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## UCSD VISUAL ART DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES STUDENT FILM SCREENING Screening to Showcase Film and Video Works by Interdisciplinary Artists

La Jolla, CA – In conjunction with the Graduate Visual Arts Department at the University of California – San Diego MFA student Open Studios on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> from 2-8 pm, a rare opportunity will be had for the Southern California community to view many works only seen in galleries or film festivals. The Graduate Visual Arts Department at UCSD is announcing its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Open Studios Film Screening. The screening will take place at 4pm in the Visual Arts Performance Space and is free and open to the public.

Over a dozen short films and videos will be screened by film and videomakers who have been working outside of a traditional film program. “UCSD is not where you go to graduate school if you want to make Hollywood blockbusters. This MFA program is about working on your art-making and practices,” says 3<sup>rd</sup> year MFA candidate, Cathy de la Cruz. “I learned the basics of film and video production as an undergrad. My whole life has been about studying film history and theory. I came to UCSD because I wanted to be able work on where my art practices were going next. I have learned far more through collaborations with sculptors, photographers, and painters than I would have in a very competitive Hollywood-focused environment,” de la Cruz goes on to say. de la Cruz will be screening clips from her final MFA film at the Open Studios screening, which she and fellow 3<sup>rd</sup> year MFA student, Kelly Pendergrast have co-organized.

Conversely, many artists come to UCSD’s MFA program and don’t intend to be filmmakers. “I took a video class a year after college and my video work was generally experimental with just sort of a rough understanding, but I didn’t really do any video work seriously,” says another 3<sup>rd</sup> year MFA candidate, Kate Hoffman whose short animation will premiere at the Open Studios film screening. Hoffman’s MFA show will consist of her small-scale sculptures presented in a gallery setting and will also include projections of her sculptures coming to life through animation. Hoffman’s current work is the first time she has integrated video technologies into a larger body of work. Hoffman refers to her work as a “moving sculpture,” and says, “This MFA program has worked for me in the sense that there have been no restrictions. Just being around my peers who are filmmakers has given me perspective on different approaches to making art.” Hoffman believes that the Open Studios film screening will be a great way for her to see if these animations can function on their own as single channel videos.

Other MFA artists in the screening include animator, Robert Beacraft who spent a year and a half making his epic 12-minute animated film shot on 16mm. Beacraft took experimental animation to the test by incorporating everything from photocopies of live action stills shot on VHS and then animating them on 16mm, to manually rewinding his film camera in order to shoot over what he had already shot and give his animation a ghostly sense of superimposition through animation on top of animation.

Elyse Montague will be screening an excerpt from his upcoming half-hour long short, *Owls Head*. Montague financed the DV short with funds he was awarded from the prestigious Princess Grace Foundation grant, which he won last year. While Montague's video piece is one of the more narrative of the bunch, he comes with years worth of experimental filmmaking behind him. Montague is describing his film as "queer fantasy" as it deals with a transgendered person's haunting memories of a deceased lover. The video was shot on location in Montague's home state of Maine and boasts impressive camerawork that adds depth to the significance the landscape plays in the film. Montague's past work is distributed through the highly respected New York based, Women Make Movies.

Dolissa Medina, a 1<sup>st</sup> year MFA candidate has completed three short films since she has been in the Visual Arts program at UCSD. The filmmaker has completed over 10 films in the past 8 years and judging by pieces she has created since moving from San Francisco to La Jolla less than six months ago, she is not losing momentum anytime soon. Medina's films have screened internationally in Rotterdam, Germany, Toronto, Mexico City and all over the United States. Medina's latest, *The Moon Song of Assassination* closes the book on JFK and turns the conspiracy lens on slain Tejano pop star, Selena's "ascension into America's pantheon of martyred cultural heroes," says Medina's artist statement.

Other artists participating in the screening include Rachel Thompson whose work has been performed at the Knitting Factory (NY), Redcat (L.A.), The Library of Congress (D.C.), and more. Nico Herbst will be screening his latest video piece *Cosmo* and has shown his work internationally and has upcoming screenings and performances on the East Coast. New Zealander, Kelly Pendergrast will be screening excerpts from her follow-up to her award winning, *Why I Ate Myself* which was a comedic hybrid of live-action and animation that has screened extensively around the world. Gretchen Mercedes is probably the only MFA student who currently calls home, the USA, Mexico, and Australia. It is because of this prolific travel that Mercedes captures some of the most unique images available to any visual artist.

To find out about the rest of the eclectic artists participating in the UCSD MFA Open Studios Film Screening, go to: <http://ucsdopenstudios.com> where you can find artist statements, bios, work samples/images by all of the artists participating in UCSD MFA Open Studios Film Screening, as well as directions to the event.

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