

Footprints

The Next Generation's Artistic Examination of Climate Change

By Daisy Scott / VOICE

EXPERTLY PAIRING REDISCOVERED, MASS-PRODUCED OBJECTS WITH THE BREATHTAKING BEAUTY OF THE NATURAL WORLD, *Footprints* begs viewers to confront the complex nature of the ongoing climate crisis with empathy for the next generation. Created by the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara's Teen Arts Collective, the show grants insight into local teenagers' hopes and concerns as they call for community and worldwide environmental action. The exhibition will remain on display through May 29th.

"This year's TAC final project, *Footprints*, provides an opportunity for the voices of this generation of young people to express their concern with the environmental landscape that they have inherited, through a variety of media and approaches," said MCASB Chief Curator Alexandra Terry.

Footprints is the first exhibition to occupy the MCASB's Community Classroom, which will feature rotating displays throughout the summer highlighting how local artists and individuals are addressing climate change. The show is entirely student-created, with the museum's six TAC students working alongside museum staff for months to come up with a theme and ultimately curate and market the exhibition.

"The Teen Arts Collective at MCASB serves as a safe space for the dialogue and discovery of contemporary art and culture," explained Terry. "The program aims to inspire critical thinking and supports the cultivation of diverse perspectives."

Upon entering the exhibition, viewers immediately sense the strong emotions and messages captured within each student's work. Along the first wall, Santa Barbara High School senior Shea Lily Whelan's *ANTHROPOGENIC* incorporates video, paintings, photographs, and even a dead monarch butterfly and car parts to confront agriculture and resource exploitation.

The adjacent wall features Dos Pueblos High School senior Elle's collection of cyanotype prints titled *In Lackèch*, after Luis Valdez's Mayan poem (meaning "I am another yourself"). The prints depict people surrounded by flowers to show viewing the environment as "an extension of oneself."



ANTHROPOGENIC by Shea Lily Whelan



What We Leave Behind by Zoe Javanbakht

DPHS sophomore Nico Weldeab's *Repetition* also examines the connection between humans and nature, pairing a sculpture of the Greek god of nature, Pan, with a painting highlighting local endangered plants.

SBHS senior Sam Quinonez's *Homestead* shifts viewers' attention to the issue of incorporating sustainability into everyday life, creating a homey nook

featuring only found furniture. DPHS junior Zarina Scheglov's *moda sin filtro* also questions society's consumerism by placing thrifted clothing items on a pedestal and canvas.

In the center of the gallery, San Marcos High School sophomore Zoe Javanbakht's *What We Leave Behind* reimagines the region's ecosystem as a terrarium. A large pair of adult hands pass off the bowl to two smaller plaster hands, speaking to prior generations' negligence and the importance of youth activism.

When viewed as a collective body of work, viewers are left with greater understanding of the multifaceted threats facing our environment and the need to take action on personal, local, and national levels.

These feelings are only heightened by the Community Classroom's connection to the rest of MCASB's gallery, which features the ongoing *Through What Agency?* exhibition of professional artists' responses to climate change. Featuring works by The Harrisons, Jacob Kirkegaard, and Social Print Lab, the show incorporates sketches, flags, film, and even an immersive audio experience to examine a multitude of issues connected to climate change.

In pairing this long-term show with rotating exhibitions, MCASB hopes to spark meaningful, community-driven conversations through art.

"I wanted to put activism and art and conversation and dialogue all on the same platform to say all of this is important and necessary," Terry said.

Open 11am-5pm Wed, Fri, & Sa; 12-5pm Sun; 11am-8pm Thu. • Free admission • www.mcasantabarbara.org



Photos by Daisy Scott

Repetition by Nico Weldeab

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