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For immediate release

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City Center Square
in collaboration with Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project
is pleased to announce

AIRMAIL – A WINDOW INSTALLATION BY KANSAS CIT ARTIST MARGARET SHELBY
Commissioned for the City Center Square windows on 12th Street, just west of Main, in downtown Kansas City



Artist rendering of *AIRMAIL*, comprised of hundreds of paper airplanes bearing handwritten notes of appreciation to postal carriers.

Art installation inspired by the United States Postal Service will debut FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 5pm
in conjunction with Charlotte Street's Urban Culture Project Studio Residency Program
Open Studios Weekend; will remain on view for one year

City Center Square and Charlotte Street Foundation are pleased to announce the upcoming debut of "AirMail," a window installation by Kansas City-based artist Margaret Shelby. To remain on view for approximately one year, the mail-themed installation was commissioned by City Center Square for its south-facing window on 12th Street, just west of Main, through an open call to artists facilitated by Charlotte Street Foundation. It will be unveiled at a brief public ceremony on Friday, December 9 at 5pm.

The installation relates to the United States Post Office located within City Center Square, specifically taking as inspirations the personal nature of handwritten correspondence, the intimate process of folding and sending a letter, and the person-to-person transport and delivery of this correspondence via postal service.

Shelby's installation will consist of hundreds of paper airplanes, suspended in the window space, bearing written messages on paper. The hanging airplanes will be arranged into two cubes of monumental scale, suggesting the systematic gathering, sorting, and organizing of vast quantities of mail that occurs between the time a letter leaves one individual's hands and ultimately arrives at its final destination. Shelby describes the cube-like arrangements of the letters as representations of "two sides of good communication, each holding its own information but able to receive from and send to the other." Arcs of paper airplanes, suspended as if in flight, will create a sense of connection and flow between the two cubic formations.

Through a series of public engagements, members of the community are being invited to participate in the project by writing brief notes of gratitude to postal workers and mail carriers. These will be folded into paper airplanes and added to the installation. "Inviting others to take part in the process creates the collaboration that all good communication requires," Shelby says. Through the process, she hopes to bring attention to City Center Square and its window, and to "celebrate the work of the United States Postal Service."

Margaret Shelby lives in Kansas City, MO and has exhibited work in a range of venues, including Kansas City Artists Coalition and Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project Space. In 2010, she was a featured artist at the Epstein Gallery during Charlotte Street Foundation and the Kansas City Jewish Museum of Contemporary Art's collaborative exhibition, *The Dining Room Project*. In 2007, she and collaborator Michelle Bridges received a grant from the Arts Council of Kansas City for the creation and installation of *One as Many/Many as One*, a community arts project.

Shelby's *AIRMAIL* installation is the fourth United States Postal Service-inspired installation commissioned for these windows through a partnership of City Center Square and Charlotte Street Foundation's Urban Culture Project. Previous Kansas City artists awarded the commission are Kati Toivanen, Adolfo Martinez, and Judith Levy.

Urban Culture Project is an initiative of the Charlotte Street Foundation, an organization dedicated to making Kansas City a place where artists and art thrive. *Urban Culture Project* creates new opportunities for artists of all disciplines and contributes to urban revitalization by transforming spaces in downtown Kansas City into new venues for multi-disciplinary contemporary arts programming. For more information, visit www.charlottestreet.org.



AIRMAIL community participants writing notes and folding paper airplanes.