

NEWS RELEASE

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Hardin Center to Host Reception Honoring Kathy Chan and Celebrating *Celestial Dreams: The Art of Space Jewelry*

GADSDEN, AL: The Hardin Center has a special reception planned to celebrate their current exhibition and its artist.

Celestial Dreams: The Art of Space Jewelry features 36 pieces of jewelry created by Huntsville, Alabama artist Kathy Chan.

Using precious gems, minerals, and metals, Chan crafts what her heart perceives, and imbues – pendants, rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings – with symbolism and meaning. Gazing both heavenward and inward, she creates a body of work that invites introspection and affirmation.

Celestial Dreams, the Art of Space Jewelry includes works featuring gold, platinum, a variety of pearls, diamonds, topaz, opals, aquamarine, rubies, tourmaline, garnets, amethyst and sapphires. Many pieces transcend from jewelry to decorative arts through clever and unique interlocking combinations. Pendants and earrings, for example, may detach from a necklace to provide the wearer multiple looks from a single piece. With the exhibition *Celestial Dreams* Chan imagines what a space traveler in our solar system may encounter, giving prominence to the fragile oasis Earth.

“In this short lifetime of ours it is important to me to leave an impression and do something positive. Consequently, my designs are filled with symbolism, purpose and meaning. My goal has always been to make my unusual creations as strong and as flawless as possible, while at the same time making a quiet and elegant statement to the beholder,” said Chan. Her jewelry design skills are a result of natural instincts and fearless experimentation.

Chan was born in China, immigrated to Brazil as a child and was married in England. She and husband C.H. (Tony) Chan later moved to Turkey and then the west coast of the United States where Tony taught at the University of California. The Chan family members, including two sons and a daughter, eventually made their way to Huntsville, Alabama.

In Huntsville, Chan attended the University of Alabama in Huntsville, earning degrees in French and fine art. With an artist's instincts and an entrepreneur's spirit, she soon embarked on a career as a jewelry designer and within five years was receiving international accolades for her

work. Over nearly four decades she has earned more than 14 international awards in jewelry design and execution.

The exhibition features Chan's jewelry contextualized through space exploration and was designed and installed by the U. S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville. It has twice been exhibited in Huntsville and also travelled to the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center in Mobile, Alabama. It comes to the Hardin Center in Gadsden through a partnership with the U. S. Space and Rocket Center and through the sponsorship of The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

"The caliber and intricacy of Kathy Chan's incredible work and the exquisite way this exhibition was designed and installed by the U.S. Space and Rocket Center provides a unique experience for our visitors," said Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation executive director Tom Banks. "Tony and Kathy Chan are longtime supporters of the Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation and supporters of all forms of the arts in Alabama. We are very pleased to honor Kathy with this special reception as we share her work with the community."

The reception is Tuesday, November 12 from 5-7 pm at the Hardin Center. Admission is free and the public is invited to attend. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served.

In addition to the reception, the exhibition is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm and Sundays from 1-5 pm. It is open daily through January 31 and is only closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. Admission is \$8 per person and free for children under 24 months. Admission includes Imagination Place Children's Museum, Festival of Trees (featuring 32 Christmas trees decorated by local schools), and the interactive Let it Snow exhibit.

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