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CELEBRATED CULTURALLY-CENTRIC ARTISTS CONVERGE AT McCOLL CENTER FOR VISUAL ART IN WINTER EXHIBIT AND RESIDENCIES

Charlotte, NC (December 2011)— Kicking-off the winter session, McColl Center for Visual Art will host “Converge” featuring renowned artists Quisqueya Henriquez and Sonya Clark and the pieces they created while in residence at the Center. Exploring themes of identity and inclusion, the work showcased in the exhibition will represent a convergence of art, history and diverse cultures.

The exhibition featuring these celebrated artists runs from January 27 to March 24, 2012 and is free and open to the public. An opening reception will be held on Friday, January 27, 2012 from 6-9pm at the Center and includes the opportunity to meet the artists and learn about their work. This exhibition is made possible with a generous grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation. In addition to the exhibit, the work of eight distinguished artists-in-residence will be on exhibit in the Center’s corridor galleries. “Converge” and the residencies of Henriquez and Clark were made possible thanks to a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Cuban-born Quisqueya Henriquez incorporates collage and drawing over appropriated and often distorted images of twentieth-century artists and architects to investigate her place within the framework of art history. By marrying personal imagery with familiar images of the Whitney Museum of Art’s lobby and the site of a Gordon Matta Clark installation, Henriquez provides a commentary on her own challenges regarding access, support and inclusion. Ironically, many of these images she uses are from artists who, in their own artistic practice also borrowed from other artists to raise questions about their respective places in the world and their roles as well. Henriquez graduated from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba. She has exhibited her work throughout Latin America, Europe and the US. Her work can be found in private and public collections including El Museo del Barrio in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, Florida. She was recently named as one of the 25 art world trendsetters by *ARTnews*.

Drawn to everyday objects, Sonya Clark employs the use plastic combs, hair and American money to reference her place within the confines of history and African and African American culture and heritage. She investigates the historical context of hair and its meaning related to “the first textile artists,” African Americans who manipulated their hair with combs. Individuals including Madame CJ Walker who reinvented the hair-straightening comb thus becoming the first African American woman to become a millionaire are represented in her unique portraits of American citizens. With contemporary references including President Obama, Clark’s work in “Converge” collapses the time between the Emancipation Proclamation and today. Originally from Washington, D.C., Clark received a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. She has exhibited her work in more than 250 museums and galleries internationally and has been awarded the Pollock-Krasner Award, a Rockefeller Foundation Residency and a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship.

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“The upcoming exhibit and residencies of these celebrated artists increase the Center’s momentum and advance our mission of bringing high quality art and artists to our region,” said Suzanne Fetscher, president of McColl Center for Visual Art. “These artists exemplify excellence in their work and a commitment to connecting with fellow artists-in-residence and the community. We are excited by their arrival and certain that our community will be enriched by their presence and ideas.

In conjunction with ‘Converge,’ the winter session will welcome resident artists: Margarita Cabrera, Rashaad Newsome and Dawit Petros.

Margarita Cabrera, Knight Artist-in-Residence, is a Mexican-American artist, activist and organizer whose soft vinyl sculptures representing potted plants and automobiles address timely issues related to border relations, labor practices and immigration. Turning crafts and their manufacture into a vehicle for social commentary, Cabrera draws on the community to help create collaborative works of art that are used as a platform to raise political and socio-cultural consciousness as a means for survival and empowerment for the Spanish-speaking immigrant community. Working with displaced immigrants – Cabrera organizes workshops and ad hoc corporations to close the gulf between third world production and first world consumption.

Rashaad Newsome, Gantt Center Artist-in-Residence, uses performance, video and collage to investigate power and status associated with people of color and the gay community. Newsome borrows intensively from hip-hop music and popular culture to create work that challenges current ideas regarding social protocol and hierarchy as they relate to human behavior. Newsome is presently showing at the Marlboro Gallery in New York City. He was born in New Orleans and received a B.A. in Art History at Tulane University before studying Film at Film Video Arts in New York City. He has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including New York, Prague and Berlin.

Dawit Petros, Knight Artist-in-Residence, has lived in three different continents: Africa, Europe and North America. The effects of his nomadic life are evident in his work, which is inspired by history, cultural memories and minimalism. Petros uses mixed media, installation, video, performance and photography as a springboard to delve into relationships between subject, object and location and the transformation that happens through migration. Petros was born in Eritrea, raised in Kenya and Canada and lives and works in Brooklyn. He has exhibited his work in group exhibitions throughout Canada and the US, including the Studio Museum in Harlem and Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit, MI.

Other resident artists include Matthew Steel, a sculptor from Bloomington, Indiana; Mary Giehl, Carolinas Health Care Artist-in-Residence from Syracuse, NY; Patricia Leighton and Del Geist, UNCC Artists-in-Residence and David Theissen, a Charlotte-Mecklenburg school teacher and painter who is the Gail Peacock Art Teacher-In-Residence.

McColl Center for Visual Art is an artists’ residency program and gallery dedicated to promoting contemporary art and supporting artists regionally, nationally, and internationally. The Center’s goal is to present art and artists in a way that engages and enriches the public while revealing the creative process through open studios, outreaches, community projects, and educational programs. The gallery is free and open to the public, Thursday and Friday, 2-7 PM and Saturday from 11AM to 6PM. McColl Center for Visual Art is supported, in part, with a Basic Operating Grant from the Arts and Science Council as well as the North Carolina Arts Council with funding from the state of North Carolina and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art and the generosity of corporate and individual donors. For additional information on McColl Center for Visual Art, visit mccollcenter.org.