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TOUCHING WARMS THE ART

On view at Museum of Contemporary Craft January 19, 2008 – March 23, 2008

The Museum of Contemporary Craft is excited to present this unusually interactive exhibition that has initiated a full circle of regional dialogue about the presentation of art jewelry by museums. In response to an exhibition curated by Rock Hushka for Tacoma Art Museum, Portland artist Rebecca Scheer wrote a passionate review for Metalsmith magazine – *Beyond the Body: Northwest Jewelers at Play* – posing some inquisitive challenges to the habits of her peers and imagining the potential to democratize the audience experience of art jewelry. Museum of Contemporary Craft then empowered Ms. Scheer with the opportunity to actualize her vision.

Many of the concepts inherent in pieces of art jewelry remain vague or abstract until the viewer becomes the wearer. But this transmission, and subsequent transformation, is typically not possible in a museum setting, where it's sometimes even noted that "touching harms the art." Juried by Rebecca Scheer, Rachelle Thiewes and Namita Gupta Wiggers, the exhibition navigates new territory regarding how craft – particularly art jewelry – can be engaged in a museum setting. A prospectus was sent internationally, asking artists to put aside preciousness and create work that audiences would be invited to touch, try on and engage – both in the exhibition and as part of the Museum's new teaching collection. Participants from around the world responded, and artists selected represent the United States, Japan, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Australia, Sweden and South Korea.

Artists featured in this exhibition include: Maru Almeida · Laura Aragon · Eliana Arenas · Adam Arnold · Anastasia Azure · Julia Barello · Roberta Bernabei · Diego Bisso · Iris Bodemer · Allyson Bone · Jenny Campbell · Ana Cardim · Sungho Cho · Jennifer Crupi · Brigit Daamen · Christine Dhein · Cristina Dias · Teresa Faris · Yael Friedman · Alison Gates · Heidi Gerstacker · Andrea Giaier · Jennifer Hall · Catarina Hällzon · Karrie Harbart · Mindy Herrin · Megan Hildebrandt · Tomoyo Hiraiwa · Peter Hoogeboom · Lindsay Huff · Masumi Kataoka · Susan Kingsley · Steven & William Ladd · Julie Lake · Dongchun Lee · Moira Lime · Kenneth MacBain · Susanne Matsché · Tomomi Matsunaga · Mayumi Matsuyama · Carrie McDowell · Lisa Medlen · Maria Ochoa · Masako Onodera · Emiko Oye · Michelle Pajak-Reynolds · Seth Papac · Sarah Peterman · Natalya Pinchuk · Laura Prieto-Velasco · Gail Ralston · Berenice Ramirez · Elizabeth Ryan · Rachel Kassia Shimpock · Lisa Sikorski · Stephanie Simek · Courtney Starrett · Carol-lynn Swol · James Thurman · Cynthia Toops · Fabrizio Tridenti · Machteld van Joolingen · Marchi Wierson · Nancy Worden · Yoshiko Yamamoto · Liaung Chung Yen · Agnieszka Zoltowski

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Namita Gupta Wiggers - curator at Museum of Contemporary Craft - will lead exhibition tours at the Museum at noon, Tuesday, January 22 and at noon, Tuesday, February 19.

Artists in the exhibition will gather in The Lab at the Museum for a public discussion on Saturday, January 19 at noon, followed by a panel discussion amongst the exhibition jurors and Rock Huksha, curator at Tacoma Art Museum, at 2pm.

Action/Re-action - a fashion show inspired by this exhibition - will be co-presented by ultrapdx.com at the Museum on Wednesday, January 30 at 7pm.

For more information about this exhibition and related Museum programming; to schedule an interview with an exhibiting artist, the exhibition jurors or Museum staff; or for access to press images, please contact Wendy Miller (contact information listed at the top of this page).

Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft is one of Oregon's oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located at an expansive new site on Portland's North Park Blocks, the Museum is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it. Here, craft is engaged as a verb as well as a noun, pondering what it means to "craft" something. Questions are posed, conversations ignited by curated exhibitions and thoughtful publications. Educational programs and special events create an additional layer of engagement, and The Gallery - the region's premier retail destination for the very best in contemporary craft - provides visitors with the opportunity to extend the museum experience into everyday life. With a commitment to being accessible, admission to the Museum is by donation only.

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Museum of Contemporary Craft