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TEXAS ARTIST JOY O. UDE EXPLORES NIGERIAN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

9ja Vision: The Fiber and Mixed-Media Work of Joy O. Ude

On View June 5 – September 11, 2021, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

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June 5 – September 11, 2021

Front Gallery

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Hours & Admission

Current hours: Thursday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Admission is free. Reservations are required.

Visitors must wear masks and practice social distancing. Visit www.crafthouston.org for the latest information.

(HOUSTON, TX) March 24, 2021 -- Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is pleased to present *9ja Vision: The Fiber and Mixed-Media Work of Joy O. Ude*, a solo exhibition by the Texas-based artist. For millions of Nigerians worldwide, the mobile-friendly shorthand, *9ja* (or *naija*), evokes a shared identity and culture in constant dialogue with itself--a dialogue which, like Joy Ude's work, crosses borders and generations. Ude says, "The works included in *9ja Vision* represent the interweaving of Western and Nigerian cultures, as experienced from the perspective of an American-born child of Nigerian immigrants. In each series, I combine intergenerational anecdotes, cultural commentary, and altered traditional fiber techniques to construct experimental visual narratives. Through my work, I endeavor to expand understanding of the American immigrant experience beyond a singular characterization."

Ude's practice is grounded in the rich traditions of West African textiles and references their material history as a backdrop for the personal, familial, and historical narratives that she weaves into her work. Combining printed wax cloth with photo transfers of family members, Ude contextualizes her personal history within a complicated material legacy of colonialism, creating embellished pieces that are both joyful and haunting. She explores this legacy further in the form of skin-lightening soaps and products, reproducing them in resin and coconut oil and draping them in hand-tatted lace, a nod to oppressive Western beauty standards as well as the presence and burden of female servile labor in historical and familial settings. Her work is also an exciting part of the enormously energetic and internationally influential fashion scene coming out of the Nigerian homeland and diaspora communities.

Merging the joys and sorrows of her history with those of her family and community, Ude's deeply personal work is also familiar to the tens of millions of Americans born into immigrant families. Drawing on her experiences growing up in Texas, the largest hub of Nigerian community and culture in the United States, Ude's explorations of assimilation and the generational transference of culture have created a personal visual

language that both celebrates and critiques. Through it, she asserts her identity and place in society, affirming the same for others who see themselves in the narratives she weaves.

9ja Vision: The Fiber and Mixed-Media Work of Joy O. Ude is curated by HCCC Curatorial Fellow María-Elisa Heg.

About Joy O. Ude

Mixed-media artist and designer Joy O. Ude's fiber and sculptural work tackles questions around assimilation, race, cultural transference, and identity, examined through the lens of the immigrant experience in America. She earned a BFA in fashion design from the University of North Texas in 2005. Following her work in the fashion industry, Joy returned to UNT, where she earned an MFA in fiber arts in 2013. Her work has been exhibited at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PA), FJORD Gallery (PA), Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts (TN), and the American Textile History Museum (MA), among others. Ude's work was also included in HCCC's *CraftTexas* exhibition in 2012 and 2014.

For more information about Joy O. Ude, please visit: www.joyoftextiles.com.

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, studio, and garden spaces to support the work of local and national artists and serves as a resource for artists, educators and the community at large.

HCCC is currently open limited hours: Thursday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Timed reservations are required. Before visiting, the public should visit www.crafthouston.org to make reservations and view the complete list of visitor guidelines, including the requirement to wear face masks and practice social distancing throughout the building.

HCCC is located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street. 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 supported by individual donors and members and funded in part by 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. Find HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

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