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**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR THE CERAMIC ARTS RECEIVES GENEROUS GRANT FROM THE WINDGATE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) is delighted to share news that it recently received an extraordinary three-year grant from the Windgate Charitable Foundation. The purpose of the \$124,500 gift will be to advance developing careers of Emerging Artists as well as awareness of their work on a national level. According to NCECA President, Keith Williams, a Professor at Concordia University in Minneapolis, MN, "The Windgate Charitable Foundation's significant award to NCECA animates the organization's recently adopted strategic plan. In the midst of a very tough economic environment for the arts and artists, this grant enables us to increase value for NCECA members through essential, high quality and unique programs and services in a very real and meaningful way."

NCECA has made Emerging Artist awards since 1996. Issuing an open call to thousands of ceramic artists and educators working in the US and abroad, NCECA annually assembles a panel of experts in the field to identify six worthy talents whose work has reached the cusp of open new, promising and sometimes challenging dimensions in contemporary clay. Each of the six selected artists makes a presentation on his/ her work at NCECA's Annual Conference which draws from 4000-5500 registrants from throughout the globe. Many past selected artists have found that this exposure has opened opportunities to advance their creative efforts and visions in ways they might not have otherwise realized.

With the support of the Windgate Charitable Foundation grant, NCECA will further enhance the Emerging Artist honor with financial awards and an exhibition opportunity for the selected artists at NCECA's Annual Conference. Additional dimensions of the funded project will advance national awareness of the artists' work by presenting NCECA-sponsored speaking engagements at national art venues like the College Art Association conference or The International Expositions of Sculpture Objects & Functional Art (SOFA). NCECA also anticipates devoting a portion of the funding to advance emerging critical voices and writing in and about ceramics.

According to NCECA Director at Large, artist and Arizona State University Assistant Professor, Sam Chung, "This important gift from the Windgate Charitable Trust Foundation will make a significant impact on NCECA's Emerging Artist Program and its selected artists. It gives NCECA the ability to provide a much greater platform for these talented artists to share their creative work, enhance their visibility, and ultimately propel their careers forward at this critical stage of development."

Executive Director, Joshua Green states, “Nurturing the next generation of ceramic artists is critical to NCECA’s mission of inspiring passionate interest and reflective practice in ceramic arts and education. NCECA pursued this opportunity because we believe the future of the field will be shaped by ceramic artists grappling with critical and evolving conditions in the art world and society at large. Creating opportunities to make these artists’ works known to a broad constituency of makers, collectors, enthusiasts and critics is essential. Providing much-needed resources to the artists themselves makes investments of creative exploration and development possible.”

The Windgate Charitable Foundation is a private grant-making foundation established in 1993. A principal goal of the foundation is to fund projects that promote art and craft education.

### **About NCECA**

The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts is a dynamic organization that fosters global education and appreciation for the ceramic arts. NCECA’s programs, exhibitions, publications, opportunities and resources inspire advancement of the field. NCECA promotes and improves the ceramic arts through education, community-building, research and creative inspiration. NCECA offers programs, events and publications to support its membership of artists, educators, students, individual and corporate art patrons, gallery owners, museum curators and providers of ceramic arts-related products and services.

NCECA is the leading organization operating in the US dedicated to a global perspective on ceramic arts and education. From March 28-31, 2012 NCECA’s 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, ***On the Edge*** was developed especially for the Seattle/ Pacific-Northwest region where more than 170 related exhibitions will be sited. The conference, which will take place at the Washington State Convention Center, is expected to draw nearly 5000 attendees. Along with it will come many opportunities for area residents and visitors to experience the transformative and continually evolving influences of one of our most ancient art-forms.

To learn more about NCECA membership and the 46th Annual Conference in Seattle visit [www.nceca.net](http://www.nceca.net) or contact the office by phone at 1-866-266-2322.