

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Arts Council Awards Two Grants to Santa Barbara City College

Santa Barbara, CA – On June 12, the California Arts Council announced its plans to award Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) Foundation two grants: \$17,325 for its Reentry Through the Arts program and \$10,648 for its Veterans in the Arts program. With these awards, the Atkinson Gallery at SBCC will provide hands-on activities designed to develop visual literacy skills and self-expression in both visual and written form to two underserved campus cohorts: formerly incarcerated students and veteran students. Through the yearlong program, each group will work with gallery director Sarah Cunningham, artist Nathan Hayden, and poet Emma Trelles to cultivate a stronger sense of community through shared artistic experiences and personal storytelling, thereby increasing retention and academic success.

Re-Entry Through the Arts: The Atkinson Gallery and the Transitions Program

Based on his own experience discovering art while incarcerated, 2018 SBCC graduate Alberto Lule said, “A program in the arts can help formerly incarcerated students find a voice that they may have forgotten how to use and maybe never learned to use at all, which is the creative voice in us all, wanting to come out and share our wisdom with the universe.” Lule was the student speaker at the 2018 SBCC commencement ceremony. The SBCC Foundation is one of 15 grantees chosen for the Reentry Through the Arts program. At SBCC, the Atkinson Gallery will collaborate with Transitions, a campus program that supports formerly incarcerated students. Through the program, students build a sense of community with the goal of increasing college success by providing creative and meaningful experiences for self-expression that will help students’ re-integration into their communities and ultimately, reduce recidivism. The Reentry Through the Arts program is rooted in the California Arts Council’s belief that the arts are a powerful vehicle for positive change in people, communities and society. Grants support high-quality arts programs for formerly incarcerated men and women. “Projects like the one developed by the Atkinson Gallery and the Transitions Program tie together emotional competence through the arts and community-based support services to equip formerly incarcerated individuals with the tools needed to re-establish their lives,” said Nashormeh Lindo, California Arts Council Chair.

Veterans in the Arts: The Atkinson Gallery and the Veterans Support & Resource Center

Current SBCC art student and veteran Sami Ibrahim said, “Watching the other art students create something out of nothing to make the world better was a revelation for me.” He continued, “Viewing and making art will re-engage veteran students in life and make them realize that they are not forgotten.” SBCC Foundation is one of 34 grantees chosen for the Veterans in the Arts program. Together, the Atkinson Gallery and the SBCC Veterans Support & Resource Center will cultivate a sense of belonging for the veteran student cohort via art and

writing activities that provide valuable opportunities for self-expression. The Veterans in the Arts program is rooted in the California Arts Council's desire to address the needs and improve the lives of California's veterans through the arts. The program seeks to increase equity, access, and opportunities for veterans to participate in quality arts programming that is sensitive and responsive to their unique experiences. Nashormeh Lindo, California Arts Council Chair, said, "The duty is ours to respond to the needs of our veterans and ensure they are not lost. The work of the SBCC Atkinson Gallery and the Veteran Support & Resource Center honors its veteran community by providing a venue for creative expression, camaraderie, and compassion."

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Santa Barbara City College

Santa Barbara City College is a comprehensive community college serving the south coast of Santa Barbara County. Established in 1909, SBCC is renowned as the #1 community college in the nation. The college has a wide range of associate degree and certificate programs, as well as transfer programs that provide the first two years of study toward the baccalaureate degree. Students are attracted to SBCC by virtue of its outstanding faculty, small classes, state-of-the-art facilities, student support services and incredible location. Learn more at <http://sbcc.edu/>

- **Atkinson Gallery:** The Atkinson Gallery is a learning laboratory providing opportunities for hands-on art making and direct engagement with original works of art. The Art Department's showcase for the visual arts, the Gallery hosts contemporary art exhibitions featuring international, national, regional and student artists working in a wide range of styles and media. Learn more at <http://gallery.sbcc.edu/>
- **Transitions Program:** Part of Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), the goal of the Transitions Program is to assist formerly incarcerated individuals to re-integrate into society by pursuing their goal of higher education. Recent studies show that recidivism rates drop from 70% to 13.7% when individuals earn an Associate's Degree from a community college. Through College Success classes, peer mentoring and other educational support activities, students explore practical strategies for empowering themselves to become active, responsible and lifelong learners. Learn more at <http://www.sbcc.edu/eopscare/Transitions.php>
- **Veterans Support & Resource Center:** At SBCC, 169 veterans, 5 active military members, and 26 military family members are enrolled as students in academic transfer and/or vocational training programs. The objective of the The Veterans Support & Resource Center is to offer eligible program participants support to achieve their educational goals by providing academic counseling, career, transfer, tutorial and other services. Learn more at <http://www.sbcc.edu/veteranssupport/>

About the SBCC Foundation

The **SBCC Foundation** has provided Santa Barbara City College with private philanthropic support since 1976, serving as the vehicle through which individuals and organizations may invest in the college and its students. The SBCC Foundation provides more than \$4 million annually for student success programs, scholarships, book grants, and other critical needs of the college in order to support SBCC students as they prepare for careers, transfer to four-year universities, and pursue lifelong learning goals. In 2016, the Foundation launched the *SBCC Promise* in order to provide all local high school graduates with the opportunity to attend SBCC full time at no cost. More than 2,000 students have enrolled in the *SBCC Promise*, which covers all required fees, books, and supplies for up to two years. Visit sbccfoundation.org.

The California Arts Council

The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to advance California through the arts and creativity. The Council is committed to building public will and resources for the arts; fostering accessible arts initiatives that reflect contributions from all of California's diverse populations; serving as a thought leader and champion for the arts; and providing effective and relevant programs and services. Members of the California Arts Council include: Chair Nashormeh Lindo, Vice Chair Larry Baza, Phoebe Beasley, Christopher Coppola, Juan Devis, Kathleen Gallegos, Jaime Galli, Donn K. Harris, Louise McGuinness, Steven Oliver, and Rosalind Wyman. Learn more at www.arts.ca.gov.

- To view a complete listing of all Reentry through the Arts grantees, visit http://arts.ca.gov/programs/files/FY1718_ProjectDescriptions_RTAs.pdf.
- To view a complete listing of all Veterans in the Arts grantees, visit http://arts.ca.gov/programs/files/FY1718_ProjectDescriptions_VIA.pdf.

Image Credits:

- Alberto Lule, a recent SBCC graduate who discovered art while he was incarcerated, discusses his artwork with members of the Santa Barbara Newcomers Club at the Atkinson Gallery
- Sami Ibrahim, current SBCC art major and war veteran, drawing while Rafa Esparza's "for you and the sky" exhibit was being installed at the Atkinson Gallery.

Teaching Artists:

- Sarah Cunningham: <https://www.saltmound.net/>
- Nathan Hayden: <http://www.nathan-hayden.com/>
- Emma Trelles: <http://emmatrelles.com/>