

# Contemporary artist speaks about self-identity and new exhibition

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Cole M. James gives insight about the art featured in the lecture given on Friday morning, Nov. 15, 2019, in the Humanities Building at City College in Santa Barbara, Calif. James' exhibit "Residence 3 Movements" will be open to the public starting Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019 at 5pm at the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation Ojai, Calif.

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An eye-opening journey through interdisciplinary artist Cole M. James's work is now turning into a three-month-long art exhibit called "Cole M. James in Residence: 3 Movements."

James gave an insightful lecture at City College Friday to discuss the depth of the artwork that will be shown at the exhibit.

Born in Chicago and raised in the Inland Empire, James began a career in art at Riverside Community College and went on to receive a Bachelor's degree at California State San Bernardino.

Not only does James spend time on creating meaningful pieces of art, they are also an activist, assistant professor at Otis College of Art and Design and an advocate for students that have dealt with or deal with incarceration.

John Connelly, Atkinson Gallery director, said he brought James to campus to speak because he knew it would inspire students to see an artist that began at a City College.

"I think it's really helpful for our students to see James's journey as an artist throughout [their] education and afterwards as well with [their] own personal journey," he said.

James also talked about influential artwork that covered topics like racial divide and what hardships African Americans face every day.

Education, knowledge and community are also topics prominent in James's work.

Throughout the lecture, they expressed that a huge part of their artwork involved their personal journey with their roots and background.

James' inspiration came from their family and their journey, empathy and self-identity.

"Part of my conversation about making art is about me understanding me," the artist said.

When trying to find inspiration for a piece, James explained the visual emphasis of their process. Taking pictures and sketching drawings, they try to find a connection between the two mediums.

"My subconscious talks to me through images," they said.

James showed the audience a handful of pieces, each with a different theme that correlated with a feeling they've experienced throughout their life.

For example, a video they created called "Manchego" detailed the expanding and collapsing

of society and herself.

The video closes with a spoken word segment with James's voice. "The weight of my intellect is costing me my faith in humanity," they lamented. This arose many questions from students.

James related this quote to their belief that education is not always as accessible as it should be, and followed up by telling a story about how they were once told they couldn't change make a difference in the world.

"I took that as a challenge," they said.

James ended their lecture explaining that once you learn about things that need serious changing, it makes you complicit, "it makes you a part of that".

"Cole M. James in Residence: 3 Movements" will run from Nov. 16-Feb. 29 at the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation in Ojai, Calif.