

January 29, 2016 | By Sheena Ghanbari

## UC San Diego Visual Arts Students Break Boundaries at the Mall



*“Date Night,” at SDAI project space in Horton Plaza. Photo by UC San Diego, Dept. of Visual Arts.*

The University of California, San Diego is an institution known for achieving scientific and creative innovations. So it is no surprise that the Department of Visual Arts broke boundaries and crossed audiences when it recently transformed a 2,500 square-foot, San Diego Art Institute ([SDAI](#)) project-space at Horton Plaza into an unexpected home for innovative contemporary art.

The project, entitled, “Date Night,” involved UC San Diego students Trevor Amery, Kim Schreiber, Morgan Mandalay, Seth Ferris, Jessica Frelund, Javier Fresneda, Dustin Brons and Audrey Hope, who helped plan the weekend-long program involving local contemporary artists.

The endeavor emerged from a conversation between M.F.A. candidate Amery and SDAI Executive Director Ginger Shulick Porcella. SDAI frequently exhibits the Department of Visual Arts faculty and student projects.

“I think the aesthetics and dialogue being generated in the UC San Diego Visual Arts Department is akin to the goals and messaging being disseminated by SDAI,” noted Porcella.

Through a generous invitation from SDAI, the visual arts graduate students decided to connect members of the larger San Diego arts community to create an immersive weekend of artistic programming. “Date Night” featured booths by Carla, Friend’s Collective, Helmuth Project, Poderes Unidos, A Ship in the Woods, Space 4 Art, SPF15, TARP Reform, UAG and Untitled Space.

Performances, screenings and poetry readings were also scheduled throughout the weekend.

“There was palpable energy during the installation process,” said M.F.A candidate and SPF15 founder Mandalay as he described the week leading up to the “Date Night” showcase.

Several artists integrated interactive elements to engage the audience. M.F.A. alumnus David White presented his project, “TARP Reform.” Visually, the project mirrored a carnival ball toss with a yellow tarp backdrop and a black-and-white graphic displaying figures ranging from economist Milton Friedman to local developer Stacey Lankford-Pennington. Funds collected relative to the art piece fittingly contribute toward yellow tarps that are distributed to the local homeless population. Alumna Ash Eliza Smith screened a special cut of, “Mauls Mauls,” a film she had coincidentally shot at Horton Plaza. Smith blends documentary and fiction in this site-specific exploration of futuristic cliques in a postmodern mall.

With 10 formal exhibitors and a full film and performance schedule, Porcella described “Date Night” this way: “unexpected, raucous, and uncanny in the best possible way.”

To learn more about the project please visit the [website](#).



*Elizabeth Stringer (left) Kim Garcia, UC San Diego Visual Arts alumni and Friends Collective members. Photo by UC San Diego, Dept. of Visual Arts.*

## MEDIA CONTACT

**Sheena Ghanbari**, 858-822-7755, [sghanbari@ucsd.edu](mailto:sghanbari@ucsd.edu)

UC San Diego's [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via [studio@ucsd.edu](mailto:studio@ucsd.edu). To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.