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SPRING EXHIBITION EXPLORES RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRAFT & DINING ***DINING AND DISCOURSE: A DISCUSSION IN THREE COURSES*** On View February 6 – May 10, 2015, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Dining and Discourse: A Discussion in Three Courses

February 6 – May 10, 2015

Main Gallery

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Opening Reception

Friday, February 6, 5:30 – 8:00 PM

The evening will also feature the opening of one day, late in the afternoon. . . in the Front Gallery and open studios by HCCC's current resident artists.

Hours & Admission

Open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sunday, 12 – 5 PM. Admission is free.

(HOUSTON, TX) November 16, 2014 — With the demand for locally sourced goods and handmade products on the rise, terms like *handcrafted*, *craftsmanship*, and *artisanal* are household words in the food industry and marketplace. Art-and-food-fusion events are increasingly prevalent, while *craft*, in this arena, denotes customized products and services. In response to these trends and recent scholarship, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) presents *Dining and Discourse: A Discussion in Three Courses*, an exhibition that looks critically at the intrinsic relationship between craft and dining. The exhibition features 27 emerging and mid-career artists working in wood, glass, ceramics, fiber, metal, and mixed media. Curated by HCCC Curatorial Fellow, Kathryn Hall, the show challenges contemporary notions of functionality, status, and aesthetics by moving beyond the presentation of the beautifully set dinner table to spark discussion about the



past, present and future of craft. Organized into three dining-room vignettes—*Role Play*, *Hunter-Gatherer*, and *Opulence and Excess*—*Dining and Discourse* reveals new flavors within the age-old partnership of craft and food, as contemporary makers find inspiration in the dining experience.

Role Play addresses the formal concerns of dining-room furniture, utensils, and wares through material, line, color, and form. The artists in this vignette bring

a new sense of purpose and identity to the dinner table, calling attention to the social and practical aspects of

sharing a meal. Inspired by Le Corbusier's modern design principles, Studio WAC's *Obus Lofts' Dining Table* presents a creative solution to hosting a small dinner party. Designed for five people, the layout of the table breaks up formal seating arrangements to promote conversation and social interaction. With two corners of the top bending towards the floor, the piece's asymmetrical design confronts the functional boundaries of dining-room furniture.



Hunter-Gatherer recognizes the growing presence in popular culture of the self-sufficient, resourceful, and environmentally conscious mindset—a modern adaptation of the survivalist. Through the lens of contemporary craft media, this vignette considers the topic of sustainability in craft and food, as well as the traditional display of man's dominion over nature. For instance, with a handle made from pig bone and copper, Seth Gould's *Non Si Butta Via Niente* meat cleaver is a stunning embodiment of the environmental mantra, "Do not throw anything away."

In contrast to the first two vignettes, *Opulence and Excess* exhibits a playful explosion of color, ornamentation, and material exploration. Historically, commissioned wares and dining-room furniture asserted the power, status, and personal beliefs of their patrons through the use of precious materials, embellishment, and technical execution. However, as tastes have evolved, old aristocratic styles that were once revered—like the



Baroque—have become kitsch in mainstream culture. Borrowing from the history of decorative arts patronage, the artists in this vignette have restored value to period styles by adapting them to a contemporary context. For instance, Nanda Soderberg showcases his highbrow-meets-lowbrow style with handmade glassware. The artist transforms recycled beer bottles into Venetian-style goblets and tumblers, adorned with a touch of gold leaf.

Above all, *Dining and Discourse* aims to generate discussion about the historical and contemporary relationships between craft and dining. Visitors are welcome to participate in the discussion through related programming and by visiting the exhibition's Tumblr blog. (Full details will be available in February, 2015, on the exhibition web page, www.crafthouston.org/exhibition/dining-and-discourse/.)

Image Credits

Studio WAC, *Obus Lofts' Dining Table (OLDT-AP-1)*, 2011. Laminated birch plywood, pigmented conversion varnish, powder-coated steel. Photo by Scott Cartwright.

Seth Gould, *Non Si Butta Via Niente*, 2012. Iron, tool steel, fine silver, brass, copper, pig bone. Photo by the artist.

Nanda Soderberg, *Gold Leaf Beer Bottle Tumblers*, 2012. Recycled bottle, gold leaf. Photo by the artist.

Dining and Discourse Featured Artists

Role Play

Corey Ackelmire
Nicholas Bivins
Samuel Chung
Susan Dwyer
Haand
Danny Kamerath
Studio WAC
Grace Zuniga

Hunter-Gatherer

Jessica Broad
Chris Campbell
Margaret Dorfman
Seth Gould
Clark Kellogg
Robbie Lobell
Adrien Segal
Smith Shop
Michael Radyk

Opulence and Excess

Margaret Bohls
Blair Clemo
Shari Mendelson
Sarah Rebekah Byrd Mizer
Jaydan Moore
Susan O'Brien
Lisa Orr
Ellie Richards
Tom Shields
Nanda Soderberg

About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit arts organization founded to advance education about the process, product and history of craft. HCCC serves as an important cultural and educational resource for Houston and the Southwest—one of the few venues in the country dedicated exclusively to craft at the highest level. The organization provides exhibition, sales and studio spaces to support the work of local and national artists and offers mission-related educational programs in schools and underserved communities. Visitors enjoy viewing innovative exhibitions, visiting artist studios, strolling through the Craft Garden, creating their own crafts in monthly HANDS-ON HOUSTON events, and shopping for one-of-a-kind gifts and home décor in the Asher Gallery.

Located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sunday, 12 – 5 PM. **Spring/Summer Hours: Closed Easter Sunday, July 4th, and on Sundays, July 4th – Labor Day.** Admission is free. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis Street. HCCC is three blocks south of Wheeler Ave. MetroRail station on Main Street.

HCCC is funded in part by grants from The Brown Foundation; Houston Endowment, Inc.; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation.

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For more information, call 713.529.4848 or visit www.crafthouston.org. Follow HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

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