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**LONG-TIME DIRECTOR OF EXHIBITIONS AT CONTEMPORARY CRAFT, KATE LYDON, TO RETIRE IN JUNE  
LEAP Award Winners Named in Lydon's Honor**

**PITTSBURGH, PA (January 2022)** – Kate Lydon, Contemporary Craft's Director of Exhibitions, has announced her retirement, after leading the organization's exhibitions program for more than 35 years. Lydon is responsible for bringing world-renowned craft artists to Pittsburgh and serving as a driving force for the organization's social justice exhibitions. Lydon's last day with the organization will be June 30, 2022.

"CC's values clearly articulate a commitment to and innovation in contemporary craft - advancing artistic creation, engaging individuals and fostering environments of cultural equity, access, and inclusion," said Lydon. "During my time at CC, I was honored to have worked with an amazing team of colleagues and to have organized more than 100 innovative exhibitions highlighting dynamic and masterful work by countless regional, national and international artists."

During her tenure at Contemporary Craft, Lydon worked with thousands of emerging and established artists, including Lenore Tawney, Peter Voukos, Nick Cave and Edward Eberle, nurturing the careers of young artists and highlighting craft's role in the broader world of contemporary art. She also played a key role in the creation of CC's series of social justice-themed exhibitions, helping select artists and forging relationships with dozens of community partners. The fourth of these exhibitions is currently on view and continues to exemplify how art can help inspire meaningful change in the world.

"Throughout her 35-year career at Contemporary Craft, Kate Lydon has shaped the aesthetic of our organization, trained emerging administrators, and connected Pittsburgh to the field of craft. She has undoubtedly recognized and shown the talent of some of craft's most esteemed artists - well before others woke up to their existence. On top of all of that, Kate has become one of my most trusted colleagues over the years- her absence will certainly be felt," said CC Executive Director Rachel Saul Rearick.

Coinciding with Lydon's retirement, Yu-San Cheng will be promoted to the role of Associate Director and in-part will oversee CC's exhibitions program. Cheng has been with Contemporary Craft for more than eight years, serving as Director of Finance since 2015 and Director of Operations and Finance since 2019. She played a pivotal role in CC's recent relocation to Lawrenceville and in the creation of the capitalization plan to ensure CC's long term financial stability. Cheng holds a Masters of Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University – Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy and serves on the Office of Public Art Advisory Committee. She has served on the Board of Directors for Artists Image Resource, NEX Foundation and Brew House Association.

"As we look toward new paths, I am honored to name Yu-San Cheng as the Associate Director of Contemporary Craft," said Rearick. "Together with our Exhibitions Coordinator, we will triangulate the way in which we select artwork, and begin to push the materiality of our exhibitions in new directions. After eight years with the organization, Yu-San has a firm grasp on who we are and where we can go."

**2022 LEAP Award and Winners**

Coinciding with the announcement of Kate Lydon's retirement, we are proud to announce the 2022 LEAP

award winner and finalists. The LEAP (Lydon Emerging Artist Program) award was established in 2007 to honor Kate Lydon's 20 years of service. The program recognizes exceptional emerging talent in the contemporary craft field and provides opportunities for these early career artists to bring their artwork to the consumer market. The year-long retail program features, markets and sells the work of one winner, who also receives a \$1,000 prize, and four finalists.

This year's award holds extra significance, as it marks Lydon's 35<sup>th</sup> and final year with Contemporary Craft. In honor of this anniversary year, Lydon served as a guest judge, alongside Sarah Kelly, the Windgate Curator of Contemporary Craft & Design at Arizona State University Art Museum and Ceramics Research Center; and Sean Beauford, Manager of Community Relationships at Carnegie Museum of Art and Independent Producer and Curator.

This year's LEAP winner and finalists include:

Winner: [Danielle Attoe](#), Milwaukee, WI – Jewelry. Store Feature: February 2022 – January 2023

Finalist: [Taylor Mezzo](#), Pittsburgh, PA – Ceramics. Store Feature: November 2022 – January 2023

Finalist: [Morgan Gilbreath](#), Richmond, VA – Glass. Store Feature: May – July 2022

Finalist: [Suyu Chen](#), Rochester, NY – Jewelry. Store Feature: February – April 2022

Finalist: [Noah Greene](#), Alfred, NY – Ceramics. Store Feature: August – October 2022

Danielle Attoe and Suyu Chen's work will be available in the Store at 5645 Butler Street and online at [contemporarycraftstore.com](http://contemporarycraftstore.com) beginning in February 2022. Each of the finalists will be featured in the Store for three months, with the winner featured through January 2023.

More information on LEAP can be found at <https://contemporarycraft.org/store/leap-award/>.

#### ABOUT CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2021, Contemporary Craft presents contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists. Contemporary Craft offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and contemporary art, as well as a range of artist-led studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a store. Located at 5645 Butler Street in the Upper Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, Contemporary Craft's exhibition and Drop-In Studio art activity are always free to the public. For more information, visit [www.contemporarycraft.org](http://www.contemporarycraft.org).