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Through active conversation, *Call + Response* reveals the influence of newer faculty members on Oregon's shifting creative landscape

CALL + RESPONSE On view June 18 – October 31, 2009
PRESENTING SPONSORS: John and Suzanne Bishop

PORTLAND, OR—May 7, 2009—Museum of Contemporary Craft presents *Call + Response*, a multi-layered exhibition featuring diverse works by eight art and eight art history faculty members from colleges and universities in Oregon. On view June 18 through October 31, this exhibition highlights academics who have taught in this state for roughly ten years or less. Through multimedia content, contextual writing, the presentation of studio works and public programs, this intriguing project celebrates and provokes the recent influx of ideas brought to Oregon by these faculty members – who are breaking ground within their fields nationally and internationally. In effect, *Call + Response* considers what role these individuals, and their institutions, play within the state's creative community at large.

In the musical tradition of “call and response,” musicians play or sing alternating sections of a score, replying directly to one another through song. *Call + Response*, the exhibition, raises questions through a similar exchange, providing a rare platform for artists and art historians to engage with each other in in-depth conversation about contemporary visual practice.

The physical exhibition features artists with materials-based training whose works collectively express the vast breadth of practice currently taking place within craft. Pieces on view will range from Anya Kivarkis' (University of Oregon) ornamental contemporary jewelry to David Eckard's (Pacific Northwest College of Art) absurd pseudo-functional sculptures and film to Jiseon Lee Isbara's (Oregon College of Art and Craft) repetitious, embroidered textile works.

To provide context to the works, each artist was paired with an art historian with compatible interests; diverse art historical focuses include medieval architecture, Asian art and contemporary theory. In one case, Reed College's Rob Slifkin, a historian specializing in modernism, was matched with Studio Gorm (John Arndt and Wonhee Jeong), University of Oregon's product design team that creates deceptively simple objects for modern living environments. In collaboration with the Museum's curator, Namita Gupta Wiggers, all of the pairs were asked to meet individually to discuss the works to be exhibited. Historians were then tasked to create original scholarship about their respective artist.

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Museum of Contemporary Craft

By engaging these artists and art historians – and later the community through public programs – in active conversation, *Call + Response* positions Museum of Contemporary Craft as a catalyst and nexus for critical inquiry about craft’s role within visual culture, and propels the conversation about craft far beyond traditional questions of commodity and marketplace. *Call + Response* provides an opportunity for art historians to bring their practice to the public sphere, and challenges them to think differently about craft-based work by focusing on artists they have never written about before. In return, this exhibition requires the studio artists to articulate the questions that guide their practice and allow for a dramatic change in perspective as their work is placed in a greater context through the essays.

“As a facet of our institutional mission, the Museum is designed to be a vibrant center for learning, a place to stimulate new questions about visual practice. We always encourage exhibition and program participants to form new opinions about the work they make and see,” said Namita Gupta Wiggers, curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft. “It feels like a natural step to now create an opportunity for Oregon’s expanding cadre of remarkable art and art history faculty members to actively collaborate – and then to bring the larger community to the table.”

Full essays, podcasts and other multimedia content featuring the participants can be found online at the *Call + Response* microsite, which will go live June 18 at: www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org/call. A print-on-demand publication will be available (anticipated release fall 2009), including all original writing created by the participating art historians and images of work by each artist, as well as documentation of the project as it unfolds. A series of related programs will engage the public at regular intervals throughout the tenure of the exhibition.

PARTICIPANTS

Karl Burkheimer · associate professor and head of wood department, Oregon College of Art and Craft

Matt Johnston · assistant professor of art history, Lewis & Clark College

David Eckard · instructor of intermedia and sculpture, Pacific Northwest College of Art

Anne Marie Oliver · assistant professor of intermedia and contemporary art theory, Pacific Northwest College of Art

Josh Faught · assistant professor and program director of fibers, University of Oregon

Kate Mondloch · assistant professor of contemporary art history and theory, University of Oregon

Anya Kivarkis · assistant professor and area head of jewelry and metalsmithing, University of Oregon

Abby McGehee · associate professor of art history, Oregon College of Art and Craft

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Jiseon Lee Isbara · associate professor and head of fibers department, Oregon College of Art and Craft
Kirsi Peltomäki · assistant professor of art history, Oregon State University

Sam Morgan · instructor of ceramics, Portland Community College
Dawn Odell · assistant professor of art history and assistant chair, Lewis & Clark College

Heidi Schwegler · associate professor of metals, Oregon College of Art and Craft
Sue Taylor · professor of art history, Portland State University

Studio Gorm (John Arndt and Wonhee Jeong) · associate professor of product design, University of Oregon
Rob Slifkin · assistant professor of art history and humanities, Reed College

ABOUT MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft is one of Oregon's oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located in Portland's Pearl District, the Museum is nationally acclaimed for its curatorial program and is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it.

Visit the Museum online at www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org.

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1–4 Karl Burkheimer (dark blue shirt), associate professor and head of wood department, Oregon College of Art and Craft, and Matt Johnston, assistant professor of art history, Lewis & Clark College, meet in Burkheimer's studio to discuss Burkheimer's sculptural works. April 2009. Photo: Heather Zinger

5. Karl Burkheimer, *Five Fourths*, 2008; Wood; 83 × 62 × 62 inches; Courtesy of the artist

6. David Eckard, Still image from *Prestidigitation: A Folly in Eleven Acts*, 2009; Film; Courtesy of the artist

7. Josh Faught, four signs to suicide prevention, 2009; Machine knit fabric, garden trellis, paint, disaster blanket; 4 x 9 feet; Courtesy of Lisa Cooley Fine Arts and the artist

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8. Anya Kivarkis, *Penelope Cruz Red Carpet Earrings*, 2007; Sterling silver, 14k Palladium white gold; Courtesy of the artist

9. Jiseon Lee Isbara, *Scattered*, 2008–09; Cotton fabric, cotton and silk thread, hand and machine stitched, inkjet printed; 2.5 × 3.5 inches to 8.5 × 11 inches each; Courtesy of the artist

10. Sam Morgan, *X Teapot in Orange*, 2002; Porcelain, slip and wood fired; 7 × 9.5 × 7 inches; Courtesy of the artist

11. Heidi Schwegler, *More Than Simply Made: Melamine Tea Set Pierced with Ming Dynasty Pattern*, 2009; Melamine; 26 × 27 × 4 inches; Courtesy of the artist

12. Studio Gorm, *Shed/Shelf*, 2007; Painted and veneered MDF; Courtesy of Studio Gorm

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13–16. Namita Gupta Wiggers (grey ruffled jacket), curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft; and Anne Marie Oliver, assistant professor of intermedia and contemporary art theory, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), meet at PNCA to discuss the work of David Eckard. Eckard is an instructor of intermedia and sculpture at PNCA, and Oliver's writing subject for *Call + Response*.