



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Alyssa Ruberto, Communications Coordinator  
828-785-1357 x111 | [press@centerforcraft.org](mailto:press@centerforcraft.org)

## ***Ten Emerging Craft Artists to Receive a Total of \$150,000*** *Center for Craft Announces the 2021 Windgate-Lamar Fellows*

**ASHEVILLE, NC (May 18, 2020)** – The Center for Craft is thrilled to announce the 2021 Windgate-Lamar Fellows, recognized as the top emerging craft artists in the United States. Ten graduating university seniors were selected from 87 applications by a four-member panel consisting of artists, curators, and professionals who play critical roles in the field today. These ten Fellows are awarded based on their notable artistic merit and demonstrated potential for contributing to the field of craft.

The Windgate-Lamar Fellowship is supported by the Stoney Lamar Craft Endowment Fund, established in 2018 and named in honor of renowned wood sculptor and Center for Craft Board Member Stoney Lamar.

Each artist will receive \$15,000 from the Center for Craft to support their personal and artistic growth in this crucial phase of their early career, building the foundation for future success. Historically, artists who receive this prestigious award often move on to become working artists establishing successful studios, exhibitors at world-renowned museums and galleries, MFA students, or full-time faculty.

“This year, the pandemic greatly affected university studio art departments, professors, and students,” says Stephanie Moore, Executive Director. “Despite the dire circumstances, we were astounded by the ingenious ways in which students responded and adapted creatively to their new realities. We are confident that we will someday look to these individuals as they shape the field of craft in future years.”

### **2021 Panelists**

**Natalia Arbelaez**—Artist (Brewster, NY)

**SHENEQUA**—Artpreneur, 2014 Windgate-Lamar Fellow (Chicago, IL)

**Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez**—President Emeritus, North Bennet Street School (Weston, MA)

**Drewry Nostitz**—Collector (Winston-Salem, NC)

## **2021 Windgate-Lamar Fellows**

### SELECTIONS FROM ARTIST STATEMENTS

**Alex Arrijo**—University of Texas at El Paso, Jewelry/Metals

“Inspired by emotional taboos like depression, regret, grief, and anxiety, I aim to deconstruct and bring resolution to the issues that are often overlooked when we dismiss our human behavior... My jewelry functions like a tool for dissecting and understanding the role society’s expectations can have.”

**Aminata Conteh**—Maine College of Art, Jewelry/Metals

“My work investigates the biographical act of holding space for both my first generation American and my Sierra Leonean heritage. These histories have shaped who I am to this point. This investigation is currently taking the form of woven wire baskets.”

**Sekoi Cooper**—Parsons School of Design, Textiles/Furniture

“My art highlights the haunting of my people... For me, to seal the importance of Black life in America means to craft literal spaces that reflect tangible memories of collective childhood experience. These miniature, intimate family spaces highlight each detail of every object that made the space paramount.”

**Hera Ford**—Rhode Island School of Design, Fiber/Textiles

“My textiles are meditations around Black indigeneity and our historical, physical, and spiritual relationships to land. Informed by my grandmother’s memories of the land and lack thereof, they have manifested themselves as flowers and butterflies, knots and roots; watered by stories my grandmother tells me; and nurtured by photographs of our ancestors who hold ancient wisdom in their eyes.”

**Mattie Hinkley**—Virginia Commonwealth University, Ceramics/Furniture

“Handcrafted objects serve as tangible evidence of the connection between our bodies, our labor, and our environment. This ancient connection is often lost with the inclusion of mechanized labor or imported materials... I believe in improving the experiences of domesticity and labor, and finding joy in the bodies and spaces we occupy daily.”

**Carl Johnson**—Savannah College of Art and Design, Fiber/Textiles

“I create art to escape the endless commotion that goes on in my head. My thoughts tend to be abstract and in translation, so is my art. I strive to capture a moment in time, to isolate a single thought, and to recreate it visually through weaving.”

**Jason McDonald**—California College of the Arts, Glass

“I cast my gaze on the disparities in the U.S. from life expectancy, to the achievement gap, to the too frequent election of racist officials... By making this work I hope to shed light, for myself and my viewers, on what it means to be a Black person in America today. [I explore ways] to bring together the important stories I want to tell about social inequality while simultaneously displaying my commitment to craft with intentionally made objects.”

**Kristy Moreno**—California State University, Chico, Ceramics/Print

“Thinking about the ongoing I.C.E. raids, concentration camps, and prisons that directly affect Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, I began to challenge the notion of the “other” by combining personal photographs, screen printed elements, and lyrics onto ceramics to tell a story... In overcrowding these physical spaces with overlapping details, I acknowledge the clutter that inevitably distracts us from practicing empathy and acknowledging our humanity.”

**Monya Nikahd**—Tennessee Technological University, Fiber/Textiles

“My work is produced by weaving high thread counts with unconventional and thin materials to create cryptic code-like patterns and connective line-work... Historically, textiles have preserved stories, just as the modern use of digital memory... Like my early life in Iranian culture, I want to preserve this ancient craft by applying digital aesthetics to its surfaces.”

**Eli Secrest**—Columbus College of Art & Design, Jewelry/Metals

“I create masks that reflect and characterize elements of the psyche in order to understand how thought, behavior, and customs relate to each other... I create masks that reflect and characterize elements of the psyche in order to understand how thought, behavior, and customs relate to each other.”

Learn more about the 2021 Center for Craft Windgate-Lamar Fellowship and past fellows [here](#).

---

**ABOUT CENTER FOR CRAFT** The Center for Craft is celebrating 25 years of advancing the field of craft through awarding grants, offering exhibitions and public programs, building strategic community and national partnerships, and spearheading initiatives in the United States. Founded in 1996, the Center is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential national 501c3 organizations working in the craft field today. For more information on ways to celebrate 25 years of craft and learn more about grants administered by Center for Craft, visit [www.centerforcraft.org](http://www.centerforcraft.org).