MEDIA CONTACT:
Mary Headrick (mheadrick@crafthouston.org)
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
713.529.4848 x.107

"A DRESSING THE FUTURE" EXPLORES CRAFT AND ECOLOGY THROUGH IMAGINATIVE FILMS, COSTUMES & SETS

On View at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft May 28 – September 10, 2022

A Dressing the Future: The Ecofiction of Nicole Dextras
May 28 – September 10, 2022
Front Gallery
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Summer Exhibitions Reception
Friday, May 27, 5:30 – 8:00 PM
The public is invited to celebrate the opening of the summer exhibitions at HCCC. The evening will also feature outdoor refreshments and open studios by the newest resident artists.

Hours & Admission
Current hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Admission is free. Visitors must wear masks and practice social distancing. Visit www.crafthouston.org for the latest information.

(HOUSTON, TX) March 17, 2022 – This summer, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) presents *A Dressing the Future: The Ecofiction of Nicole Dextras,* an exhibition that explores the exemplary craftsmanship of environmental artist Nicole Dextras' set and costume designs from her dystopian film trilogy, *A Dressing the Future* (2016—present). Giving a unique, behind-the-scenes look at the artist's process, the show features video excerpts; a selection of plant-based costumes; and ephemera that includes props, models, and other set components.

Inspired by the environmental art movement that emerged in the 1960s, Dextras shares a concern for the health of the planet and the environmental consequences of human behavior and the global economy. Her artistic practice, which incorporates her meticulous use of materials, encourages sustainable decision-making on an individual level, as well as within the fashion and film industries.

Presenting three challenging futures affected by fire, desertification, and flooding, respectively, Dextras' narratives counter the reductive post-apocalyptic films of Hollywood, focusing on the dignity and strength of the survivor. When faced with material shortages, her protagonists provide a hopeful glimpse into the resourcefulness of future creatives by working in tandem with other living species to survive their dystopian surroundings.

The first film of the trilogy, *Waiting for Spring: Persephone and the Pomegranate* (2016), depicts a young woman who is sequestered in an abandoned warehouse due to encroaching forest fires. She wears a jacket made of pomegranate peels and a mask filled with herbs to protect herself from caustic smoke as she forages for food.

In her second film, *Chronos: Time of Sand* (in production), Dextras relies on strong visuals to demonstrate how Chronos turns to weaving, basketry, and plant cultivation to live within formerly thriving agricultural lands affected by megadroughts. In her director's statement for the film, Dextras says, "This short film works on many levels: it is a survival story, it is an ode to clever inventions, and an exposé on the impacts of industrial agriculture. My choice of drama instead of the documentary genre is based on my interest in imagination as a means to propel us into an environmentally secure future." Chronos weaves clothing from fiber processed from Yucca plants and dyes it with indigo; he also weaves a tower, based on Italian architect Arturo Vittori's designs, that catches dew in the desert plateau, to be used as a water source.

The third film, which presents a future affected by flooding, is still in development. Dextras' time in Houston will inform her research for this story, and the exhibition will include visual research and test samples.

Each of Dextras' eco fictions echoes the aftermath of recent natural disasters. HCCC Curator Kathryn Hall comments, "Faced with the realities of climate change, Nicole's film trilogy is hopeful. Despite the circumstances of fire, drought, and flooding, coupled with the lack of digital technology, her characters are resilient and resourceful as they turn to longstanding craft-based practices and their ability to coexist with plant and animal species to survive."

A Dressing the Future: The Ecofiction of Nicole Dextras is curated by HCCC Curator Kathryn Hall.

About Nicole Dextras

Based in Vancouver, Canada, Nicole Dextras' studio practice utilizes film and transformative and often immersive installations to explore the concept of existential fragility and to mark the evolution of time. She graduated from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design with a degree from the interdisciplinary department in 1986. Dextras has exhibited her work internationally, including in Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Her recent exhibitions include *States of Collapse* (2021, group exhibition) at the Dunlop Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan; *Courants vert* (2020, group exhibition) at L'espace Fondation EDF in Paris; and *The Dystopian Museum* (2019, solo exhibition) at the Richmond Cultural Center in British Columbia. Dextras has received numerous awards and residencies, including the Surface Design Association's Craftivism Award (2017), the Art of Healing Network Environmental Artist Award (2013), and several grants from the BC Arts Council as well from the Canada Council for the Arts. In 2020, her work was featured as part of the United Nations Postal Administrations' Earth Day stamp collection. Her solo exhibition at HCCC marks the debut of her work in Texas.

About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, 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 continues to serve as a treasured resource in the Houston arts community and the region by showcasing emerging and acclaimed artists in exhibitions, introducing visitors of all ages to contemporary craft through hands-on and virtual programming, and supporting the development of working artists through its artist residency program.

HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Admission is free. Before visiting, the public should visit www.crafthouston.org to view visitor guidelines, including the requirement to wear face masks and practice social distancing throughout the building. All programs are subject to change or cancellation in response to current COVID-19 conditions.

HCCC is located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, three blocks south of the Wheeler Ave. MetroRail station. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis 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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