

shelter

crafting a safe home

September 8, 2017 - February 17, 2018

contemporary craft

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTEMPORARY CRAFT EXPLORES ISSUES OF SHELTER, REFUGE, AND PROTECTION IN NEW EXHIBITION

An innovative and socially engaged art experience free of charge in the Strip District

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS:

- Free admission
- Free hands-on making activity in the Drop-in Studio
- 14 artists
- 40 + works of art
- Companion exhibitions and programs
- 8 Community Partners
- Studio Workshops

EXHIBITION DETAILS:

- DATES:** September 8, 2017 – February 17, 2018
- PLACE:** Contemporary Craft
2100 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
- TIME:** Monday – Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM
- ADMISSION:** Free
- WEBSITE:** www.exploremindfulart.com
- FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/SCCPgh](https://www.facebook.com/SCCPgh)
- Twitter:** @SCCPgh
- INSTAGRAM:** @SCCPgh
- Hashtag:** CraftingaSafeHome

Pittsburgh, PA – June 6, 2017

Shelter is universally identified as a basic human right, yet refuge and protection are out of reach for millions worldwide. To bring this subject to light, Contemporary Craft (CC) presents, *Shelter: Crafting a Safe Home*, a socially engaged art experience that focuses public attention on the basic human need for safe housing. The exhibition opens on Friday, September 8, 2017 and will be on view through Saturday, February 17, 2018 at CC's Strip District gallery located in the Produce Terminal at the intersection of 21st and Smallman Streets.

A Forum for Artists to Share Thoughts on Social Justice Issues Through Art

Featuring more than 40 works of art in diverse craft media by 14 contemporary artists, *Shelter* explores the increasing public concerns on housing insecurity and displacement, and how the arts can encourage positive self-expression and to guide thoughtful conversations. The exhibition examines creative responses to difficult topics through the inclusion of artworks that convey personal stories and experiences to demonstrate the local and worldwide impact insecure housing has on individuals and the society.

The exhibition highlights a variety of techniques and forms, including Innovative art expressions rooted in traditional craft materials such as glass, wood, fiber, and clay, as well as work that incorporates found objects

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to explore unexpected relationships between craft and the inherited history within objects, and installation art. The visionary, poetic, and experiential potential of art will enable the visitors to see, feel, and understand the need for stable housing and be moved to become part of the solution.



Holly Grace. *Round Mountain Hut*, 2016. Blown glass, kiln formed and silver stain with integrated LED light. 7.5" x 14" x 8".

Photo: David McArthur of Parallax Photography.

- **Holly Grace** is an Australian glass artist based in Melbourne, Victoria. During her education as a glassmaker and artist, she travelled to Scandinavia many times. It was in Denmark and Sweden that she began to look and observe the landscape; drawn to the soft transitions of color that are different from the intense bright light in Western Australia. It is also during this time that Grace started incorporating photographic documentation of the landscape in her work.

Glass is Grace's lens to explore the complexity of the natural world. Glass is used as a surface for translating light, creating landscapes both real and imagined, internal and external. "I grew up in Perth, Australia, a city of extreme isolation where

nature is a beautiful, yet harsh reality... By immersing myself in nature I seek to find a retreat – a shelter from the day-to-day of human existence, placing me within an environment that is both foreign but completely natural."

- Pittsburgh-based designer and artist **Seth Clark** explores deteriorating architecture to find the dignifying energy that tries to escape the history of abandonment. Clark creates collage and sculpture by combining wood, fiber, and paper with found materials. He draws inspiration from structures that were designed to be permanent, but have been challenged, destroyed, and forgotten. Clark's first series "Abandoned" consisted of images of houses that had been abandoned in Detroit. Clark was attracted to them because they were once lived in and loved by families and individuals. The structures had history and Clark wanted to preserve those images and emotions. "I see an inherent honesty in the face of my subject. Among all of the clutter – the shards of wood and layers of rubble – there remains a gentle resolve. As I work, I study these structures incessantly. The buildings, often on the brink of ruin, have something very energized and present trying to escape from their fragmented reality."
- As a seasoned filmmaker in Pittsburgh, **Chris Ivey** has been documenting, exploring, and addressing local residents' fears about gentrification. His documentaries captured the essence of community change and brought out the pressing public issues on displacement, neighborhood violence, and race and class. "Everyone needs to have their voice heard. You're not going to agree with everybody, but everybody has to be heard for the dialogue to start."

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- Studio jeweler and assistant professor at the Lamar Dodd School of Art at University of Georgia, **Demitra Thomloudis**, has worked on *The Houston Yellow Tape Project* from August 2013 to August 2014. This yearlong project consists of documentation of ten residential homes demolished within the two-block radius of Thomloudis' home in Houston, Texas and ten pieces of jewelry created from remnants found at each home's demolition site. "Formed by remnants collected from these individual sites, the jewelry captures both a collective and an individual identity and preserves a fragment of what no longer exists. The jewelry in *Houston Yellow Tape Project* physically embodies a singular, discarded moment during the sprawling of the city."
- **Kathryn Clark** explores global issues ranging from the foreclosure crisis in the United States to international border controls. Clark's work questions the pattern and scale of human manipulation on plants and the long-term implications it has on our environment, society, and economics. The narratives and images are hand embroidered on textiles, creating historical documents of our times. "Inspired by the historical storyboard of the Bayeux Tapestry, *Refugee Stories* is a series of embroidery panels that follow the journey of the Syrian refugees into Europe. The monumental scale of the crisis, the second largest mass migration in history, is documented in various points along the refugees' journey out of Syria and into Western Europe."



Kathryn Clark. *By Sea*, 2016. Hand embroidery on black taffeta and cotton voile. 62" x 48".

Crafting a New Home

Following the significant impact of CC's 2016 social justice-centered exhibition *Mindful: Exploring Mental Health Through Art*, the organization continues to explore the pressing societal issues that affect our changing community. Through important **community partnerships** with social service organizations such as the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Homeless Children's Education Fund, Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, and more, CC ensures the exhibition is connected to the community in a meaningful, genuine way.

A series of events and weekend activities that provides opportunity to dive deeper into the conversation regarding homelessness and housing insecurity are planned throughout the run of the exhibition. Lectures, artist talks, Saturday Information Sessions with community partners, gallery tours, and Studio workshops allow visitors to connect with the exhibiting artists and respond to their art. Resources such as a free, online teacher's curriculum guide and a full-color catalogue further complement the exhibition. CC's **Drop-In Studio** (free and open to the public during regular business hours) will feature a hands-on, art-making activity appropriate for visitors of all ages and skill-levels designed by one of the exhibition artists.

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Group tours for *Shelter* will include guided activities for participants to explore embroidery techniques and to create fabric squares inspired by their own home and what home means to them. These squares will ultimately be compiled into quilts to benefit transient members of our community, continuing the tradition of quilts giving as a symbol of welcome and acceptance by a community. Schedule a group tour with CC at info@contemporarycraft.org or call at 412.261.7003.

Shelter's impact extends beyond the primary gallery walls and includes **companion exhibition** - *Vantage Point: Maggy Rozycki Hiltner* in CC's BNY Mellon Center Satellite Gallery from October 6, 2017 through February 4, 2018. Hiltner, an embroidery artist, will fill 72 linear feet of wall space with hand-stitched imagery. Through incorporating vintage fabrics and text into what initially appears as an idealized landscape with blue sky, green grass, and puffy white clouds, Hiltner reveals the impact of industry and human consumption on our environment.

Shelter is scheduled to travel to several venues after its debut in Pittsburgh, including the Ohio Craft Museum, Columbus, OH and Springfield Museum of Art, Springfield, OH. A complete calendar of exhibition programs and events is available at www.exploremindfulart.com.



Maggy Rozycki Hiltner. *Vantage Point*, 2015. Hand-stitched cotton and found textile. 46" x 864"

Opening Weekend Celebration

CC will mark the **opening weekend** of the exhibition with a free, public reception on Friday, September 8 from 5:30 – 8:00 PM. There is a \$5 suggested donation at the door. Opening celebration events will continue on Saturday, September 9, from 12:00 AM – 2:00 PM. The day's activities include a **Dialogue with the Artists**, where exhibiting artists will be in CC's gallery to talk about their work.

Shelter Support

Shelter: Crafting a Safe Home is made possible by the Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, Staunton Farm Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Fine Foundation, the Brooks Foundation through the PNC Charitable Trusts Grant Review Committee, and Cohen & Grigsby. Media sponsored by 90.5 WESA, 91.3 WYEP, and NEXTpittsburgh. (As of August 2017) Contemporary Craft is supported in part by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the Elizabeth R. Raphael Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

About Contemporary Craft

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by regional, national and international artists since 1971, Contemporary Craft (CC) 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, CC offers

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meaningful art opportunities for more than 135,000 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.

CC is located at 2100 Smallman Street in the Strip District of Pittsburgh, PA. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm. The satellite gallery is located in the "T" station lobby of BNY Mellon Center in downtown Pittsburgh, and is open daily from 6 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 or call 412.261.7003.

Photos

To view the complete collection of available high-res *Shelter* photos, visit www.exploremindfulart.com/shelterimages and use the password **SHELTERimages**. For addition materials or high-res images, please email Stephanie Sun at ssun@contemporarycraft.org.

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