FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What Surrounds (downstairs), Ready Familiar (downstairs) Connecticut Watercolor Society (upstairs), Maxim Schmidt this is not an exhibition (upstairs lounge)
October 13 - November 10, 2019

Artist Talk/Closing Reception:
Sunday, November 10, 2 - 3 pm

New Haven, CT: The Ely Center of Contemporary Art announces three new projects on view through November 10—Art Shape Mammoth and The Connecticut Watercolor Society, as well as our own Maxim Schmidt.

An artist talk will take place on November 10, beginning at 2 pm. Art Shape Mammoth artists Cori Champagne and Maureen O’Leary will discuss the significance of artist communities as well as their own artwork in the exhibition. Gallery hours are Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays 1 - 4pm; Wednesdays and Thursdays 5-8pm, and by appointment.

Art Shape Mammoth, a collective based in the Berkshires, has come to Connecticut to unveil a new exhibition in the downstairs galleries at ECOCA. Art Shape Mammoth’s What Surrounds raises the question of: what is Environment? As described by ASM artists, “It is wild and cultivated, imaginary and concrete, volatile and protected.” What Surrounds is the assembled works of six female Art Shape Mammoth artists, Rita Bard, Wendy Copp, Aimee Hertog, Maureen O’Leary, Fay Stanford, and Julie Ward. Through painting, found object sculpture, photography, and printmaking, they explore the multi-faceted concept of our Environment and
the many ways we experience its influence on our lives. *What Surrounds* is curated by Heather Fortin Rubald, and supported by a grant from the Berkshire-Taconic Community Foundation.

Concurrent to *What Surrounds*, is a solo exhibition *Ready Familiar* by Cori Champagne, also presented by Art Shape Mammoth. According to Champagne, “Clothing is our first home. It begins identity, produces comfort, offers protection. As the world imposes more and constant change, the garments I create imagine that life-altering circumstances could somehow be thought through and prepared for, solutions developed, created. That by taking each need in turn – shelter, protection, mobility - and the freedom to think them through without crisis – could allow an overwhelming change to be absorbed incrementally.” Champagne’s environmentally-conscious designs brings attention to contemporary climate crises and the innovation necessary to survive them.

Upstairs, the Connecticut Watercolor Society presents their juried Autumn Exhibition, comprised of 61 watermedia paintings on display from Connecticut artists. CWS Awards have been presented to June Webster (Cheshire), Ralph Acosta (Stonington), Earl Grenville Killeen (Clinton), Sharon Rowley Morgio (West Haven), and Betsey Evarts (Clinton). The autumn exhibition was juried by Del-Bourree Bach from Mystic, CT.

Maxim Schmidt, our residing gallery coordinator and local multidisciplinary artist, will have a studio space for the duration of October in our Upstairs Lounge. Schmidt’s work is eclectic, deriving inspiration from a lifelong love of collecting and revitalizing antiquated or lost objects with new meaning. Schmidt states, “I think that the holiest objects we encounter are the ones we take most for granted; the things that we discard are simply being discredited in their power. My love of collecting has largely been forged from this belief, that all objects - simple and complex, functional or ‘useless’ - hold their own personal histories, and that each of those stories mean something.” Schmidt’s studio space is open to the public during our regular public hours.

The Ely Center of Contemporary Art’s mission is to reaffirm Grace Ely’s testamentary wishes for an art center where artists, arts organizations, and the public assemble, exchange, learn, and engage through exhibitions, performances, and emerging contemporary practice.

High resolution images are available. Please contact Maxim Schmidt at mschmidt@elycenter.org for more information.