



museum of arts and design

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN NAMES ELISSA AUTHER AS INAUGURAL WINDGATE RESEARCH CURATOR

*New Position Reflects Museum's Ongoing Commitment to
Scholarly Research and Critical Discourse about Craft and Design*

*New Partnership with the Bard Graduate Center (BGC) and The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design
(CCCD) Will Serve to Establish New Hub for Expanded Field of Craft Research*

New York, NY (November 19, 2014) – The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) today announced that Elissa Auther will join the Museum as its new Windgate Research Curator, effective December 1, 2014. She will serve as the inaugural scholar and curator in this newly created position to advance scholarly research and critical discourse about craft and design.

Auther will bring far-reaching and diverse expertise to MAD as a scholar and widely-published author, a skilled educator, and an independent curator. She joins MAD from the University of Colorado, where she currently serves as an Associate Professor of Contemporary Art as well as the Director of the Art History and Museum Studies Program. Auther also serves as the Co-director of *Feminism & Co: Art, Sex, Politics* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver.

The Windgate Research Curator is a newly-created position, generously supported for 5 years by the Windgate Charitable Foundation and launched under the aegis of MAD's Nanette L. Laitman Director Glenn Adamson. This initiative is a significant partnership between MAD, the Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture (BGC) in New York, and The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD) in North Carolina. Recognizing the resurgence of interest in craft and the process of making across a wide range of media and materials that has occurred in recent years, the new position establishes an important leadership role for exploration and scholarship for this burgeoning field of study. The Windgate Charitable Foundation has been a much-valued partner of the Museum of Arts and Design for many years. In addition to its steadfast support of the Museum's exhibitions, the Foundation has provided crucial support for the institution's move to 2 Columbus Circle in 2008, and has been instrumental in enriching the Museum's collections in clay, glass, metalwork, wood and fiber.

"We are delighted to welcome Elissa Auther to the Museum of Arts and Design and to inaugurate the new position of Windgate Research Curator," said Glenn Adamson, the museum's Nanette L. Laitman Director. "With her diverse experience as a professor, author, independent curator, and a co-director of a dynamic museum program, Elissa brings the distinctive combination of scholarly, curatorial and leadership abilities to help launch the innovative partnership between MAD, the Bard Graduate Center and The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design. With so many new initiatives on the horizon for MAD, Elissa's role will be critical in helping to build this important new function for the Museum, and support our reinvigorated mission."

"I am thrilled to be joining MAD at this pivotal juncture in its history and look forward to being part of the next chapter of its growth," said Auther. "Leaving the University of Colorado and my outstanding colleagues there and at MCA Denver was a difficult decision, but the new Windgate Research Curator position and the partnership with these three leading institutions offers a unique opportunity to expand

my work and the field in an exciting new context.”

The Windgate Research Curator

By partnering with the CCCD, the leading organization supporting craft research in the country, MAD, America’s flagship Museum devoted to skilled makers, and BGC, the leading specialist academy for the study of the history of design and material culture, the Windgate Research Curator position will establish a focal point for the expanded field of craft research in the United States.

The Research Curator will be a part of MAD’s Education Department and act as the lead academic and support for MAD’s exhibitions, also contributing her own research and overseeing external scholarly contributions. At BGC, the Research Curator will help expand teaching on the history of craft and making and provide the opportunity for students to have supervised professional experience via an ongoing museum practicum hosted at MAD. The position of Windgate Research Curator will also serve to establish an anchor in New York City for CCCD and its activities.

Elissa Auther

Prior to joining the University of Colorado, Auther taught at the University of Cincinnati in the School of Art, Architecture, Design and Planning. She has published widely, including *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft* and *West of Center: Art and the Countercultural Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, which was also the subject of a nationally-touring exhibition. Her current scholarship examines the fiber-based work of artist Josh Faught, the performances of Senga Nengudi, and the painting of Marilyn Minter. She has developed exhibitions for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, where she also serves as co-director of the nationally-acclaimed public program *Feminism & Co.: Art, Sex, Politics*, as well as The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum and RedLine Denver. She is currently working on a large-scale retrospective of painter and photographer Marilyn Minter, which will open at the MCA Denver in 2015.

Auther received her Ph.D. in the History of Art from the University of Maryland, and her BA in the History of Art from San Francisco State University.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

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.

The **Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture (BGC)** is a graduate research institute committed to the study of the cultural history of the material world, drawing on methodologies and approaches from art and design history, economic and cultural history, history of technology, philosophy, anthropology, and archaeology. www.bgc.bard.edu

The **Center for Craft, Creativity & Design (CCCD)**, established in 1996, is a national nonprofit organization that advances the understanding of craft by encouraging and supporting research, critical dialogue, and professional development in the United States. CCCD raises funds for programs and outreach to international, national, and regional artists, craft organizations, universities/colleges, and the community. Each year, CCCD administers over a quarter million dollars in grants to those working in the craft field. Located in Asheville, North Carolina, CCCD curates Benchspace, a public gallery and

workshop for investigating contemporary practices of making in the shifting creative landscape of the 21st century. www.craftcreativitydesign.org

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