

THE *Current*

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Art for the People

In Gabriel Cardenas's brightly colored mural, the sun shines onto the earth, nourishing red-and-purple trees that produce life-giving oxygen and diminish — in their own small way — the carbon footprint left by human industrialization.

"The sun is what gives us life," Cardenas, a fourth-year student at UC Santa Barbara said of the art piece that took root as an idea and blossomed into a mural. "Trees take up carbon dioxide and give us oxygen," added the environmentalist who majors in sociology with a minor in art. His representational trees are a way of trying to "build up" ones that have been taken away.

Cardenas' vision is the latest to be realized on a canvas that doubles as the street-facing wall of an apartment building in Isla Vista. The project, part of the UCSB Urban Art Workshop, was both quarterly coursework and practical experience for its participants, and an act of community building. Approximately 20 students, under the direction of instructor Jeff Paige, developed the concept, put it through an approval process and exercised their artistry on the wall at 6568 Sabado Tarde. Property management firm Meridien Group and the property's owner, also participants in the project, were on hand to celebrate with the artists at the mural's unveiling on Thursday, December 3.

Other artists who participated in this project include Michelle Sharp, Madeline Reed, Kourtney Pham, Leila Youssefi, Roberto Perez, Silvia Quach, Tyler Smith, Madison Dykstra, Madyson Egan, Ava Selbach and Allie Sullberg.

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.