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ARTS AND CULTURE

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LOCAL ARTISTS ANIMATE STATE STREET WITH LIFE-SIZE SCULPTURE

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) –The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture and City of Santa Barbara are pleased to announce the renewal of the State of the Art Gallery, which features work exclusively by local artists. The sculptures will be mounted on eight designated installation pads located on the State Street corridor from April-June 2018.

The official opening reception will take place at the sculpture sites on First Thursday, April 5, from 5-8 p.m. In addition, the Office of Arts and Culture and City has various events planned with the artists and the exhibitions for First Thursday in April, May and June, as well as pop-up lectures, concerts and workshops.

Each of the eight pieces offers a unique or interactive element and many are centered on celebrating Santa Barbara's local culture, spirit and resilience. "California Love Locks" by Patrick Melroy offers passersby a chance to add a lock to a chain-linked sculpture shaped like the state, symbolizing their place on the map.

"These projects are intended to draw people out of the everyday grind, sparking powerful curiosity and compelling them to play along," said Melroy. He has a second work in the exhibition, "Unity Flag," that features custom flags he crowdsources online through social media and public input. He will lead frequent flag raising and lowering ceremonies.

"Storycatcher Mailbox" by Danielle Siano is multidimensional with one side of the "mailbox" to accept letters of praise, while the other accepts letters of grief. Siano will hold weekly letter readings with guest speakers at the mailbox site and hopes to create a book at the culmination of the project.

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Other featured artists, like the collaborative team of brooke smiley (lowercase is correct) and Daria Izad, are presenting artworks that emphasize the importance of the artistic process and its ability to facilitate healing. Smiley, a lecturer at University of California at Santa Barbara, invites the public to a communal placement of “Permission to Heal” made primarily from sandbags and earth. Luis Velazquez, creator of “Paper Airplane,” a whimsical sculpture weighing in at almost 500 pounds, will teach the dynamics of making planes in any medium to students at the Public Library’s Curiosity Club.

Santa Barbara Mayor Cathy Murillo notes that the sculptures will provide yet another incentive for people to visit downtown. “The city plays an active role in the vitality of downtown Santa Barbara. Celebrating talented local artists, this exhibit is sure to engage both locals and tourists,” said Murillo.

The project was funded with support from the city of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara Beautiful and the Santa Barbara Downtown Organization. Collaborating partners on the project include the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art- Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara Public Library, UCSB, the City Arts Advisory, Downtown Organizations, Santa Barbara Beautiful, Arts Collaborative and Community Arts Workshop, Historic Landmarks Commission and County Arts Commission. For up-to-date information about the project, please visit www.sbac.ca.gov, e-mail art@sbac.ca.gov, or call (805) 568-3992.

The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture is a Division of the County’s Community Services Department, serving as the local governmental umbrella for arts and culture projects and programs within Santa Barbara County. The Office represents a longstanding partnership between the County of Santa Barbara and the City of Santa Barbara. For more than 30 years, both governments have shared resources and staff to maximize support for Santa Barbara arts and culture institutions, programs, initiatives and projects.

Full List of Exhibition Artists and Works:

Michael Irwin, *Hammerhead*
Patrick Melroy, *Public Flag Pole* and *California Love Locks*
Pattie Porter Firestone, *Leaves of Grass*
Danielle Siano, *Storycatcher Mailbox*
brooke smiley and Daria Izad, *Permission to Heal*
Nathan Snyder, *Tesseract*
Luis Velazquez, *Paper Airplane*