

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2011

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Immigrant Impact strikes a creative blow for art in Tampa-St. Pete

Contemporary Ceramic Sculpture Exhibition Explores Global Perspectives on Cultural Dislocation and Re-location in Contemporary Art

Concurrent with its 45th Annual Conference in Tampa-St. Pete, The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts presents the premiere of an exciting exhibition entitled ***Immigrant Impact***. The exhibition, co-curated by Anna Calluori Holcombe and Elizabeth Kozlowski, will be on view from March 25- April 9, 2011 at Duncan McClellan Glass, 2372 Emerson Ave. S., in St. Petersburg, Florida. Gallery hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday from 10 am- 5 pm; Thursday, 5- 10 pm and Friday by appointment. A special reception at which the artists and curators will be in attendance takes place Thursday, March 31 from 5-10 pm.

While immigration to the United States has played a major role throughout the country's history, since the events of September 11 media and political discourse on the topic has reached unprecedented levels of controversy and debate. While the world today is sometimes portrayed as a global village, there is also renewed interest in preserving and celebrating distinct cultural heritages. The rapid creation and accessibility of information, ease of travel and shifting socio-economic conditions in contemporary life have resulted in new and sometimes dramatic influences on fashion, music, design, food and art. Often these cultural indicators are propelled in new directions and take on unique forms as distinct cultural perspectives come in contact with one another. When such expressions occur they often yield new ways of questioning, exploring and understanding the world in which we live today.

The exhibition, ***Immigrant Impact***, presents several visionary perspectives on this cycle of creative perseverance, influence and transformation through the use of clay. The participating artists of ***Immigrant Impact*** represent Brazil, Nicaragua, Japan and the Former Yugoslavia respectively. Each of these individuals experienced a great culture shock upon their arrival to the United States. Time and experience have led to an enriching process and a broad spectrum of individual work.

Mika Negishi Laidlaw, of Japan, creates a bridge between her two countries of origin in her work. Her awareness of her heritage and ancestry gradually became a large part of what she makes with clay. Ivan Albrecht of the former Yugoslavia examines paradoxes of the contemporary western society by observing them from a distance. Time and experience have taught Juan Carlos Navas of Nicaragua, that it is a mixture of cultures that defines him. Through the use of clay and traditional spices from her country of origin, Gianinna Dwin creates time-based installations that speak of both worlds. Through the use of installation-based works, industrial casting methods and functional clay, these artists translate their immigrant experience through their work.

Immigrant Impact is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The exhibition is one of more than 100 being presented in the Tampa-St. Petersburg region concurrently with the 45th Annual Conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA). The conference theme, **Tidal Forces: The next wave** was developed especially for the Florida Gulf coast region by NCECA On-Site Liaisons Anna Calluori Holcombe and Brian Ransom, members of the faculty of University of Florida and Eckerd College respectively.

The conference, which is expected to draw nearly 5000 artists, educators, collectors, non-profit organizations, schools and enthusiasts, takes place from March 30-April 2, 2011 at the Tampa Convention Center. Along with it will come many opportunities for area residents and visitors to experience first-hand the transformative and continually evolving influences of one of our most ancient art forms. NCECA is the world's leading organization dedicated to the medium of ceramics. Its annual conferences are legendary and 2011 marks Florida's first time hosting this exceptional event.

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. As a dynamic, member-driven organization, NCECA is flexible in its program development, international in its perspective and responsive to the changing needs of its constituency.

To learn more about NCECA and the 45th Annual Conference in Tampa-St. Pete visit www.nceca.net or contact the office by phone at 1-866-266-2322.