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## **VETERANS UNITE THROUGH CRAFT TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE ON WAR CULTURE**

***United by Hand: Work and Service by Drew Cameron, Alicia Dietz and Ehren Tool***  
**on View February 3 – May 28, 2017, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

### **United by Hand: Work and Service by Drew Cameron, Alicia Dietz and Ehren Tool**

**February 3 – May 28, 2017**

Main Gallery

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

### **Opening Reception**

**Friday, February 3, 5:30 – 8:00 PM**

The evening will also feature the opening of *Future Tradition: Melissa Cody* in the front gallery and open studios by HCCC's current resident artists.

### **Hours & Admission**

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sunday, 12 – 5 PM. Summer Hours: Closed Sundays, July 4<sup>th</sup> – Labor Day. Holidays: Closed Easter, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is free.

**(HOUSTON, TX) November 10, 2016** – Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) presents *United by Hand: Work and Service by Drew Cameron, Alicia Dietz, and Ehren Tool*, a program-driven exhibition led by three artist-veterans working in fiber, wood, and clay. Drew Cameron, Alicia Dietz, and Ehren Tool use craft as part of their own healing, and, through their artistic practices, continue to serve their country by promoting peace and giving a voice to veterans. Through both the works on view in the galleries and a series of craft-based programs, *United by Hand* pays tribute to U.S. veterans and aims to create neutral ground, raising critical awareness about the history and current state of war culture in the United States.

Second-generation papermaker Drew Cameron draws on a history of making paper from clothing that dates back to the middle 8<sup>th</sup> century. Cameron served in the U.S. Army, right after high school, from 2000 to 2006. He was deeply affected by the time that he spent in Iraq in 2003 as a Field Artillery Soldier and found catharsis through papermaking. In 2007, Cameron cut up his uniform, reconstituting it into paper for *You Are Not My Enemy*. In this same year, he co-founded *Combat Paper* with fellow artist and activist, Drew Matott. The two began traveling the country with a Hollander beater, a machine that produces paper pulp from plant fibers, collecting uniforms and other clothing, and transforming them into paper sheets, which he calls "lineage fiber." Celebrating the collaborative work of veterans and civilians, this interactive project is ongoing and promotes a forum for individuals to share their perspectives on war with those who have not experienced it firsthand.

In conjunction with *United by Hand*, Cameron will conduct a *Combat Paper* workshop at HCCC in April. HCCC will ask the public to donate uniforms and civilian clothing for the project, and participants will work together to create a 9.5-by-5-foot flag, a continuation of his 2013 piece, *Burial Flag*. This community project calls attention to the vacancy that occurs in the wake of military service and honors those who have died, as well as those who no longer wear their uniforms.

Stationed around the world, Alicia Dietz served in the U.S. Army for 10 years as an officer and Blackhawk Maintenance Test Pilot in the Iraq War. During her military career, she had the opportunity to meet a variety of people and felt compelled to share their stories. With a background in journalism, Dietz views her woodworking and furniture design practice as a conduit for these individuals. Organized by blood type, the handmade wooden frames in her *Collective Cadence* (2016) installation chronicle the stories of 117 active-duty soldiers, veterans, and their spouses, all etched in glass and printed on aluminum. Dietz emphasizes the individual through the collective experience of war: "Through the telling of each, we are united as one. In the telling of the collective, we find our own. These are our stories. This is our story." While the installation is on view at HCCC, Dietz will continue to collect stories as part of her ongoing *Collective Cadence* archive.

As a Marine who served in the 1991 Gulf War, ceramic artist Ehren Tool is unsettled by memories of his service and recognizes how violence has changed him, leaving him uncertain about how to talk about his experience during active duty. He has been struck by children's toys that replicate the gas masks, uniforms, and warfare that he recognizes as products of the Gulf War. When discussing his work, he says, "You may be for or against a particular war, but I think it is too easy for us to look away. I think we as a country and as humans should look at what is actually going on." Tool uses his potter's wheel to make cups that expose the large disparity between fiction and reality. For him, each cup represents a human life. He uses the utilitarian object's familiar form to engage the cupbearer in a dialogue with the graphic photographs and press-molded war paraphernalia of its surface. So far, Tool has given away more than 18,000 of these cups, and, for this exhibition, he will create a new series to be distributed at HCCC on Memorial Day weekend.

Tool has said, "Peace is the only adequate war memorial." All three artist-veterans devote their craft practices to promoting this message and to calling the community to action. When presented together, this powerful collection of works and programming shows that each voice in the community has the power to help heal from past events and shape the future.

*United by Hand: Work and Service* by Drew Cameron, Alicia Dietz, and Ehren Tool was curated by HCCC Curator, Kathryn Hall.

## **Exhibition Programming**

The public is encouraged to participate. More details will be available in 2017.

Friday, February 3, 5:30 - 8:00 PM	Exhibition Opening
Saturday, February 4, 3:30 PM	Artist Talk by Alicia Dietz
Friday, March 24, 1:00 - 5:00 PM	Papermaking Demonstration by Drew Cameron
Saturday, March 25, 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Combat Paper Workshop by Drew Cameron
Saturday, April 22, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Cup-Throwing Demonstration by Ehren Tool
May 27, 3:00 - 5:00 PM	Memorial Day Weekend Closing Event

## **About the Artists**

**Drew Cameron (San Francisco, CA)** is a papermaker, based in the Shotwell Paper Mill, and the co-founder of *Combat Paper*. Cameron served in the U.S. Army from 2000 to 2006 and spent four years in active duty as a Field Artillery Soldier, with a tour in Iraq in 2003, where he was promoted to Sergeant (E-5). From 2004 to 2006, he served in the Vermont Army National Guard. He has held residencies at the Museum of Contemporary Craft (Portland, OR), University of Illinois (Urbana, IL), University of Iowa Center for the Book (Iowa City, IA), and Southwest School of Art & Craft (San Antonio, TX). His work can be found in 33 public collections and has been shown at the Museum of Contemporary Craft (Portland, OR), Craft and Folk Art Museum (Los Angeles, CA), the Corcoran Gallery (Washington, D.C.), Courthauld Institute (London, UK), and the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.), to name a few. More information at <http://www.combatpaper.org>.

**Alicia Dietz (Richmond, VA)** is a woodworker and Iraq War veteran. From 2001 - 2011, she served in combat and peace-keeping operations as a U.S. Army Officer, UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter Pilot, Maintenance Test Pilot, and Company Commander of over 125 soldiers. In 2015, Dietz received an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in furniture design and woodworking. She maintains two woodworking and furniture degrees from Vermont Woodworking School in 2013 and 2012 and a BSJ in advertising/journalism from Ohio University in 2001. Her work has been exhibited at the Center for Art in Wood (Philadelphia, PA), Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA), and Arrowmont School of Crafts (Gatlinburg, TN), among others. More information at <http://aliciadietzstudios.com>.

**Ehren Tool (Berkeley, CA)** is a ceramic artist and the senior laboratory mechanic at the University of California, Berkeley's ceramic department. He served as a Marine in the 1991 Gulf War. Tool has an MFA from the University of California, Berkeley, and a BFA from the University of Southern California. His work has been shown at the Minnesota Street Project (San Francisco, CA), the Oakland Museum of California (Oakland, CA), the Craft and Folk Art Museum (Los Angeles, CA), the Berkeley Art Center (Berkeley, CA), the Bellevue Arts Museum (Seattle, WA), and The Clay Studio (Philadelphia, PA). His work is in the permanent collections of The Smithsonian Renwick Gallery (Washington, D.C.), the Centre National des Arts Plastiques Français (Paris, France), and Arizona State University's Ceramics Research Center (Tempe, AZ). More information at <http://www.dirtycanteen.com/ehren-tool.html>.

## **About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to advancing education about the process, product and history of craft. HCCC provides exhibition, retail and studio spaces to support the work of local and national artists and serves as a resource for artists, educators and the community at large.

Located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM, and Sunday, 12 – 5 PM. Summer Hours: Closed Sundays, July 4<sup>th</sup> – Labor Day. Holidays: Closed Easter, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's 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.; the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation. HCCC is a member of the Houston Museum District and the Midtown Arts District.

For more information, call 713-529-4848 or visit [www.crafthouston.org](http://www.crafthouston.org). Find HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

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