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For Immediate Release

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## **FCMOCA Makes a Fashion Statement with New Exhibition: *Dress Code***

Exhibition Dates: January 16 – April 11, 2009

On January 16, 2009, The Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art will open a new exhibition by three artists who recognize the importance of a proper dress code. “Dress Code” features the work of artists Deborah Oropallo, Haley Hasler and Kate Kretz. Each explores the physical, psychological and social messages communicated by costume and clothing. Playing upon our emotional and cultural notions about dress, these artists make a strong statement about how clothing signals our personal, cultural or sexual identity.



Deborah Oropallo creates digital paintings that layer historical male figures of power over photographs of pin-up girls in provocative poses. This process creates a series of hybrid figures that marry the attributes of power and aristocracy in traditional portraiture with the sexually aggressive posturing of the models in costume. Issues of power, seduction, gender and sexual stereotype are revealed and deconstructed in Oropallo’s compelling images. Oropallo’s work is widely exhibited nationally and internationally and she has had one-person exhibitions at the San



Jose Museum of Art, the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, and the Boise Art Museum.

Haley Hasler is a Fulbright Grant recipient and award-winning Fort Collins painter whose work examines her own competing roles of professional artist and homemaker with young children. Her clash of identities is played out on canvas as a procession of self-portraits whose compositions are borrowed from Renaissance masters. The artist portrays herself in all manner of historical dress as she carries out the

life of mother, cook and harried housewife amid elaborately arranged scenes that call into question our stereotypes about gender roles. The result is a body of work that is both humorous and earnest in its examination of the confusion and absurdity of straddling two lives as one person.

Fiber artist Kate Kretz creates “Psychological Clothing” that uses the language of fashion (usually used to cover things up) to reveal a variety of psychological states. The boldest work by Kretz in the exhibition is the “Defense Mechanism Coat” made of over 150 sharp roofing nails set to protect a vulnerable, raw network of hand-embroidered veins and arteries. Kretz’s “wardrobe of ideas” is at once sensual and anxious in its communication of psychological moods that are typically cloaked by strict adherence to the appropriate dress code. Kretz is a nationally acclaimed artist who gained international attention with her 2007 painting “Blessed Art Thou” that depicts Angelina Jolie as a Madonna hovering on a cloud above a banal Wal-Mart store. Kretz’s work has been exhibited at the Museum of Art & Design in New York, The Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art and the Belger Art Center in Kansas City.



The digital prints, paintings and textiles in this exhibition poke fun and raise questions about how clothing can deflect or convey the truth about who we are and how we interpret the dress code to assess the people around us. Viewers will be amused by the light-hearted jabs at human vanity and intrigued by this provocative look at fashion and identity.

FCMOCA hours: Tues – Fri: 10am – 6pm, Sat: 12 – 5pm

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