

# Exhibit connects with past

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**SAN MARCOS** — The sun-baked clay depression looks like the mud-cracked bottom of a dry lake.

Now imagine 20 similar hollows, carved from the outlines of the human form, and you will get a mental picture of an art project currently being installed at Cal State San Marcos.

Interweaving the past with the present is the focus behind the project created by college students and Elfin Forest artist Anne Mudge for a binational art exhibit.

The theme is appropriate for a city and college that has been, and will be, growing by leaps and bounds.

"It's a time to acknowledge the past and mark the transition in the process of becoming," said Mudge, with one arm up to its elbow in the clay and sand slurry that will be used to coat the excavated ground.

Mudge and Global Arts Department students are participating in inSITE94, an exhibit of installation and site-specific art by non-profit visual arts groups throughout the region.

inSITE94 involves more than 100 fine and performing artists from a dozen countries and 74 temporary art projects at 37 venues.

The CSSM exhibit, called "Heirloom," aims to show the connection between the past and present, people today with the spirit of yesterday, said Gina Erickson, one of the students.

The project features silhouetted outlines of 20 students' bodies etched in the grass of the library courtyard. They represent contemporary people and also members of the Luiseno tribe, the American Indians who occupied much of North County before colonists arrived, organizers said.

Each student also had to design and inscribe a tile featuring a person or an historical event. Erickson's tile features her



Staff Photo / Don Boomer

**Artist Anne Mudge tells students at Cal State San Marcos how to finish the grass cutouts, part of some 25 inSITE94 art installations.**

deceased grandmother, whose birthday fell on Sept. 21, the day the group completed the project.

"There is always a sense of continuity in people's lives" when memories are kept alive, said Erickson of her choice of tile design.

There are tiles that depict the unsavory side of San Marcos history. One tells the story of an early white settler who found it difficult to "wrest" the original industrious inhabitants from their homes.

"If I had not done it, somebody else would," the settler wrote. "All agree the Indian has no right to public land."

Other tiles recall more light-hearted episodes of life in an isolated valley. One early inhabitant

noted that the people in the valley were indebted to a "Mr. Hatch of the Telephone Central office."

Mr. Hatch had played a phonographic recording on a Saturday night for a far-flung audience. "To be entertained with music by phone is almost as good as living in town," the settler recalled.

Mudge said it is difficult to locate the past in San Marcos, as in all of Southern California. People keep moving from their roots.

But the clues are there, she said. Finding the history requires slowing down and really looking.

The CSSM campus is on Twin Oaks Valley Road, off Highway 78.

The exhibit opened Tuesday and runs through Oct. 30.