 DAYS A WEEK
229 Ocean View, Santa Barbara • Mobydick.com • 805-965-6599

me to Ste
KINETIC LAB GIVE

Correspondent
Wednesday and
HSSB Ballet Studio
events.ucsb.edu/event/
893-2064

Whited is UCSB's
dance department's
youngest member, and
has fallen to him to
Kinetic Lab, which
choreog-
the first time they
a piece in front of an
UCSB juniors,
in the Lab are given five
time limit, and a maximum
And Whited brings not
knowledge of dance, but must
a dancing flock through
hours of nerves.
they are working through
personal and intense mate-
sary. "That can be scary,
...It becomes a con-
how you can be ethical
those subjects that can be
or domestic violence, or
anxiety, any number of
which are ever present in

mean that audiences are
of an evening—this
to see bodies in motion,
music, and be in the
of some brilliant minds.
choreographers chosen
are Guillermo Castro,
Juan, Lexi Cipriano, Wes
Joyceline Fekete, Morgan
Lillian Gonzalez, Colson
Mason Teichert, and their
diverse as they are, from
ballet to hip hop. The
designers work with sophom-
designers and senior costume
Schemenauer's "Saint of
is set to open the first half, a
all-female quintet set to Max
er's modern classical music and
led by the iconography and tale
of Arc.
sculpt" by Colson Lynn is a col-
oration with his dancers set to
chronic music by Iku and Jon Hop-
us. This is a lot more abstract and
intimate, and Whited compares it to
the physical architecture of Pilobolus
dance. Morgan Geraghty's "Coalesce"
a trio that works in a very quiet
understated way with sudden bursts
movement.