



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Alyssa Ruberto, Communications Coordinator  
828-785-1357 x111 | [press@centerforcraft.org](mailto:press@centerforcraft.org)

***Center for Craft reopens with first exhibition  
from 2020 Curatorial Fellows***

*The Computer Pays its Debt explores the  
connection between technology and textiles*

**ASHEVILLE, NC (August 1, 2020)** – *The Computer Pays its Debt: Women, Textiles, and Technology, 1965-1985*, illuminates the direct connection between computing technology and weaving, and is now on view at the Center for Craft following a three-month closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. Viewable by pre-registration starting August 4, the show positions women who worked with technology and textiles at the heart of the information age. Kayleigh Perkov, 2020 Curatorial Fellow, drew the exhibition's title and theme from a 1966 *New York Times* interview with IBM computer scientist and weaver Janice Lourie, creator of the Textile Graphics software, in which she argues that it was “about time that [computing’s] debt to the weaving trade was paid back.”

The statement links computers to the nineteenth-century Jacquard Loom, which used punch cards as proto-programming. The loom directly influenced Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace, considered the first programmer, when they invented the analytical engine – the precursor to our modern computers – in the nineteenth century. Perkov and the ten renowned artists in the exhibition, including Lourie, Sonia Sheridan, Sonya Rapoport, and Lia Cook, recenter the role of women in technology by elevating other voices and histories beyond Lovelace, offering up new ways of seeing the relationship between identity, creativity, and technology.

Participating artist Daniela Rosner, a collaborator on *Core Memory Quilt*, explores “the process by which we build technologies,” was inspired by archival footage of two women weaving “core memory ropes” that stored programming for the Apollo space missions in an example of electronic-textile hybridity. She and collaborator Samantha Shorey saw an immediate link between these women’s actions and textile production. “We began to think about memory as both computer memory and in terms of often gendered processes like quilting and craftwork,” she notes. “What you might think of as a quilt – made of pieces of fabric left behind and associated with being unpaid, unthinking work done mostly by women – was actually critical to launching the Apollo missions to the moon and back.”

Like the other participating artists, Rosner uses craft as a lens to “think about how things get made, and who makes them.” Through her piece, she questions “what kinds of bodies, hands, and locales are involved in the production of technology, and how those choices in the development process can shape what’s made possible and what’s closed off.”

This is the first exhibition from this year's 2020 Curatorial Fellowship recipients. Each year, the Curatorial Fellowship recognizes up-and-coming curators working at the cutting edge of craft. Three recipients organize shows at the Center for Craft to Asheville as part of the Center's larger conversation around craft and its evolution. Learn more at [centerforcraft.org](http://centerforcraft.org).

Reopening on the week of August 3 under limited hours, the Center is offering free, unguided visits and affordable tours of its exhibitions to the public. Guests can pre-register for a 30-minute visit to explore the current exhibitions, learn more about the Center's national impact in their Craft Research Fund Study Collection, and enjoy interactive activities.

Center for Craft is monitoring the effects of COVID-19 on the community and following the instruction of federal, state, and local health departments. Our top priority is always the health and safety of our staff, coworkers, and visitors. At this time, the Center will only allow a **maximum of five guests** in its public space at a time and will **require the use of masks or face coverings by all visitors**.

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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](http://www.centerforcraft.org)