



contemporary craft

www.contemporarycraft.org

news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **2016 LEAP Award Winner and Finalists Announced**

*Contemporary Craft Store to Highlight Emerging Craft Artists Throughout 2016*

PITTSBURGH, PA – January 4, 2016 – Jewelry artist Laura Jaklitsch of Somerville, MA has been selected as the Society for Contemporary Craft’s (SCC) 2016 Lydon Emerging Artist Program (LEAP) winner. Established in honor of SCC’s Director of Exhibitions, Kate Lydon, for her 20 years of service, the annual LEAP Award was launched in the fall of 2007 and provides exceptional emerging artists with the opportunity to showcase their work in SCC’s Store in Pittsburgh’s historic Produce Terminal building located at 21<sup>st</sup> and Smallman streets the Strip District.

Jaklitsch, who received her BFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing in 2011 from Massachusetts College of Art, elegantly combines traditional craftsmanship and modern design in her work. Bold in color and sleek in form, her wood and plastic jewelry is at once youthful and sophisticated. “Using my signature wood and plastic inlay technique, I let the process direct the work, while making deliberate color and composition choices,” says the artist. “The painterly, gestural process of cutting into the wood block and pouring the dyed polyurethane is contrasted with the diligence of the findings and the graphic quality of the lines. The resulting pieces are a delicate balance of both experiment and precision, and the wood and plastic abstractions begin to take on a precious, symbolic feeling.”

Reflecting on her career as an emerging artist, Jaklitsch says, “creating a body of work is a continuous process, and I feel both proud of the evolution of my work so far, and passionate about the direction my work is going.” As winner of the 2016 LEAP Award, Jaklitsch receives a \$1000 cash prize and the opportunity to retail her jewelry at SCC for one year beginning on January 20, 2016.

Guest juror Brigitte Martin – creator and Editor-in-Chief of *crafthaus*, a social network and online art community for professional craft artists worldwide – selected the 2016 LEAP Award winner and six finalists from a diverse group of applicants. As the curator for *crafthaus*, Brigitte is at the forefront of current trends and happenings in the international craft community and is committed to creating awareness beyond the usual art and craft circles, a goal shared by Megan Crowell, Assistant Director of Retail Operations at SCC.

“Contemporary Craft has a longstanding tradition of discovering and supporting the best and brightest emerging talent,” says Crowell. “Many of our LEAP winners and finalists go on to exhibit and sell their work at other prestigious arts organizations and galleries, such as the Heidi Lowe Gallery, Penland School of Crafts, and the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC. It’s exciting to be part of an artist’s budding career at such a pivotal moment, and it’s a wonderful opportunity for visitors and collectors to make a new discovery.”

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Six LEAP finalists were also recognized and their work will be featured in two-month increments in the SCC Store beginning February 2016. The finalists are: Alison Bailey of Greenville, NC (Jewelry); Cheryl Derricotte of Oakland, CA (Glass); Danielle James of Greenville, NC (Jewelry); Erin Castellan of Asheville, NC (Fiber); Marion Angelica of Minneapolis, MN (Ceramics); and Molly Uravitch also of Minneapolis, MN (Ceramics). For additional information, visit [www.contemporarycraft.org](http://www.contemporarycraft.org).

Support for the LEAP Award is provided by the Castagnari Family Charitable Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation.

**About Contemporary Craft:**

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists since 1971, the Society for Contemporary Craft (SCC) offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and non-mainstream art, as well as a range of studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a retail store. Through its mission of engaging the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft, SCC offers meaningful art opportunities for more than 145,000 people a year through four core values: providing vital support for artists; filling critical gaps in public education; sharing cross cultural perspectives; and using art to build community. SCC is located at 2100 Smallman Street in the Strip District of Pittsburgh, PA. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The satellite gallery is located in the "T" station lobby of BNY Mellon Center in downtown Pittsburgh, and is open daily from 6:00 am through midnight. Exhibitions and informal, hands-on art activities in the Drop-In Studio are always free to the public. For more information, visit [www.contemporarycraft.org](http://www.contemporarycraft.org) or call 412.261.7003.

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