



Contact:
Dori Nielsen | dori@nceca.net
Candice Finn | candice@nceca.net

PRELIMINARY RELEASE
**NCECA COMES TO PITTSBURGH
IN MARCH 2018**

FOR IMMEDIATE CIRCULATION

CROSSCURRENTS: CLAY AND CULTURE

The city of rivers, bridges, complex immigrant history, gritty perseverance, and reinvention provides setting for reflection on culture's influence on art, teaching and learning with clay.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania hosts the 52nd Annual Conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA - (May, 2017) – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and the surrounding region has been selected as site of the 52nd Annual Conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts. The conference will take place March 14-17, 2018 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, 1000 Fort Duquesne Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

The 2018 conference theme, *CrossCurrents: Clay and Culture* will explore sources of inspiration that influence and impact work in ceramics today whether grappling to keep clay vital in classrooms, museums, and community settings, or learning from and adapting to the interplay of cultures in the contemporary world. Personal, social and aesthetic forces animate creative work with elemental materials, methods and ideas in the midst of the information age. On-site Conference Liaisons working on behalf of NCECA's members and board of directors in the greater Pittsburgh region are Kate Lydon, Director of Exhibitions at the Society for Contemporary Craft and Shoji Satake, Assistant Professor of Ceramics at West Virginia University. Additionally, their institutions are acting as hosts for the 2018 NCECA conference, along with Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Slippery Rock University, and Pittsburgh Filmmakers/ Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PF/PCA) in supporting host roles.

Lydon and Satake share enthusiasm for the impact of arts, culture and community engagement that are integral to NCECA's model for conference development, stating, "We are working on behalf of NCECA to integrate experiences with contemporary ceramic art throughout the city's diverse urban neighborhoods and to the region beyond. We hope to generate enthusiasm for the broad world of ceramics as artistic expression across county and state lines through an extensive series of exhibitions and programs to meet every interest." 2018 is the second occasion in the past ten years that NCECA's conference takes place in Pittsburgh, anticipating more than 5000 conference registrants including artists, higher education students and teachers, collectors and enthusiasts. NCECA's Executive Director Joshua Green writes, "To NCECA's followers from throughout the United States and abroad, Pittsburgh represents an urban nexus of natural beauty, technological innovation, and exceptional cultural assets. Pittsburgh embodies diverse traditions and a spirit of reinvention. The region's character will resonate deeply with those engaged in the ongoing evolution of the ceramic arts."

Conference programming will range from lectures to panel discussions, artist projects and demonstrations, networking opportunities and dozens of exhibitions throughout the greater region. Special strands dedicated to K-12 education and student-centered programming will also be incorporated along with opportunities to learn about ceramics study, residency opportunities, services and products.

SELECT PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITIONS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A limited number of engaging conference-related experiences including the opening ceremonies, keynote lecture and a performing arts presentation known as the Randall Session are open to the public without charge. The NCECA Gallery Expo will also be free and open to the public. This program brings an array of galleries exhibiting some of the highest quality ceramic art into the heart of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center where representatives will interact with all of those interested in learning more about collecting contemporary ceramic art.

Surrounding NCECA's annual conferences are an array of diverse and dynamic ceramic art exhibitions. NCECA is partnering with the Society for Contemporary Craft and artist/ guest curator Winnie Owens-Hart to organize and host *Visual Voices: Truth Narratives*. This 2018 NCECA Annual exhibition will highlight leading-edge artists and practices in contemporary ceramic art influenced by the griot tradition in contemporary contexts. NCECA's National Student Juried Exhibition will be hosted at PF/PCA. In all, nearly 100 exhibitions featuring clay as a medium of artistic expression will be sited throughout the Pittsburgh region and promoted concurrently with the conference. Most will be free and open to the public, although some venues may implement general admissions fees for visitors not registered with the conference.

ABOUT NCECA

NCECA, the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts is the leading organization operating in the U.S. dedicated to a global perspective on ceramic arts and education. A dynamic membership organization that fosters global education and appreciation for the ceramic arts, NCECA's programs, exhibitions and public events promote and improve the ceramic arts through education, community building, research and creative inspiration. For more information, visit www.nceca.net.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN- WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

The School of Art & Design at West Virginia University College of Creative Arts is recognized as a leader in the education, creative development and growth of artists, designers, scholars, and teachers in the visual arts. Its mission is grounded on the attraction and retention of a talented, skilled, creative, distinguished, and diverse body of faculty and students. As an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, School of Art & Design degree programs are meant to give students ample opportunity to explore the visual arts, art history, and art education. The curriculum of the School is designed to afford the student an opportunity to explore the visual arts. Programs offer scholarly and studio experiences to potential artists and teachers. It positions students at the crossroads between a local sense of place and a global understanding of that place in the world. The in-depth instruction is enhanced by the close working relationship between students and faculty, which allows sharing the insights and investigative processes of professional artists and scholars. As a national and regional leader in arts education, WVU is honored to be a co-host for NCECA Pittsburgh 2018.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by international, national and regional artists since 1971, Contemporary Craft offers cutting edge exhibitions focused on multicultural diversity and non-mainstream art, as well as a range of classes, community outreach programs, and a retail store. Through its mission of engaging the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft, the organization offers meaningful art opportunities for more than 145,000 people a year through four core values: providing vital support for artists; filling critical gaps in public education; sharing cross-cultural perspectives; and using art to build community.

ABOUT MANCHESTER CRAFTSMEN'S GUILD

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild (MCG) is a nonprofit multi-discipline art, education, and music organization established in 1968 in Pittsburgh's Northside by Bill Strickland. Inspired by his high school ceramics teacher, Frank Ross, Strickland has developed a renowned, 62,000-square-foot community asset that has led to replicated centers in other cities around the United States and abroad. MCG Youth offers programs in ceramics, photography, digital arts, and painting to over 500 young people each year, and impacts thousands of additional students through partnerships with schools. MCG Jazz, whose mission is to preserve, present and promote jazz music features live performances in a 350-seat concert hall, a recording studio, and Grammy winning production label. In addition to an art gallery, classrooms and workshops, MCG's sister organization, Bidwell Training Center provides career preparation experiences for adults, with majors developed through strong partnerships with leading Pittsburgh corporations, agencies, and organizations.

ABOUT PITTSBURGH CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PF/PCA) is a historic, nonprofit institution with a critical mission to support artists and advance artistic excellence in the Pittsburgh region. A community-based, NASAD-accredited institution PF/PCA offers year-round credit and non-credit courses, access to equipment and studio space to artists, a regional residency program for artists, a regular exhibition program, a robust screening program that includes an annual film festival, and sales of work by artist members in an on-site shop. Annually PF/PCA serves 100,000 individuals of all ages.

ABOUT PITTSBURGH FILMMAKERS/PITTSBURGH CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PF/PCA) is a historic, nonprofit institution with a critical mission to support artists and advance artistic excellence in the Pittsburgh region. A community-based, NASAD-accredited institution PF/PCA offers year-round credit and non-credit courses, access to equipment and studio space to artists, a regional residency program for artists, a regular exhibition program, a robust screening program that includes an annual film festival, and sales of work by our artist members in our on-site shop. Annually PF/PCA serves 100,000 individuals of all ages.

ABOUT SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

Slippery Rock University, founded in 1889, is a member of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education. The University is shaped by its normal school heritage and characterized by its commitment to intellectual development, leadership and civic responsibility. A four-year, public, coeducational, comprehensive university offering a broad array of undergraduate and select graduate programs to more than 8,500 students, SRU provides a learning experience that intentionally combines academic instruction with enhanced educational and learning opportunities that will help students succeed in their lives, professional careers and be engaged citizens. . The University has earned full institutional accreditation through the Middle State Commission on Higher Learning and discipline specific accreditations.