

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Tanja Baumann, Director of Marketing & PR  
425.519.0759 or [taniab@bellevuearts.org](mailto:taniab@bellevuearts.org)

### **WANT TO PLAY? BAM presents 2012 NCECA Invitational**

***Push Play: The 2012 NCECA Invitational* on view January 19 - June 17, 2012**

**BELLEVUE, WA** – Want to play? Imaginative, engaging and challenging, ***Push Play: The 2012 NCECA Invitational***, on view at Bellevue Arts Museum **January 19 - June 17, 2012**, showcases over 30 international artists who explore how the act of play effortlessly expands human potential.

The *Push Play* exhibition will be held in conjunction with the 46th National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Conference in Seattle, WA (March 28 - 31, 2012). “We are honored to be the hosting venue for the NCECA Invitational,” says Stefano Catalani, BAM’s Director of Curatorial Affairs/Artistic Director and co-curator of *Push Play*. “Ceramic art, traditional or experimental, has deep roots in the Northwest. As a museum dedicated to the exploration of art, craft and design, it plays an integral role in our mission.” *Push Play* follows such groundbreaking ceramics exhibitions as *Robert Sperry: Bright Abyss* in 2009 and the much celebrated *BAM Biennial 2010: Clay Throwdown!*, both of which highlighted some of the greatest innovators and visionaries working in clay.

Both in life and in art, play is not just about fun and games. It also teaches essential skills, contributing to healthy, well-balanced lives through the sure pleasure of participation. Not relegated to the world of children, it continues to cultivate enlightenment and enjoyment through informed, creative activity into maturity. “Push play. This familiar command to commit and participate in the open-ended activity of play offers a blend of excitement spiked with trepidation of the unknown,” says NCECA Exhibitions Director and *Push Play* co-curator Linda Ganstrom. “Active or passive, physical or purely mental; play engrosses. So whether daydreaming, stepping into the studio or on stage, tossing out a ball or a bet, competing in sports or immersed in a book, film, art exhibition or virtual world; you are in play, alive and open to life.”

Over 200 artists responded to the call for entries in early 2011 to participate in this invitational exhibition, submitting approximately 2,000 works of art. From this strong pool of creativity, 33 artists were selected for the final exhibition, including luminaries like Adrian Arleo, Beth Cavener Stichter, Judy Fox, Kiki Smith and Christina West, among others.

***Push Play: The 2012 NCECA Invitational*** is organized by The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts in partnership with Bellevue Arts Museum, co-curated by Linda Ganstrom and Stefano Catalani. Made possible through the generous support of The National Endowment for the Arts.

#### **ABOUT BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM**

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft, and design. The Museum connects people of all ages with the extraordinary works of Northwest artists while bringing national and international collections to its community. Dynamic educational programs provide unique opportunities to connect with art and artists; past or present, experimental or established. Each July, BAM hosts one of the largest and most treasured art festivals of the year, the Bellevue Arts Museum ARTSfair. BAM is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. Please visit [www.bellevuearts.org](http://www.bellevuearts.org) for details.