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Center for Craft Celebrates Reopening and National Craft Innovation Hub with *Craft Futures 2099*

ASHEVILLE, NC (November 8, 2019) – On Nov. 16, Center for Craft will celebrate the *Building a Future for Craft* campaign and the Grand Reopening of the National Craft Innovation Hub with *Craft Futures 2099*, an exhibition featuring 10 national and local multimedia artists envisioning craft as it might look 80 years from now. The exhibition will be open in the Center's new Bresler Family Gallery through February 29, 2020.

Inspired by the World's Fair of 1939 in New York City, which looked toward a coming era of prosperity channeled through a streamlined and shining vision of the future, the Center commissioned participating artists to envision their own futures in a moment when a multiplicity of paths forward exists. The resulting exhibition brings a wide range of perspectives together in one space to invite reflection, immersion, interaction, and speculation. Delving into subjects like the environment, indigenous history, social justice, decolonization, and technology, the participating artists uncover our hopes and desires in the present moment through a future full of possibilities.

The breadth of responses to the call highlight the Center's commitment to its exploration of broad definitions of craft. Assistant Director and Curator Marilyn Zapf notes that "the Bresler Family Gallery will continue to reflect national trends in contemporary craft, with this and future exhibitions representing current conversations. Our National Craft Innovation Hub is an opportune platform to show the most cutting edge craft happening today."

Works in *Craft Futures 2099* are at the forefront of craft's evolution. Chicago-based Folayemi (Fo) Wilson and Jeffreen M. Hayes' *The Allegory of the Fontainebleu*, an interactive hologram that reimagines the canon of art history, positions Harlem Renaissance artist Augusta Savage as a central figure in a 2099 museum tour. Santiago X's *MODULE*, a spacecraft that delivers regional indigenous crafts as sources of wisdom, reverses traditional narratives of colonization. David H. Clemons' piece, *The Weight of Deferred Gratification*, invites us to weigh our immediate needs with the long-term survival of our species through a set of eating utensils containing sprouted seeds.

Clemons reflected on his piece and the larger exhibition, saying, "I was intrigued by the prompt for the exhibition, responding to the 1939 World's Fair. This fair ushered in the use of technology and industrial advances that have propelled life and industry at a global level. The resulting speed of life and consumption of resources and wealth have had devastating effects,

and the aftermath of our present experience will be felt by those in 2099. For me these ideas provided rich ground for speculation and exploration. This notion of deferred gratification is something I feel we need to have a greater awareness of now and in the future so that we can better serve ourselves and our fellow human beings.”

Artist Jessica Green, whose work *...and the light* is a collaboration with Eric Meeker, asks us to pause and ruminate on time and slowness. Constructed with woven cloth and glass prisms and orbs, the piece catches shifting light to create an ephemeral “shadowcloth” on the wall behind it. Green, speaking about the inspiration behind the piece, notes that “working with light feels like working with suspended and refracted time, and working with accumulated woven threads is a physical chronicle of time as it is spent. How do we gracefully carry the ancient past and the right now with us into the future? How do we re-member a way of being that can sit in awe at the magic of the mundane? I have a hunch that light, shadow, our hands and simple cloth can help us tell the tale.”

The theme of *Craft Futures 2099* exhibition parallels the Center’s own *Building a Future of Craft* campaign, which includes a complete renovation of the historic 1912 building in downtown Asheville, N.C. The Center preserved its historic elements while adding 7,000 square feet of new galleries, meeting rooms, and event spaces, as well as state-of-the-art technology to meet the needs of Asheville’s vibrant creative sector and connect it with the national craft community. The building itself bridges the past, present, and future through its functional and decorative installations from groundbreaking artists pushing the boundaries of craft.

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ABOUT CENTER FOR CRAFT Founded in 1996, the Center for Craft (formerly The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design) is the leading organization in the United States identifying and convening craft makers, curators, and researchers, and matching them with resources, tools, and networks to advance their careers. Over the years, the Center has become a vital community resource, serving thousands of visitors annually. As a national 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the field of craft, the Center administers more than \$300,000 in grants to those working in the craft field. www.centerforcraft.org