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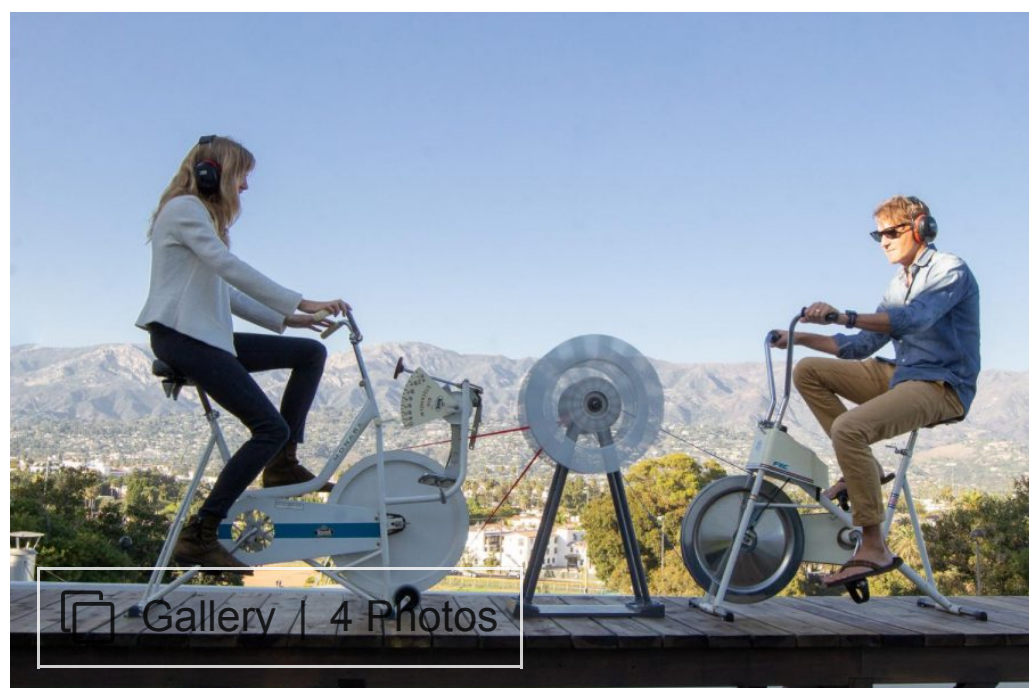
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New Atkinson Gallery exhibition questions what it means to belong



Marlena Hughes (<https://www.thechannels.org/staff/?writer=Marlena%20Hughes%20>)


Gallery attendees try out the interactive bike sculpture created by Artist and UCSB professor Jane Mulfinger featured in the solo exhibition West is South on Friday, Oct. 4,

2019, at the Atkinson Gallery at City College in Santa Barbara, Calif. The bikes ring bells when peddled and were built in the UCSB woodshop lab by Mulfinger using exercise bikes from the 1960's.

Madeleine Sydkvist

(<https://www.thechannels.org/staff/?writer=Madeleine%20Sydkvist>), Staff Writer

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City College's Atkinson Gallery presented its first exhibit of the semester, "West is South", a visual journey through solo artist Jane Mulfinger's search for a sensation of belonging.

With a painted compass spreading across the Atkinson Gallery (<http://gallery.sbcc.edu/>) floor and two connected vintage exercise bikes facing each other with cowbells dangling in between, dozens of people came to experience the creativity of Mulfinger. The brightly colored compass decorated the grey-brown gallery floor with tripods mounted projectors standing at each point.

They played videos filmed when Mulfinger walked alongside trails and streets in each cardinal direction around Santa Barbara. Using City College as her base, she took her Canon and walked North, South, West and East for miles while capturing her journey.

"I've never done a video project this intensively

before and decided to use some of my naivety as an element of that work, like leaving it raw and not terribly well done on purpose, because I wanted it to feel like you're really there walking with me," Mulfinger said.

She found inspiration for her exhibit from a geological discovery about how the land in Santa Barbara originates from the San Diego-Tijuana border area.

"I came across Tanya Atwater's geological work and learned that this piece of land once belonged to what is now the border region," Mulfinger said as she explained how two tectonic plates were rubbing against each other thousands of years ago as a "chunk of land broke off, moved northwards, slammed into and shaped what is now California, which is why we have this coastline facing South."

This lead Mulfinger into questioning how the spatial disorientation and sense of belonging connect in people's lives and she started to collect texts (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1F7MR7e-wCv9huBnNjRXq5oiLzlybSa1Cm9519_CB3ME/view/edit_requested=true) from the general public about their thoughts and feelings towards the subject.

"It started with my own spatial disorientation when I moved to Santa Barbara, I could not believe that I didn't know which way was North and which way was South," she said. "I want it to be an invitation to people to look and think and come up with their own conclusions."

People continuously came and went throughout the evening as students, faculty and locals all came together to discuss their thoughts and

perceptions of the exhibit.

“I like how [Mulfinger] talked about how the actual soil we’re on once came from Mexico,” said Armando Ramos, art department chair. “If you said that to some people it could be perceived as kind of disturbing, but really that’s how America is, our culture is basically from everywhere.”

“West is South” is the first exhibit for new gallery director John Connelly, who resonated with Mulfinger’s feeling of space disorientation when he first moved to Santa Barbara a few years back.

“You’re looking at the ocean thinking you’re facing West but your really looking at the South,” Connelly said. “I’m looking for artists that resonate with me, and that I think will resonate with the students.”

“The gallery is open for the whole community, it’s a beautiful and pretty unusual resource that we have here where we highlight student work but also welcome artists to our campus to inspire,” he continued.

‘West is South’ is a free exhibit at the Atkinson Gallery located at City College East campus in the Humanities Building Room 202. It will be displayed until December 6, 2019.

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