

UC SANTA BARBARA

# THE *Current*

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## **Creativity on Display**

It's said creativity has no bounds — something first- and second-year [Masters of Fine Arts](#) (MFA) students at UC Santa Barbara will demonstrate in their annual [Open Studio](#) on Friday, Nov. 2, from 5 to 10 p.m. in the campus's Harder Studios at Harder Stadium. It is free and open to the public.

The exhibition, "Flagged," features diverse works representing patriotism, identity, globalization and democracy, said Maiza Hixson, an MFA graduate student and a co-organizer of the event. Exhibiting artists are Hixson, Serene Blumenthal, Kio Griffith, Madeleine Eve Ignon, Adam Jahnke, Megan Koth, Kayla Mattes, Elisa Ortega Montilla, Andrew Morrison, Marshall Sharpe, Thomas Stoeckinger, Echo Theohar, Christopher Velasco and David Wesley White.

"Each artist contributed to the exhibition with performance, sculpture, painting and multimedia artworks that speak to these themes in both personal and politically urgent ways," Hixson noted. "This exhibition is a catalyst for a conversation about the U.S. in relation to the larger world and contemporary culture in general."

Open Studios, according to Hixson, offers the artists the chance to provide a behind-the-scenes window into their studio practices. "As an artist, I am passionate about sharing my creative process with people and hearing their feedback on what interests them about my work," she said. "This back-and-forth is rewarding for me because it means that my art does not exist in a vacuum and is informed by engagement with others. Conversations often influence the direction of my work and so having people visit my studio might inspire me to make something new or

develop an idea even further.”

What makes the Open Studios exhibition unique among art shows, Hixson said, is that it allows the public to see where an artist creates. “The studios are where art is living and breathing and where visitors can become insiders,” she explained. “They can experience and observe what it means to be a working artist grappling with the world of ideas through new materials and creative methods.”

UCSB is well known for its interdisciplinary approach in science, engineering and the humanities, and the MFA artists are no exception. Many, she said, work in ways that involve algorithms, artificial intelligence, language and text, film, the humanities, environmental science and even economics.

“Even if you are not interested in art, you may discover something that resonates with you and your particular field of study,” Hixson said. “Contemporary art is relevant to almost every aspect of human thought and daily life and this is an amazing opportunity to engage first-hand with fascinating thinkers and makers shaping the visual culture of today.”

Harder Studios are located beneath the bleachers at Harder Stadium, closest to Stadium Road. The entrance can be found on the eastern side of the bleachers — signage will be visible on the day of the exhibition. Ticketed parking is available in Lot 30 across the street from the stadium.

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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.