



2025/26 Season

Dear Friends and Patrons,

Welcome to the 2025/26 Season here at UC Merced Arts! This year is brimming with performances, exhibitions, and special events that reflect the diversity, creativity, and spirit of our community. Through powerful live performances and exhibitions that spark reflection and conversation, we're proud to present incredible artists and stories from both near and far — offering something for everyone to enjoy.

Our concerts and performances span genres and generations, featuring the return of the Merced Symphony's Side-by-Side Spectacular at UC Merced, the global fusion of American Patchwork Quartet, and the moving film-and-music experience *A Song for Cesar*. In October, Las Cafeteras returns to Merced by popular demand with their Día de los Muertos-themed theatrical production *Hasta la Muerte*. We're also thrilled to present dance in the UC Merced Arts season for the first time with San Francisco's award-winning PUSH Dance Company, who will bring their groundbreaking blend of contemporary dance, technology, and storytelling to Merced. Whether you love American folk traditions, symphonic classics, or boundary-pushing contemporary works, you'll find it here this year.

La Galería presents an exciting lineup of exhibitions this year, starting with *20 Years of UC Merced Art & Architecture*, a special anniversary showcase of the campus's creative history. In January, we'll open *Central Valley Landscapes*, a dialogue between paintings and photographs by UC Merced faculty Richard Gomez and Christopher Viney. In April, the third annual Bobcat Art Show at La Galería continues our tradition of celebrating the creativity of our students, faculty, and staff.

Our signature programs also return with fresh energy — the second annual Merced LitFest, Shakespeare in Yosemite's vibrant *Love's Labor's Lost*, and the whimsical UC Merced Children's Opera production *The Ghost in the Opera House*. Finally, we'll present a new production of *If All the Sky Were Paper*, first performed at UC Merced in 2022, bringing real wartime letters to life in collaboration with author and playwright Andrew Carroll.

As always, none of this would be possible without you — our audiences, donors, sponsors, and community partners. Your support makes our work possible and strengthens the role and impact of the arts on our campus and in the region. Thank you for being part of our story, and I look forward to sharing another unforgettable season with you.



Collin Lewis

Collin Lewis

Executive Director for the Arts, UC Merced

La Galería: *20 Years of UC Merced Art & Architecture*

Begins August 28, 2025 | Pg. 3

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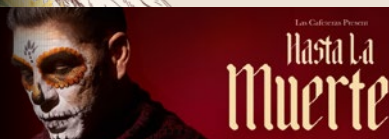
Literature: Merced LitFest: *Hope & Hard Times*

Begins September 26, 2025 | Pg. 11

HOPE &
HARD TIMES

Concert: Las Cafeteras: *Hasta La Muerte*

October 8, 2025 | Pgs. 5-6



Concert: Merced Symphony

October 29, 2025 | Pg. 7



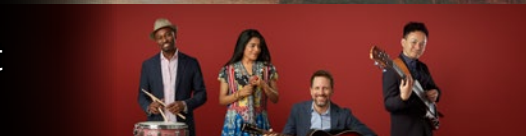
La Galería: *Central Valley Landscapes*

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Concert: American Patchwork Quartet

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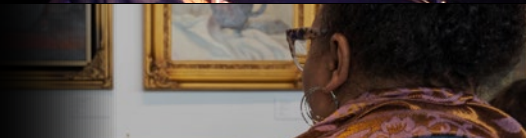
Concert: *A Song for Cesar*

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La Galería: 2026 Bobcat Art Show

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Concert: PUSH Dance Company

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Theater: Shakespeare in Yosemite: *Love's Labor's Lost*

Begins April 23, 2026 | Pg. 12



Theater: *If All the Sky Were Paper*

Begins May 1, 2026 | Pg. 13



Theater: UC Merced Children's Opera: *The Ghost in the Opera House*

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La Galería

Aug. 28 – Dec. 13, 2025

20 Years of UC Merced Art & Architecture

Opening Reception: Aug. 28, 2025 | 4:30 – 6:30pm

UC Merced's 20th anniversary exhibition at La Galería celebrates the design, development, and creative identity of California's newest public research university. From original campus renderings and architectural models to public artworks and selections from the university's growing Permanent Collection, this exhibition explores how UC Merced's physical and artistic landscape has evolved over its first two decades. Whether you're encountering the campus for the first time or reflecting on its early years, *20 Years of UC Merced Art & Architecture* offers a compelling look at how place, purpose, and creativity converge to shape a university.

La Galería Viewing Hours

Thursdays – Saturdays | 10AM – 1PM & 2PM – 6PM

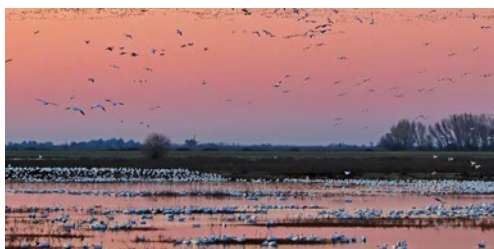
La Galería Jan. 29 – Mar. 14, 2026

Central Valley Landscapes

Paintings and Photographs by
Richard Gomez and Christopher Viney

Opening Reception: Jan. 29, 2026 | 4 – 6pm

In this long-awaited exhibition featuring two UC Merced faculty artists, Richard Gomez's plein-air paintings and Christopher Viney's photographs come together in conversation, each offering a distinct perspective on the beauty of California's heartland. Through scenes of expansive mountain ranges, winding riverbanks, and sunset vistas, these artworks capture the Central Valley's shifting light, changing seasons, and enduring spirit.



La Galería Apr. 2 – May 16, 2026

2026 Bobcat Art Show

Opening Reception: Apr. 2, 2026 | 4 – 6pm

UC Merced's annual Bobcat Art Show is back for its third presentation at La Galería – this group exhibition showcases the creativity and artistry of the entire UC Merced community, including students, faculty, and staff.

For more information, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu/lagaleria



Las Cafeteras Presents



HASTA La MUERTE

A Day of the Dead Show



Oct 8, 2025

The Art Kamangar Center at The Merced Theatre

Las Cafeteras *Hasta La Muerte*

Performance Begins: 7:30pm

\$15 General Admission 

FREE Admission for Students (With ID) and Children 

Hasta La Muerte is a vibrant multimedia performance by Las Cafeteras that honors the spirit of Día de los Muertos through music, dance, poetry, and theater. Centered on La Catrina's annual return to guide souls and console the living, this two-act production weaves Mexican folklore with contemporary stories to explore grief, memory, and the enduring power of love. Both deeply personal and universally resonant, *Hasta La Muerte* is a heartfelt celebration of life and a reimagining of death as a beginning rather than an end.

To purchase tickets, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu/boxoffice



Oct 29, 2025

Wallace-Dutra Ampitheatre at UC Merced

Merced Symphony

Side-by-Side Spectacular

Concert Begins: 6pm

\$45 Orchestra Seating

Incl. reserved parking & golf cart rides to and from the parking lot.

\$15 Lawn Seating

Lawn seating (Blankets and low-profile chairs are recommended)

FREE Lawn Seating

Available for Students (With ID) and Children

The Merced Symphony returns to UC Merced for its 2nd annual side-by-side concert with student musicians from UC Merced and Merced College. Led by Music Director Ming Luke, the program will feature the traditional Mexican folksongs *La Llorona* and *Son de la Negra* along with orchestral works by Bernstein, Saint-Saëns, Smetana, and Tchaikovsky.





Feb 6, 2026

The Art Kamangar Center at The Merced Theatre

American Patchwork Quartet

Concert Begins: 7:30pm

\$15 General Admission 

FREE Admission for Students (With ID) and Children 

American Patchwork Quartet (APQ) blends timeless American folk songs with jazz, country, West African, and East Asian influences to create a rich, globally inspired sound. Led by GRAMMY®-winning guitarist and vocalist Clay Ross and joined by fellow acclaimed musicians Falu, Clarence Penn, and Moto Fukushima, the group celebrates America's cultural diversity through music. APQ's performances are both a reflection of the nation's complex heritage and a powerful reminder of the beauty in unity, weaving a sonic tapestry that honors the past while embracing the present.

To purchase tickets, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu/boxoffice





Mar 17, 2026

Downtown Merced

A Song for Cesar

Film Screening (6pm) and Concert (7:30pm):

Mar. 17, 2026 | 6 – 9pm | The Art Kamangar Center at the Merced Theatre



\$15 General Admission



FREE Admission for Students (With ID) and Children

A Song for Cesar is a moving documentary film and live concert experience that celebrates the life of civil rights leader Cesar Chavez and the musicians and artists who amplified his call for justice. Featuring voices like Joan Baez, Maya Angelou, and Carlos Santana, the film highlights the powerful role of music in the farmworker movement, while the Song for Cesar band brings these stories to life on stage. Together, the screening and performance offer a heartfelt tribute to artistic activism and the enduring legacy of peaceful protest.

Apr 3, 2026

Merced Multicultural Arts Center (The MAC)

PUSH Dance Company

Performance Begins: 7:30pm

\$15 General Admission FREE Admission for Students (with ID) and Children 

San Francisco's award-winning PUSH Dance Company brings its groundbreaking blend of contemporary dance, technology, and storytelling to Merced with excerpts from their original dances *Mothership*, *Technoculture*, *Codelining*, and *EMME YA*. Choreographed by Raissa Simpson, these works span science fiction, Afrofuturism, and social justice — melding hip hop, multimedia, and avant-garde movement into performances that are as thought-provoking as they are visually stunning.

Co-Presented with UC Merced's Center for Africana Studies



To purchase tickets, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu/boxoffice



Sept. 26 – 27, 2025

Downtown Merced

Merced LitFest: Hope & Hard Times

Keynote Reading w/ Award-Winning Writer & Editor, Lori Ostlund:
Sept. 26, 2025 | 7 – 8pm | El Capital Hotel Courtyard

LitFest (15+ Literary Events held throughout Downtown Merced):
Sept. 27, 2025 | 12 – 5pm | Multiple Locations

FREE and Open to the Public

Merced's Second Annual LitFest brings together writers and lovers of writing for a weekend of literary events held in the heart of Downtown Merced. This year features a keynote reading and conversation with award-winning writer and editor, Lori Ostlund, and over 15 unique literary events showcasing the works of 60+ creative writers.

Co-Sponsored by UC Merced's Center for the Humanities;
the Division of Equity, Justice & Inclusive Excellence; and
the Global Arts, Media & Writing Studies Department.



MERCED'S 2ND
ANNUAL LITFEST

HOPE &
HARD TIMES



Apr. 23 – 26, 2026

UC Merced and Yosemite National Park

Love's Labor's Lost Shakespeare in Yosemite

Campus Performance at Wallace-Dutra Ampitheatre:
April 23, 2026 | 6pm | Wallace-Dutra Ampitheatre

Park Performances at Curry Village Amphitheatre:
Apr. 24 | 5pm Apr. 25 | 12pm & 5pm Apr. 26 | 12pm

All Performances are FREE and Open to the Public

Shakespeare in Yosemite returns with a uniquely adapted *Love's Labor's Lost* for Yosemite National Park, set in the vibrant years of 1969 and 1976. With groovy music, colorful costumes, and the spirit of the first Earth Day, this lively reimagining blends Shakespeare's wit with a look back at the past 50 years of American history. The result is a joyful, thought-provoking celebration of love, friendship, and our enduring connection to the natural world.

For more information, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu



UC Merced Global Arts Studies Program Presents

IF ALL THE SKY WERE PAPER

by Andrew Carroll

May 1 – 3, 2026

Merced Multicultural Arts Center (The MAC)

If All the Sky Were Paper

UC Merced Advanced Performative Storytelling

Performances: May 1 | 7pm May 2 | 2pm May 3 | 2pm

 \$10 General Admission

If All the Sky Were Paper brings to life real wartime letters from service members around the world and their loved ones, offering an intimate and deeply human perspective on war. Inspired by Andrew Carroll's bestselling books *War Letters* and *Behind the Lines* and framed by his own remarkable journey to collect them, this 80-minute play captures both the drama of battle and the quiet moments of connection from the front lines. Each performance is followed by a talkback with Andrew Carroll, inviting audiences to reflect on the personal stories that shape our shared history.

May 23, 2026

The Art Kamangar Center at The Merced Theatre

The Ghost in the Opera House

UC Merced Children's Opera

Performance Begins: 11am

FREE Community Performance

Mister Maestro's old opera house is making some seriously strange sounds — and just as the big singing contest is about to begin! Costumes are disappearing, mix-ups are everywhere, and things are going delightfully topsy-turvy. Can the star singers stop squabbling and join forces to save the show? This zany, 40-minute musical mystery for the young and young-at-heart bubbles over with laughter, teamwork, and the magic of music.

Co-Presented with Merced County Office of Education, with generous support from the Central Valley Opportunity Fund.

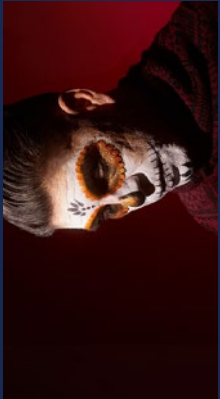
UC MERCED CHILDREN'S
OPERA PRESENTS

THE GHOST IN THE OPERA HOUSE



To purchase tickets, visit
arts.ucmerced.edu/boxoffice





Become a Friend of UC Merced Arts

Friends of UC Merced Arts support the Arts at UC Merced and stay informed on upcoming exhibitions, concerts, and programs. Your contributions help us achieve our goals of fostering creativity, promoting arts education, and enhancing cultural experiences for both our students and the broader community.

