



museum of arts and design

MAD TO HOST SERIES ON THE ROLE OF CRAFT AND PRODUCTION IN CONTEMPORARY FASHION DESIGN

Featuring New York Designers **Koos Van Den Akker**, **Mary Ping**, **Mike Eckhaus** and **Zoe Latta**, and **Andre Walker**



New York, NY (May 20, 2014)—From May 22 to July 10, MAD presents *Beyond the Garment District: Perspectives on Craft and Technique in New York-Made Fashion*, a series of four programs featuring some of New York's most innovative and avant-garde fashion designers. Moderated by Jeremy Lewis, founder and editor of the fashion zine *Garmento*, the series considers practical as well as conceptual implications of contemporary clothes making, as mass

consumption and production continue to take a deep environmental and human toll.

"The humanistic appeal of a garment sharply contradicts the mass-industrialization of the fashion industry, even in the luxury market. It is strange how out of all the things we make, clothes are the most personal yet the realities of their origins and end use are perhaps the most detached," says Lewis. "In the face of factory collapses and slave labor, one must question the role of people and clothes not as commodities but as crafted objects. As fashion scrambles to rediscover its exclusive appeal and as consumers become increasingly aware of the grim realities behind such clothes, this series hopes to define a new value, a new way to consider clothes and engage designers who are actively challenging how fashion is made and consequently designed here in New York City."

Museum visitors will hear from **Koos Van Den Akker**, who came of age when folk traditions and home crafts were a huge influence in fashion, and who is popularly known for his sweater designs as worn by Bill Cosby in his '80s-'90s sitcom; **Mary Ping**, who embraces the anthropological as well as aesthetic facets of fashion in her unconventional label Slow and Steady Wins the Race; **Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta**, the design team whose conceptual collections combine the homemade with contemporary materials and fabrications in radical ways; and **Andre Walker**, whose ingenious ideas on construction and materials have influenced many major designers.

"As the production of garments within NYC has spread out from the garment district and into new approaches and atelier practices throughout the city, emergent and exciting

designers and works have appeared on the scene,” says Jake Yuzna, MAD’s Director of Public Programs. “This program brings together some of the best examples of adaptability and talent in NYC’s fashion community to explore not only the design of fashion, but also what it really means to make it in NYC today.”

ABOUT THE SERIES

Beyond the Garment District: Perspectives on Craft and Technique in New York–Made Fashion is organized by Jake Yuzna, Director of Public Programs. Moderator Jeremy Lewis founded *Garmento*, the semiannual fashion zine printed and published out of New York, in 2010. Each issue addresses different themes, such as “Futurism” and “The Outsiders,” drawing inspiration from contemporary and historical fashion.

All programs are free and take place in The Theater at MAD.

For more information about the series, visit www.madmuseum.org/series/beyond-garment-district

Koos Van Den Akker

Thursday, May 22, 2014, 7pm

Free

An American fashion legend, Dutch-born and French-trained Koos Van Den Akker has been designing couture-caliber clothes over the last 40 years. Emerging at a time when folk traditions and home crafts were a huge influence in fashion, he made a name for himself as the master of couture collage. A rich panoply of color and pattern painstakingly pieced together, his designs have provided inspiration for fashion tastemakers like Nicolas Ghesquière, though they are known more popularly as worn by actor and comedian Bill Cosby on the hit sitcom *The Cosby Show*. Representing one of the highest level of clothes-making possible in New York City, Koos Van Den Akker’s operation is a true couture atelier, endless in its technical feats and creativity.

Mary Ping

Thursday, June 12, 2014, 7pm

Free

In 2003, after studying fine arts at Vassar, Mary Ping joined a slew of downtown designers who were actively challenging the status quo of contemporary fashion. She has since been designing Slow and Steady Wins the Race, an unconventional label comprised of a series of perennial capsule collections that focus on a single theme or concept. Engaging the anthropological as well as aesthetic facets of fashion, Ping reconstructs familiar tropes and memes ranging from the white T-shirt to the wedding dress, distilling from them their essential meanings and building on them with her own interpretations. Her qualitative and critical assessment of materials and garments as symbols has made her work a compelling and ongoing critique of how consumers perceive and engage fashion as object and as idea.

Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta

Thursday, June 26, 2014, 7pm

Free

Having founded Eckhaus Latta in 2011, the designing duo Mike Eckhaus and Zoe Latta have staked a space for themselves in New York’s buzzing downtown fashion scene. Their enigmatic, fragmented and disheveled aesthetic is perhaps easiest described as post-deconstructionist. Repurposing the various components of a garment into their own

refreshingly youthful and devastatingly domestic vision, Eckhaus Latta push the idea of the homemade, radically juxtaposed with contemporary materials and modern fabrications; a connecting thread throughout their conceptually leaning collections. Their clothes are often abstract groupings of textiles and fibers rather than fully realized garments, directly challenging the dichotomies of refinement and rawness, the machine-made and the hand-made, and the impersonal coldness of fashion and the warmth and personality of crafted clothes.

Eckhaus Latta will participate in *NYC Makers: The MAD Biennial*, July 1–October 12, 2014.

Andre Walker

Thursday, July 10, 2014, 7pm

Free

A designer's designer, self-taught Andre Walker has been one of the fashion industry's secret weapons, having shown his eponymous collection on and off since he was a teenager in the mid-'80s. Championed by New York arbiters of the avant-garde Bill Cunningham, Kim Hastreiter, and Patricia Field, his ingenious ideas on construction and materials have proved prodigiously prescient, often finding their way into the collections of the most directional designers years later. Having worked as a consultant for Marc Jacobs, Kim Jones, and Louis Vuitton, he recently teamed with Comme Des Garçon's Dover Street Market to design a women's ready-to-wear collection. His ideas on dress and fashion are as powerful as ever, and his current outlook, impassioned by growing contemporary concerns, is just as sharp and enlightening.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields, presenting artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill to their work. Since the Museum's founding in 1956 by philanthropist and visionary Aileen Osborn Webb, MAD has celebrated all facets of making and the creative processes by which materials are transformed, from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies. Today, the Museum's curatorial program builds upon a rich history of exhibitions that emphasize a cross-disciplinary approach to art and design, and reveals the workmanship behind the objects and environments that shape our everyday lives. MAD provides an international platform for practitioners who are influencing the direction of cultural production and driving 21st-century innovation, fostering a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design.

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