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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contemporary Craft Announces Edward Eberle Retrospective, Opening 9/9/16
Career Survey to Cover Three Decades of Work by Prolific Pittsburgh Ceramic Artist

PITTSBURGH, PA – June 6, 2016 – The Society for Contemporary Craft (SCC) is pleased to present the first career retrospective of work by Pittsburgh-based ceramic artist Edward Eberle (b. 1944, Tarentum, PA). *Edward Eberle Retrospective* will open to the public on Friday, September 9, 2016 and will be on view at SCC's Strip District gallery through Saturday, March 11, 2017.

Over the past three decades, Eberle has explored and tested the limits of porcelain, with his prolific body of work ranging from classically inspired vessels to altered and deconstructed sculptures. The retrospective brings works from the mid-1980s to the present into dialogue allowing visitors to discover the timeless and intriguing work of a true master. Comprised of 45 works, the show highlights the evolution of the Eberle's exquisite forms and fragmented, dreamlike imagery by featuring both his trademark porcelain work, as well as a series of works on paper. Audiences will see paper-thin, wheel-thrown, vessels of both closed and open forms, as well as more conceptual pieces from the early 2000s. The exhibition culminates with examples of the artist's most recent mixed media sculptures and large paper cylinders.

"Looking back at earlier work has been reveling," notes Eberle. "I see that some periods have been particularly strong, and I'm learning from them all over again. I'm appreciating where the work has gone, but I'm very careful not to look back too hard. My work has to be right now, in the present. I keep the *Retrospective* at a distance, while still appreciating it."

Using black and white *terra sigillata* to embellish the surface and create contrasting images, patterns, and textures, Eberle then paints his works with elaborately interlinked human, animal, and celestial forms. "As soon as that black hit the white, I knew what I had been hunting for," the artist recalls discovering what would become his signature method. "And I had been hunting for a long time."

Eberle's ceramics are influenced by the Oribe and Kutani periods in Japan, the black-on-white Mimbre bowls Southwestern New Mexico, and Pysanky (Ukranian Easter eggs.) His painting and sculpture influences include the work of Picasso, Miro, Duchamp, Klee, and de Kooning among others.

"Ed is a seminal figure in the contemporary ceramics field," says Janet McCall, executive director of SCC. "At the hand of this master artist, something as delicate as porcelain feels monumental. While his work has no explicit narrative, the stream of consciousness of his imagery feels timeless and almost mystical."

ABOUT EDWARD EBERLE

Born in Tarentum, PA in 1944, Eberle received his B.S. in 1967 at Edinboro State College (Edinboro, PA). After completing his M.F.A. at New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University (Alfred, NY) in 1972 under the guidance of master artists—Ted Randall, Daniel Rhodes, Val Cushing, Bob Turner and Bill Parry in Sculpture and John Wood in Drawing—Eberle joined the faculty at Philadelphia College of Art (Philadelphia, PA). He was later hired as an Associate Professor in Ceramics and Drawing (1975-1985) at Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA). In 1985 he established a studio in the Millvale, PA where he worked as a studio artist in ceramics and drawing for 26-years until 2010. He has been in his current studio, located in the Homestead section of Pittsburgh, since 2012. In addition to numerous solo shows in New York, Chicago, and Pittsburgh, his work is represented in numerous museum collections including two solo exhibitions at the Carnegie Museum of Art (1980 and 1991) and one exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art (1999).

RELATED PROGRAMS

▶ Present at Creation

Friday, October 14, 2016 – Saturday, February 18, 2017 BNY Mellon Center Satellite Gallery

Organized in conjunction with the *Edward Eberle Retrospective*, the companion exhibition *Present at Creation* will feature contemporary works by four artists who have been directly mentored and impacted by Eberle's energy and virtuosity. Through their individual art practices Erica Nickol, brothers Jeff and Jonathan Schwarz, and Ian Thomas are forging new avenues for contemporary art using a visual language that combines craft and personal narrative.

All four artists are passionate about art's potential to offer insight into their creative process as well as increased opportunity for learning. A strong and important complement to each artist's studio practice is an interest in teaching and engaging with diverse audiences in local, regional, and national communities.

Erica Nickol creates sculptures that combine porcelain with found objects and steel, wire, rope, and wood. She uses the contradiction of the precious, often translucent porcelain with the detritus found in America's rust belt to share her narrative. After obtaining a B.Arch. from the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, IN) in 2005, Nickol completed a M.F.A. in Ceramics from the University of the Arts (Philadelphia, PA) in 2011.

Jeff Schwarz received his B.F.A. from Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock, PA) and his M.F.A. from Syracuse University (Syracuse, NY). Using cultural references from both rural and

urban environments, the artist explores contemporary ceramic forms—both sculptural and functional—that play on tension, movement, stillness, and energy.

Jonathan Schwarz received his B.F.A. from Edinboro State College (Edinboro, PA) and an M.F.A from Kent State University (Kent, OH). Schwarz's recent works are an investigation into the simple act of making. Using only his hands, Schwarz creates forms that interrelate and rely on one another to exist.

Ian Thomas earned his B.F.A. in Ceramic and Painting studies at Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock, PA) and an M.F.A. in Ceramics at Texas Tech University (Lubbock, TX). A self-proclaimed pluralist, he explores traditional and nontraditional ceramics, sculpture, printmaking, painting, and installation. Metaphoric and anthropocentric, his work couples intimate narratives and sociological observations.

▶ The Space Between Salon Series

Dates to be announced; see contemporarycraft.org for up-to-date details Contemporary Craft Main Gallery

SCC's new salon series invites two thought leaders representing multidisciplinary and diverse viewpoints to discuss the role of creativity within their respective fields. The moderated talks provide a friendly place for open dialogue about differences and commonalities, resulting in expanded understanding and mutual respect. *The Space Between* salon series references the ceramic work of Edward Eberle, whose career-long use of black and white motifs conjures provocative questions of these iconic polar opposites, while exploring the inspiring space between them.

► Youth Bridge: Connecting Through Clay

Dates and locations to be announced See contemporarycraft.org for up-to-date details

Throughout the exhibition, SCC will offer a clay-based youth mentoring program titled *YouthBridge: Connecting Through Clay*. Designed to bridge educational, cultural, and economic gaps, the program is inspired by the personal story of SCC's 2016 Summer Artist in Residence, Christian Morris. As a young black man growing up in an industrial park in Leetsdale, PA, Christian experienced trauma, felt marginalized, and was unable to succeed in school until he was introduced to art. *YouthBridge* will take place in the community and will focus on ceramics, as well as the production of a video chronicling Morris' story.

Christian Morris' time at Contemporary Craft signals a conscious effort to encourage greater diversity in arts professions and opportunities. "Thought leaders like Darrell Kinsel of BOOM Concepts have increased our awareness of the absence of black men in arts programming," says Janet McCall. "Like many arts organizations, we are committed to increasing racial equity within the field. We're excited for the energy and vision Christian will bring to SCC, and hope his presence and contributions to the community inspire future artists of color."

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A companion catalogue will be produced with reproductions of works in the show along with a feature essay by Peter Held, an internationally renowned specialist in contemporary ceramics. The publication will provide a lasting document of the exhibition and Eberle's extensive career. Hardcopies will be for sale in SCC's Store, and the catalogue can also be accessed online at www.contemporarycraft.org.

TRAVELING SCHEDULE

The exhibition will travel to The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, PA following its run at SCC.

FUNDERS

Edward Eberle Retrospective This exhibition is made possible by the Jack Buncher Foundation, The Fine Foundation, Cohen & Grigsby, Ted Rowland, BNSF Railway Foundation, and media sponsors WESA and WYEP. Additional support is provided by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the Elizabeth R. Raphael Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Windgate Foundation. (As of July 2016)

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. Contemporary Craft is committed to making its exhibitions, programs, and services accessible to the public. For questions related to accessible accommodations, please contact us. For more information, visit www.contemporarycraft.org or call 412.261.7003.

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▲ Edward Eberle, Under the Influence of the Moon, 2013 26.25" x 13.5" x 13.25" | Photo: Edward Eberle



▲ Edward Eberle, Whiplash II Revised, 2005 25" x 17" x 16" | Photo: Edward Eberle



▲ Edward Eberle, Catching Water, Fetching Breath, 2007 9.75" x 17.25" x 16.75" | Photo: Edward Eberle