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## CONTEMPORARY CRAFT EXPLORES THEMES OF GRIEF IN NEW EXHIBITION

**PITTSBURGH, PA (MAY 2024)** – Contemporary Craft (CC) is exploring the themes of grieving, mourning, and the celebration of life in its new regional, juried exhibition, *Hereafter*. The exhibition will be on view May 31 – August 24 and features 13 regional artists working across a variety of craft mediums. The public opening reception is scheduled for Friday, May 31, 5:30 – 8:00 PM.

Craft objects have long been a vehicle for processing and understanding, and the act of creative expression itself can become an instrument for healing. Through the unique perspectives of the artists featured in *Hereafter*, this exhibition transcends individual experiences, to create a rich tapestry of cultural and ancestral connections, and brings forth an authentic portrayal of the grieving process. Each artwork becomes a poignant vessel, carrying the weight of emotions and memories.

To celebrate the high quality and breadth of work being created in the region, the call for *Hereafter* was open to craft artists based within 250 miles of Pittsburgh. Selected artists include Sue Amendolara (Edinboro, PA), Kimberlyn Bloise (Pittsburgh, PA), Dan Brockett (Leechburg, PA), Cheryl Capezzuti (Pittsburgh, PA), Tom Doyle (Washington DC), Meryl Engler (Akron, OH), Sharon Massey (Indiana, PA), Zach Mellman-Carsey (Lancaster, PA), Jada Patterson (Pittsburgh, PA), Lucas Pointon (Gibsonia, PA), Katie Rearick (Allison Park, PA), Kate Strachan (Amber, PA), and Hee Joo Yang (Pittsburgh, PA).

The exhibition features more than 50 works that include assemblage, clay, sculpture, jewelry, printmaking, and basketry. "In *Hereafter*, we carefully chose these 13 artists, whose creations resonate with profound emotions and memories drawn from their personal journeys, some intertwined with rich cultural and ancestral threads," said Associate Director Yu-San Cheng. "Each piece reveals intricate details and narratives, inviting viewers on a captivating and intimate exploration of grief, mourning and the celebration of life."

"Grief and mourning are a part of each person's narrative at some point in time, and of course we have globally experienced them over the course of the past few years. At Contemporary Craft, we value the opportunity for collective introspection around these topics, through the lens of artwork," said Executive Director Rachel Saul Rearick. "This regional artist exhibition will explore intimate memories, as well as moments that might resonate with many. We welcome visitors to join these artists along a journey that processes spiritual and ritual response to loss, and imagines the world *Hereafter*."

*Hereafter* aims to guide visitors through an emotional journey, inviting introspection and empathy. In this shared space of reflection, *Hereafter* becomes a sanctuary for communal healing and understanding.

### Opening Reception & Related Events

**Opening Reception: Friday, May 31, 5:30 – 8:00 PM.** Free and open to the public. Join us as we celebrate the opening of *Hereafter*. Light refreshments will be served.

**Artist Talk: Saturday, June 1, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM.** Free, registration required. *Hereafter* artists will be in the gallery discussing their work and answering questions from visitors.

**July – August Monthly Guided Tours:** The second Saturday of each month, join us for a free guided tour of *Hereafter*. Registration is encouraged.

Additional events will be announced in the coming weeks.

### **About the Artists**

**Sue Amendolara** was born in Youngstown, Ohio. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Jewelry Design/Metalsmithing from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. She taught Jewelry Design/Metalsmithing at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania from 1991-2022, retiring in 2022. She served as President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths from 2011-2014. Her metalwork has been exhibited regionally and nationally in galleries and museums for over thirty years. Her work has been included in international venues in Germany, Switzerland, Thailand, Poland and Japan. Publications of her work include *American Craft*, *Metalsmith*, *Ornament and Lapidary Journal*. She has been the recipient of three Individual Fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (1994, 1999, 2003) and a Mid-Atlantic/NEA Regional Fellowship (1995.) Her work is part of the permanent collections at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA, The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, The Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. and the White House Collection of American Crafts, Washington D.C. She was awarded “Artist of the Year” from Erie Arts and Culture, Erie, PA in 2023.

**Kimberlyn Bloise** is a ceramic artist who grew up in Monroeville, PA. She attended Mercyhurst University for Studio Art and received her MFA from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Kimberlyn makes work that revolves around material study and experimentation. She confronts ideas of anxiety and communication, and challenges what is considered functional or practical by the standards of traditional ceramics. Since 2015, Kimberlyn has been teaching ceramics classes and has participated in numerous juried exhibitions and arts festivals, where she has received numerous juror’s merit awards. In 2021, she was awarded 2nd place for her work in the national MFA student juried exhibition, COHORTS alone : together, hosted by the University of Montana. Kimberlyn has spent time with many Pittsburgh-area arts centers, including Union Project, Radiant Hall, and Braddock’s Bathhouse Ceramics Studio. She completed a residency at Pittsburgh Center for Arts and Media in 2023, and she is currently an instructor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In addition to working with clay, she enjoys playing music, hiking, and spending time with her dog and cat, Sadie and Ernie.

**Dan Brockett** creates handwoven baskets from willow grown on his 12-acre property, Foggy Blossom Farm, in Leechburg, Pennsylvania. As a grower turned self-taught artist, there is an element of companionship with, and reverence for, his material that permeates every project. From choosing the willow varieties he plants to eventually harvesting and selecting each rod for a specific basket, Dan’s desire to be in relationship with all aspects of his craft is the driving force behind his work.

**Cheryl Capezzuti** is best known in her hometown of Pittsburgh for making community-interactive public art and has shared her work through residencies in unusual spaces ranging from Duds ‘N Suds Laundromat to Pittsburgh International Airport. Non-traditional, donated, and discarded items have always been her materials of choice and are most notable in her current series. Her newest work revisits dryer lint as a sculptural medium and includes over one hundred new works using this

dust of everyday life to reflect on what it feels like to be human right now. The Heinz Endowments, The Jane Henson Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, The Sprout Fund, The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and Awesome Pittsburgh have all recognized and funded her work during her 25 years of making art in Pittsburgh. Selections from her studio are always on view at be Galleries in Lawrenceville. Learn more at [www.studiocapezzuti.com](http://www.studiocapezzuti.com).

**Thomas Kieran Doyle** is a ceramic artist and arts educator born in Pittsburgh, PA, but currently living in Washington, DC. He loves helping students of all ages learn how to work with clay and find joy in making something with their own hands. Thomas is currently a faculty member and gallery coordinator at Stone Ridge School in Bethesda, MD. Previously, he has worked as the Studio Technician at the Chautauqua Institution and as in the Work Exchange program both at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia and Guldagergaard International Ceramic Research Center in Skælskør, DEN. Thomas also served as the Gallery Manager at The Schulman Project and Program Director of MICA Pre-College. Tom's art work has been shown at several galleries and art centers around the U.S. He holds a BFA in Ceramics and a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Maryland Institute College of Art.

**Meryl Engler** is an artist using woodcut and collage to create layered prints that evoke intimate, magical human moments, and the hidden landscapes of the environment. Meryl grew up in Huntington Beach, California, on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. She attended Syracuse University where she studied sculpture, printmaking, religious studies and history, while also competing on the women's rowing team. Next, she went to graduate school at University of Nebraska-Lincoln for studio art with an emphasis in printmaking. This is where she developed her love of colorful woodcut prints, using layering, pattern and repetition. Meryl moved to Akron, Ohio in fall of 2019 as the Artist-in-residence at Rubber City Prints. The city's landscape, people and history continue to inspire her. From watching the foliage and greenery take over the barren, urban landscape of Northeast Ohio to gathering with friends around a fire on a summer night, Meryl is always looking for the magical in the every day. In 2022 she started working at the Morgan Conservatory and learned Eastern and Western papermaking techniques, now incorporating papermaking into her print work. She has shown nationally and internationally, notably at Highpoint Center for Printmaking in Minneapolis, and Artlink Contemporary Gallery in Indiana.

**Sharon Massey** is an Assistant Professor of Jewelry and Metals at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). Her jewelry was selected for both Schmuck 2014 and Schmuck 2015 in Munich, Germany. From 2012 to 2015 Sharon served on the board of directors of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) and she currently serves on the Board of Trustees of The Enamelist Society. In 2009 she received the Art Jewelry Forum (AJF) Emerging Artist Award and was included in Lucca Preziosa Young. Images of her jewelry have been published in American Craft and Metalsmith magazines and nine books, including The Art of Enameling, Art Jewelry Today 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Editions, and New Brooches. Sharon's work is included in the collection of the Enamel Arts Foundation in Los Angeles, California, the Racine Art Museum in Racine, Wisconsin, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England and numerous private collections. She received her BFA from Winthrop University in 1999 and her MFA from East Carolina University in 2006.

**Zach Mellman-Carsey** is an artist and jeweler living in Lancaster, PA. Receiving an MFA from Indiana university in Bloomington, He creates wearable fine and conceptual jewelry and sculptures. When not creating visual art, Zach spends his time honing his culinary skills and experimenting with niche processes and ingredients dealing with food. With a reference to industrial structures, Zach Mellman-Carsey creates surreal depictions of their own body. Combining these forms with set stones examines expressions of wealth and power while contrasting a narrative that expresses loss, grief, resilience and renewal.

**Jada Patterson** is a multidisciplinary artist and crafts person born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Their work spans across ceramics, sculpture as well as traditional craft mediums such as broom making and basketry. Working primarily in clay, beeswax and assemblage Jada explores beauty, adornment, girlhood and material culture as it relates to the human condition. Jada began their studies at the Kansas City Art Institute where they received their Bachelor of Fine Arts in Ceramics and Art History. They've continued their studies as a fellow, mentor and resident at art and craft schools across the country including the Ox-Bow School of Art, Charlotte Street Foundation, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, John C. Campbell Folk School and the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences. Jada is currently based out of Pittsburgh, PA pursuing their practice full time as well as teaching new young artists.

**Lucas Pointon** is a Pittsburgh born artist currently living in Madison, Wisconsin. For the past three years, he has taught both beginning and advanced jewelry design and metalsmithing courses for the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Since then, Lucas works as a professional goldsmith for a local company's store and continues to teach at various private studios. His new series of works are inspired by Medieval reliquaries, containers that hold the relic of a saint. His interests lie in the ways people venerate the dead and living, and within his work, the American cockroach serves as societies modern surrogate. Living in a time of cheap manufactured goods and a love for "trash," cockroaches, are considered the garbage collectors of terrestrial ecosystems. Lucas's reliquary jewelry illuminates these once living detritivores and, it is his hope, to direct the viewers' moral compass in waste management and environmental protection. The art jewelry on view is in essence venerating the breaking of the natural re-cycle by hosting the cockroach ironically; an agent of recycling halted from itself being recycled by yet other cockroaches. This becomes a beautiful stand in for the inability for the "king of trash" of our time, plastics, from being recycled and therefore accumulating in the natural world.

**Katie Rearick** received her BFA with an emphasis in Metal/Jewelry from Western Michigan University, and her MFA from SUNY New Paltz. Supplemental to her formal education, she has studied at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts and Penland School of Crafts. Her work ranges from small-scale body adornment to large sculptural installations that utilize personal narrative as a starting point. Katie's work was included in the publications 500 Gemstone Jewels and 500 Enamelled Objects. Notable exhibitions include: Staring: in HINDSIGHT at The International Design Museum in Munich, Germany, Associated Artists of Pittsburgh 107th Annual Exhibition at The Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, Pennsylvania and Fresh: Metalsmith Exhibition in Print at the National Ornamental Metal Museum. Previously, Katie has taught at SUNY New Paltz, Waynesburg University and Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Having founded the Allegheny Metals Club in 2015, Katie is actively engaged in the Pittsburgh metals community and currently teaches workshops at the Society for Contemporary Craft. She also maintains a home studio in the Stanton Heights neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

**Kate Strachan** is an interdisciplinary artist, whose clay work integrates various materials such as fiber, wax, and wood to form manuscripts, sculpture, installations and video art etc. The doctrine of her Pennsylvania Dutch roots forms a basis on which layers of femininity, dark humor and questioning are all orchestrated together. Kate's work is viewed as a collection of both relics and texts conveying and preserving the routine of action, sexuality and silence. She earned a BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology SUNY with a focus on fiber. After a drastic career change Kate became apprentice for two years in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Japan. It was there she was able to connect with her sensitivities to beauty, touch and austerity. Following her apprenticeship, she relocated to Taiwan to complete her MFA at the Tainan National University of the Arts. While working

both in Asia and the US, she is a recipient of 2020 Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park Exchange (supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Japan), 2023 NCECA's Emerging Artist Award, and, most recently, has been awarded a scholarship for 2024 EKWC Residency (Supported by the Dutch Government). In 2022, her work was selected for Taiwan's Yingge Ceramic Museum Biennial.

**Hee Joo Yang** currently lives and works in Pittsburgh. She creates ceramics sculpture with her hand texture that explore a sense of time, space, and memory. Her ceramics sculptures are inspired from her background when she lives in South Korea and U.S. Through the abstract objects that accumulate, flow, and pile, she makes things that have stories, countable or uncountable, empty or full. She considers how she can arouse curiosity and tell stories to the audience by visualizing what is invisible. Hee Joo's evolution into coiling construction allowed her to leave trace on the surface of objects. This practice introduces how she engage with the objects like a written language. That's why she believes her hand proficiency is related to memory. She received a B.F.A. from the Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea in 2013 and an M.F.A. from Ewha Womans University, Seoul, Korea in 2016, and an M.F.A. from SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY in 2021. Her works had been exhibited in South Korea, in the United States and other countries. Also, she has had a residence program and exhibited at the Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, Biloxi, MS and her work has also been collected.

### **About Contemporary Craft**

Presenting contemporary art in craft materials by regional, national, and international artists since 1971, Contemporary Craft offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and contemporary art, as well as a range of artist-led studio workshops, community engagement programs, and a store featuring work by top artists from across the country. Located at 5645 Butler Street in Pittsburgh, PA, Contemporary Craft's exhibitions are free to the public.