

5/24/12

For Immediate Release

Contact: Shelby Graham, sesnon@ucsc.edu, 831-459-2314

Gabi Kirk gekirk@ucsc.edu, 408-966-3773

<https://sites.google.com/a/ucsc.edu/beyond-the-gallery/>

UCSC Students, Sesnon Gallery partner with City of Santa Cruz for pop-up art projects

May 24, 2012, Santa Cruz, CA: University of California Santa Cruz students are breaking out of the traditional “white cube” art gallery and seeking empty storefronts on Pacific Avenue to showcase their work. These students are participants in an experimental two credit studio class, “Beyond the Gallery: Artists as Collaborative Agents for Community Change.” Thanks to a generous grant from the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts (UCIRA), Shelby Graham, curator of the Sesnon Art Gallery at Porter College, has helped over a dozen students learn exhibition techniques while exploring their role as artists and activists. The City of Santa Cruz also contributed funds.

The projects range from a free photo booth at the downtown Farmer’s Market, to bottles filled with symbols of memories of Santa Cruz, to a constructed redwood “forest” outside in the Abbott Square Courtyard. Artwork will be shown at the Museum of Art and History, the Rittenhouse Building windows, and other venues. The public is invited to join the students on Friday June 1, during First Friday Art tour and encounter these exciting, participatory installations.

Empty storefronts and reduced arts funding are common in the current economy. Yet art can help revive communities and urban spaces. Public spaces provide an opportunity for artists to reach audiences who would not visit a traditional gallery, or to build large installations impossible in smaller venues. In the spirit of community change, some of the students have collaborated with environmental studies students or created projects with environmental and social justice messages. For instance, “Nature BeWILDered,” by Sam Moll and Gabi Kirk, encourages patrons to blur the lines between civilization and wilderness through a constructed redwood forest and interactive writing pieces, installed at the Museum of Art and History.

Aside from this course, the Sesnon Gallery operates a museum-oriented program for educational purposes. The gallery organizes an annual schedule of exhibitions that represents a broad range of methods, media and cultures, in a local, regional, and national context, with a focus on contemporary practice. The Sesnon Gallery works to integrate a broad range of methods, media, and cultures into the lives of a broader community. The “Beyond the Gallery” students are: Jen Brown, Leia Delabahan, Vivian Fu, Kristen Gautier-Downes, Chelsea Gutierrez, Elizabeth Hibbard, Gabi Kirk, Grace Kistler-Fair, Fred Liang, Miguel Libarnes, Charlotte Marriott, Sam Moll, Zachary Livingston, Dawson Timpany, and Dmitri Zurita. For more information on “Beyond the Gallery”, including a list of installations and venues, please visit <https://sites.google.com/a/ucsc.edu/beyond-the-gallery/>.

###