Charlotte Street presents **Handiwork: Art, Craft, and the Space Between**

**Kansas City, MO, July 21, 2022:** Charlotte Street presents a new group exhibition, *Handiwork: Art, Craft, and the Space Between*, on view from August 12-September 24, 2022, curated by Kimi Kitada, Charlotte Street Jedel Family Foundation Curatorial Fellow. This exhibition untethers conventional notions of “art” and “craft” through the works of 12 contemporary artists. Artists include: **Summer Brooks** (Kansas City, MO), **Brandon Chavis** (St. Louis, MO), **Galen Gibson-Cornell** (Philadelphia, PA), **Melissa Joseph** (New York, NY), **Tamiko Kawata** (New York, NY), **Clarissa Knighten** (Kansas City, MO), **Erin Latham** (Oklahoma City, OK), **Hưng Lê** (Kansas City, MO), **Kevin McClay** (Omaha, NE), **Lily Mueller** (Kansas City, MO), **Nishiki Sugawara-Beda** (Dallas, TX), and **Casey Whittier** (Kansas City, MO). While craft conventionally suggests artists working with clay, fiber, metal, and wood, these artists remix and upend tradition through unexpected material approaches.

**Hưng Lê, **Hello Má, Hello Con**, 2021, cyanotype on silk organza, muslin, and silk habotai
Collecting the urban debris of mass-produced street posters, Galen Gibson-Cornell splices the found material and weaves the elements back together into an entirely new composition. With a similar re-structuring of found materials, Tamiko Kawata embarks on a material exploration of metal safety pins, which are carefully stacked, joined, and transformed into biomorphic sculptural works. Artist Erin Latham gravitates toward found, recycled, and reused objects that will accumulate into an immersive, large-scale installation, created specifically for the Charlotte Street gallery space.

The bold palette of Lily Mueller’s quilted works catches the eye with its hand-dyed saturated colors. Her new works have unique embellishments of tiny beads, which speak to a particular attention to detail. Another artist with an immaculate sense of detail is Hùng Lê, who utilizes a Korean sewing technique of Bojagi to fabricate large compilations of family photographs on silk organza. Both artists reveal a technical mastery of fiber-based skills, but approach the work from a refreshing perspective. In a similar way, Clarissa Knighten brings her jewelry-making acumen into a more conceptual space by integrating metal and beadwork with natural sculptural elements.
In the expansive field of ceramics, **Casey Whittier** embraces a labor-intensive process of firing hand-crafted earthenware beads, which are interconnected to create unified wall works. Alluding to the social histories of craft, these works both reference and subvert the idea of women’s work: the aesthetics of sewing, ceramics, embroidery that were historically devalued as domestic handicrafts. Artist **Summer Brooks** also works with clay as medium; she creates figurative works speaking to beauty, identity, and celebrating Blackness in the canon of ceramics.

Merging abstraction and craftsmanship, **Kevin McClay** fabricates wood mosaics with a variety of stained wood components. The abstract compositions of **Nishiki Sugawara-Beda** honor Japanese traditions and materials such as sumi ink and rice paper. The craft of calligraphy is the formal basis and inspiration of her practice.
The title *Handiwork* indicates the presence of the artist’s hand in each work, the handmade, and the intrinsic labor of making. “Some recent compelling exhibitions have re-invigorated an interest in the handmade from the solo exhibitions of *Bisa Butler: Portraits* (2021) to *Ruth Asawa: All is Possible* (2021) to comprehensive museum shows like *Crafting America* (2021) at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art,” said curator Kimi Kitada. “I’ve been looking at those exhibitions, but also wanting to introduce some new voices and practices into this conversation.”

The hand-crafted work of **Melissa Joseph** implies a patience and intentionality for the felted wool process. The artist describes “the way I make images is painterly, but with textiles.” This work shares a formal connection with the work of **Brandon Chavis**, who uses found textiles to create his energy collages. Some of the textiles hold sentimental value. This emotional connection to material speaks to several artists in the exhibition—an exploration of a city through collecting urban detritus, recycling others’ scrap material, and creating something new for the world.

**PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

**Exhibition Opening Reception**
Friday, August 12
6:00 - 9:00 PM
Charlotte Street Gallery
3333 Wyoming Street, Kansas City, MO

Please RSVP on Eventbrite [link](#)

**ABOUT CHARLOTTE STREET**

Charlotte Street centers Kansas City’s most forward-thinking visual artists, writers, and performers—acting as the primary incubator, provocateur, and connector for the region’s contemporary arts community, and its leading advocate on the national stage. Since 1997, Charlotte Street has distributed over $2 million in awards and grants to artists and their innovative projects, and connected individual artists to each other and to the greater Kansas City community. For more information about Charlotte Street, its awards, programs, and initiatives, visit [www.charlottestreet.org](http://www.charlottestreet.org).

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