

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 7, 2015**

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**[Tom Franco Co-Lab](#)**

**Co-Lab** features alumnus Tom Franco + Firehouse Art Collective + UCSC students + alumni + special guests

**Exhibition Dates:**

Thursday, February 5, 2015 - Friday, March 13, 2015

**Public reception at the Sesnon Gallery at Porter College:**

Thursday, February 5, 5:00pm-7:30pm

Artist LECTURE - Thursday, February 5, 7:30pm-8:30pm

Tom Franco: *The Artist Community Collaborative Experience*

LECTURE LOCATION: UC Santa Cruz Music Center Recital Hall

To kick off our yearlong celebration of UC Santa Cruz's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Sesnon Gallery is thrilled to present an innovative exhibition collaboration and performance series with UCSC alumnus Tom Franco and his Firehouse Art Collective, along with UCSC students, alumni and special guests. This collaboration is a compelling example of how UCSC graduates are truly open to new ideas.

This Co-Lab project is part of a Porter College course called *Curatorial Practice*, taught by Sesnon Gallery Director Shelby Graham with Tom Franco. This course will cultivate a creative community through a collaborative exhibition format, open mic events, performance collectives, discussions and murals. The students will learn participatory aspects of exhibition development, promotion, art handling and installation, including a chance to paint collaborative murals inside and outside of the Sesnon Gallery.

Tom Franco has invited a host of alumni artists to perform at the Sesnon Gallery and Porter College.

Public events with special guests:

- **Thursday, Feb. 12:** [Tyler MacNiven](#) "Big In Bollywood" 6pm video night
- **Thursday, Feb. 19:** [Matteo \(Matt\) Lovik](#) acoustic set with Mount Saint Elias band
- **Thursday, Feb. 26:** [Dorian Cohen's Mixed Media Mixer](#) - featuring musical acts, live painters and videographers
- **Friday, March 6:** [P L a N E T S The Dark Woods](#) at Porter College outdoor stage

*All events take place in the Sesnon Gallery unless otherwise noted.*

**NEW Sesnon Gallery hours**

Tuesday – Saturday, 12:00–5:00 p.m.

Open LATE: Wednesday and Thursday 12:00-8:00 p.m.

**About Tom Franco:**

Tom Franco is an artist based in Berkeley, California, and the founder and director of the Firehouse Art Collective. Franco was an Art major at UC Santa Cruz (earning his BA in 2002), and then studied ceramics at the California College of Arts in Oakland (CCA). His work as a sculptor and painter has been the foundation for the Tom Franco Co-Lab, which is comprised of works done in tandem with one or more artists. Franco’s philosophy around art practice has always been centered on collaboration, with other influences on his work such as dance ensemble, Tai Chi and martial arts. These practices provided the backbone for his view that visual arts should be experienced in groups instead of in isolation and that performance is a central element in understanding visual representation.

Franco’s Firehouse Art Collective, a nonprofit founded in 2005, is a pioneering project that is changing the arts community in the East Bay by providing spaces for local artists of all disciplines to co-create community and culture, and for art patrons and collectors to purchase cutting-edge art of lasting value. Firehouse’s five locations include gallery and public art exhibits, curated live art events, open studio art walk, performance theater, workshops, lectures, artists studios, film club movie nights, music events, living spaces and organic gourmet food.

A Bay Area native, Franco grew up in Palo Alto, California, in a creative family. His mother, Betsy Franco, is an acclaimed author, and his brothers David and James are award-winning film and stage actors. “In my family, you were never cool, you never had anything good to say, unless you were talking about art,” says Franco.

**Sponsors:** An Open Classroom Grant from the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA) sponsors this project, along with the UCSC Arts Division, Art Department, Porter College, Alumni Association and alumni donors.

Tom Franco’s work can also be found in, [“50/50” 50 Artists from 5 decades](#). UC Santa Cruz’s 50th Anniversary Alumni exhibition featuring local and visiting alumni artists from Santa Cruz to New York City. The exhibition is at the Porter Faculty Gallery at UC Santa Cruz’s Porter College and on the Westside of Santa Cruz at the R. Blitzer Gallery during the month of February, 2015.

Opening receptions for the 50/50 exhibition are February 5, in conjunction with Co-Lab at UC Santa Cruz, and the following day, First Friday, February 6 from 6:00pm - 9:00pm, with live music at the Blitzer Gallery.

Parking at UC Santa Cruz is available in metered areas located near the Sesnon Gallery in the Porter College lot. Event parking with attendants is \$4. Additional parking can be found at the Performing Arts lot near the Music Center Recital Hall.

*The Sesnon Gallery encourages interdisciplinary discourse through the lens of the arts.*  
<http://art.ucsc.edu/galleries/sesnon/current>

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