

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – NEWS & EVENTS LISTINGS

February 22, 2016

New exhibition *Eutopia* features leading Canadian artists and the Textile Museum of Canada's permanent collection

TORONTO – The Textile Museum of Canada (TMC) is pleased to announce the presentation of *Eutopia* from February 24 to May 29, 2016, featuring textiles from the Museum's international collections alongside the work of contemporary Canadian artists Christi Belcourt, Coco Guzman, Happy Sleepy (Marc Ngui and Magda Wojtyra), Radiodress, Nep Sidhu and Christina Zeidler, with selections from Daisuke Takeya's *Field Trip Project*. Exploring the powerful association of fibre arts and grassroots activism, *Eutopia* – which refers, literally, to a "good place" eminently attainable in the real world, as opposed to utopia, an impossible ideal – is accompanied by a dynamic public program.

Responding to complex social issues in the 21st century such as gender identity, cultural politics, and environmental stewardship, the artists in the exhibition ask visitors to consider multiple perspectives, acknowledging diverse and varied, sometimes conflicting points of view that make up the Canadian social fabric. Integrated with these contemporary works, stellar examples of global textiles from the TMC's collection similarly represent efforts to change social conditions – from graphic African textiles engaged in public education about malaria transmission and AIDS prevention, to elaborate embroideries from India that address violence against women and economic poverty.

"How textiles make meaning – their function in everyday life – has made them unique vehicles for political, cultural and economic commentary for centuries," says Shauna McCabe, Executive Director of the Textile Museum of Canada, "This exhibition underscores how they open up dialogue in a way that other media cannot, highlighting a trajectory of historical artifacts and contemporary art practices engaged in social commentary."

Eutopia is guest curated by Farah Yusuf with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts' Grants to Culturally Diverse Curators for Residencies in the Visual Arts. The TMC is grateful for the ongoing support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The opening reception for *Eutopia* will take place on February 24, 2016, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Textile Museum of Canada, 55 Centre Avenue (at Dundas & University). The TMC is open daily 11-5 pm, Wednesdays 11-8 pm. Visit www.textilemuseum.ca for more information regarding all of our exhibitions and programs.

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Programs & Events

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP WITH DESMOND MILLER

A Running Thread: Quilting the African Diaspora

Saturday March 5, 12 and 19 from 12:30 – 5 pm

Explore the rich history of quilting throughout the African diaspora as you learn how to sew a quilt block in this hands-on workshop with Desmond Miller in partnership with Nia Centre for the Arts. Open to Afrodiasporic youth aged 20 – 29.

Free. Advance registration is required by February 26; space is limited. For information, visit www.textilemuseum.ca/programs

CURATOR'S TOUR

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 6:30 pm

Join *Eutopia* curator Farah Yusuf as she presents exhibition highlights that explore narrative textiles as effective vehicles for social action as well as their community impact. Free with Museum admission

ART CHATS

Join special guests in the gallery as they offer unique perspectives and personal responses to the artworks on view. Free with Museum admission

Field Tripping – Wednesday March 16, 6:30 – 7 pm

Daisuke Takeya, curator of Field Trip Project, discusses environmental awareness, community-building and global reach.

Creative Activism – Wednesday April 6, 6:30 – 7 pm

Artist, filmmaker and entrepreneur Christina Zeidler discusses the links between her creative process and her community activism.

Making Good – Wednesday May 11, 6:30 – 7 pm

TMC Education Programs Coordinator Susan Fohr discusses craft methods and acts of making activist textiles.

WORKSHOP

Fabric for a Brighter Future with Coco Guzman Saturday April 30, 2016 from 1 – 5 pm

Share your vision of a perfect world by stitching a personal story cloth in this special workshop led by artist Coco Guzman, Founder of Toronto's Pio! Centre for Drawing. Experiment with expressive drawing and sketching techniques and assemble your finished textile using appliqué, decorative machine stitching and hand embroidery.

Advance registration is required, space is limited. Members \$25, General \$30 (includes materials); suitable for ages 16 and up. Register at www.textilemuseum.ca/programs or call 416-599-5321 x2228

About the Artists

Christi Belcourt is a Métis (Michif/Otepmisiwak) artist, author and advocate with concern for the environment and awareness of Métis culture. She is the lead coordinator and a contributing artist for *Walking With Our Sisters: A Commemorative Art Installation for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women of Canada*. Belcourt was named the 2014 Ontario Aboriginal Arts Laureate by the Ontario Arts Council and her work is in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and the Canadian Museum of History.

Marc Ngui and **Magda Wojtyra** are educated as architects and self-taught in a wide range of material practices. They have been collaborating as **Happy Sleepy** since 2000, creating immersive installations that combine illustration, painting, animation and textile sculptures, and have mentored Workman Arts member artists at Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Their individual and collaborative work has been exhibited and published in Canada and internationally.

Radiodress is an artist, curator, teacher and activist whose installations, recordings and live performances occur in galleries, online, and in public spaces across North America. Her live feminist readings have been performed at the Vera List Centre for Art & Politics and Aronson Gallery in New York and the Feminist Art Gallery in Toronto. She is the 2012 recipient of the Social Justice Fellowship at Eugene Lang College, a 2013 resident artist at New York's Flux Factory and a 2015 Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Fellow.

Coco Guzman works across a variety of media, using personal experiences as metaphors to talk about queer politics, silenced histories and the experience of migration. Coco is the author of *Llueven Queers*, the first Spanish graphic novel on queer life, and their project *Genderpoo* has travelled to South America, Europe, USA and Canada. Guzman's drawings have been published in activist as well as contemporary art magazines and their artwork can be found in museums, community centres, schools, and event spaces.

Nep Sidhu is a member of the Black Constellation – a collective of musicians and visual artists using popular culture to reach out to audiences about issues of race, appropriation, oppression, access and revolution. Sidhu and his family run a boxing school to empower young girls in Chakar, Punjab. His non-commercial clothing line *Paradise Sportif* has been shown at The Frye Museum in Seattle, with exhibitions opening later this year at the Anchorage Museum and the Surrey Art Gallery.

Daisuke Takeya is interested in the vitalization of communities through art. He has participated in numerous exhibitions, including the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Roppongi Art Night, Fukushima Contemporary Art Biannual, Shinjuku Creators Festa, the Japan Foundation, Toronto, the Embassy of Japan in Canada, and Nuit Blanche, Toronto. He has co-directed and performed at Ashita: Artists for Japan, a Tsunami Relief Fundraiser, and participates in Onagawa Art Season, an arts festival at the most devastated town of Japan's 2011 tsunami. He is a co-director of DAICHI Projects, the representative and curator of *Field Trip Project* and the POWER TO THE PEOPLE initiative.

Christina Zeidler is a film and video artist with over 30 short film and video titles in international distribution. In 2005, she founded the YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard) Festival, which provides a social space for people and groups involved in grassroots, locally-driven community development to gather, exchange ideas and strategies to effect change and imagine their future city.

About the Curator

Farah Yusuf is an independent curator and writer based in Toronto. She holds an MA in Experimental Digital Media from the University of Waterloo and a BFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice at OCAD University where she was the recipient of the Curatorial Practice Medal and Governor General's

Academic Medal. Past curatorial projects include *Future Forward* Scotiabank Nuit Blanche in 2011, *Babel on Rosetta Stone* and *Corpus Lucida* at InterAccess in 2012.

About the Textile Museum of Canada

The Textile Museum of Canada has a 40-year history of exploring ideas and building cultural understanding. Connecting contemporary art and design to international textile traditions, this national museum is one of Canada's most engaging arts institutions welcoming thousands of visitors from across the country and around the world each year. The Museum's permanent collection spans 2,000 years and consists of over 13,000 artifacts from virtually every country and region, uniquely positioning the Museum to speak to global culture as well as our increasingly global communities. A leader in the digitization of collections and interactive environments, the TMC is as "high tech" as "high touch" – recognized for its innovation in the development of landmark educational, research and creative initiatives.