

For Immediate Release: May 4, 2026

Contact: press@museum.ucsb.edu

**Art, Design & Architecture Museum at UC Santa Barbara Presents
the 2026 MFA Thesis Exhibition Opening Saturday, May 23, 2026**

May 23–June 7, 2026

Reception: May 23, 5:30pm



(Santa Barbara, CA) — The Art, Design & Architecture Museum and the Department of Art at UC Santa Barbara are pleased to announce the 2026 Master of Fine Arts exhibition *Fault Lines*, featuring the work of graduating artists Tiffany Aiello, Alexis Childress, Hope Christofferson, Emily d'Achiardi, Negar Farajiani, Vivek Karthikeyan, and KeyShawn Scott. *Fault Lines* brings together each artists' physical and conceptual lines of inquiry into a shifting, evolving conversation, where investigation and creating tensions and new worlds are possible. These artists break with linearity and overturn expectations for lines to mark

boundaries. Collectively their work asks visitors to examine their own perceptions of fault lines as not only splits, but also openings in existing, constructed, and imagined realms.

An installation by d'Achiardi challenges visitors' understandings of fact and fiction through a generated experience with real and invented news headlines. Drawing on Buddhist and Hindu contemplative practices, Karthikeyan's expanded cinema installation explores ways in which moving images can model our subjective experience of consciousness. Handmade anthropomorphic animal masks and paintings by Aiello engage with queer and neurodivergent identities at the intersection of simulation, reality, and performance.

Christofferson's creation of new realities connects human design to nature through living spaces for animals and humans. Childress pairs digital sculpture with a reconstructed corn field to highlight the systemic forces of racism and related experiences of isolation within rural topographies. A full-scale grocery store aisle by Scott demonstrates how the physicality of barriers, like security glass in these spaces, spotlight the social and cultural policing of minoritized bodies. Farajiani exhibits three interrelated components: soft sculpture, video, and public artwork, located outside the museum. Her project speaks to embedded networks of resilience and memory, both in materials and collaborators on campus and the artist's homeland of Iran. Fault lines, both metaphorical and material, disrupt our understanding of the nature of boundaries as impenetrable. Upon closer inspection, these apparent divides are invitations to transgress and generate anew.

Fault Lines is organized by the Art, Design & Architecture Museum and the Department of Art at UC Santa Barbara. Curatorial text is by Alida Jakobson, PhD candidate, and Kristin Yinger, PhD student, in the Department of History of Art and Architecture. The exhibition is made possible thanks to the support of the Division of Humanities and Fine Arts.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alexis Childress is a visual artist born in Illinois and received her BFA from Georgia State University. Inspired by *Astro-Blackness*, her work uses 2D and 3D digital sculpture and collage to explore Black American nationalism, systems of power, and the inception of a black identity framework within emerging techno-cultural assemblages, algorithms, and digital networks. Through a combination of installation and digital art, her work confronts the concept of constructed reality, creating worlds that become reflections of the broken systems of society.

Emily D'achiardi is an internet artist exploring the intersections of digital culture, memory, and intimacy. Emily received a BA in art history from Reed College and is currently pursuing an MFA at UC Santa Barbara. Emily creates digital works that use the browser as a site of memory, intimacy, and emotional residue. Her work foregrounds fragments, repetitions, and the quiet systems that script online feeling."

Hope Christofferson works with nature to amplify human imagination. With a deep love for creative problem solving, she often looks at natural design and animal behavior to inform the work she makes. As an illustrator, her work stems from a hybrid source of transmutation and communication. Recently the California coastline has inspired a series of wondrously collaborative works that roam the shorelines of reality and dream, merging orchids, ferns, corals, and people into artworks that swim free in our shared fantasia.

KeyShawn Scott works across drawing and installation. His drawings celebrate Black culture while addressing Black experiences and challenging stereotypes. His installations critically engage with American education systems and the ways grocery store settings oversimplify complex systemic issues.

Negar Farajiani is a multimedia artist. Her thesis explores weaving as a social and embodied practice. Drawing on her experience as an artist, mother, and migrant, she approaches weaving not only as a material technique but also as a way of building community, memory, and resilience. With a focus on socially engaged art and networking, her work builds connections between individuals and communities. Through collective weaving, installation, and her essay film, the project creates temporary spaces for gathering and storytelling, both inside and outside the museum.

Tiffany Aiello's thesis project explores the relationship between identity and nonhuman performance, using objects like puppets, costumes, masks and digital avatars as vessels for expression.

Vivek Karthikeyan is interested in reimagining moving image as a medium of phenomenological perception rather than visual storytelling. Drawing from disciplines including cognitive psychology, South Asian philosophy, and contemporary philosophy of mind, he creates immersive hybrid installations that combine traditional time-and-lens based video, sound, creative coding, and VR technology.

RELATED PROGRAMMING

Please visit the AD&A Museum website for a full calendar of events:

<https://www.museum.ucsb.edu/events/>

Public Reception

Saturday, May 23, 5:30-7:30pm

AD&A Museum

Mark the date for the public reception of this year's MFA Exhibition. Light refreshments will be served.

MFA Roundtable Discussion

Thursday, May 28, 5-6:50pm

Interactive Learning Pavilion / ILP 2101

Hear directly from the graduating artists about their thesis exhibition.

Self as Montage in Latent Space: Contemplating Consciousness Through Moving Image

Thursday, June 4, 2-3pm

AD&A Museum

Join for a guided walkthrough with graduating artist Vivek Karthikeyan. A discussion will follow with faculty from departments of Psychology & Brain Sciences, Religious Studies, Germanic & Slavic Studies, and Media Arts and Technology.

-END-

ABOUT THE ART, DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM

The Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California Santa Barbara is both a teaching museum, committed to the development of critical thinking and visual literacy in support of the University's goals of education, research and service, and a resource for the wider Santa Barbara Community. Its mission is to stimulate research, support artistic practice, and generate original programming through exhibitions and the Museum's permanent collections. These include the Architecture and Design Collection, one of the most relevant architectural archives in North America, focused on the development of modern architecture in Southern California, and an encyclopedic art collection, with holdings ranging from the Ancient Americas to today.

AD&A MUSEUM INFORMATION + DIRECTIONS

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the AD&A Museum is free, unless otherwise noted. Wednesday-Sunday: 12pm to 5pm. Located at University of California, Santa Barbara,

552 University Road, Santa Barbara, CA. On campus regular parking is \$8 for the full day. Visit www.museum.ucsb.edu for details or call 805-893-2951.

From Santa Barbara and points south: 101 North to Highway 217 exit (to Airport and UCSB). Stay left; enter campus at Henley Gate. Take the first right at the roundabout onto Mesa Ave. At the third traffic light, turn left onto Ocean Road. Continue on Ocean Road, stay in left lane through the intersection of Ocean Ave at El Colegio Road. Turn left into Parking Structure #22.

From points north: 101 South to Goleta, exit at Los Carneros Road. Turn right at exit ramp and continue south. Turn left onto El Colegio Road. Continue until the West Campus Entrance traffic light and bear right. At the next traffic light, turn right onto Ocean Road. Turn left into Parking Structure #22.