



museum of arts and design

## **MAD PRESENTS *EBONY G. PATTERSON: DEAD TREEZ***

**The Artist's First New York Solo Museum Exhibition  
Opens November 10**

NEW YORK, NY (Updated November 3, 2015) – From November 10, 2015, to April 3, 2016, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) presents *Dead Treeez*, the first monographic New York museum exhibition by artist Ebony G. Patterson, who splits her time between Kingston, Jamaica, and Lexington, Kentucky. Incorporating mixed-media installations and jacquard photo tapestries, Patterson explores visibility, in terms of class, gender, race, and the media. Her highly adorned, almost illuminated images and objects aim to attract and seduce viewers, challenging them to look closer.

“MAD champions artists who exemplify material intelligence,” said MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director, Glenn Adamson. “Patterson achieves that, along with a combination of visual extravagance and social awareness that I find extremely powerful.”

A **press preview for the exhibition** will be held on Monday, November 9, 2015, at 5:00 pm.

“Ebony Patterson is an outstanding example of an artist who is working in materials and methodologies once associated purely with craft and material culture and is deploying them in smart and critical ways,” stated MAD’s William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, Shannon R. Stratton. “Patterson is a master of collage. In all three aspects of her exhibition at MAD—the mannequins, the tapestries, and the Tiffany Gallery installation—you witness an artist who is challenging the possibility of what collage is, dimensionally and conceptually. I couldn’t be more excited that we were able to bring Patterson to the museum and give her the platform she deserves at this pivotal point in her career.”

### ***Dead Treeez***

For *Dead Treeez*, Patterson assembled five eye-popping tapestries, along with a life-size figural tableau of 10 male mannequins, dressed in a kaleidoscopic mix of floral fabrics, entitled *Swag Swag Krew* (2011–2014). A meditation on dancehall fashion and culture among the disenfranchised in postcolonial Jamaica, *Swag Swag Krew* explores the paradoxical relationship between traditional gender codes and the bombastic aesthetics of dancehall pageantry. While clothing is often used to define and exemplify gender, Patterson camouflages the body with textiles, revealing gestures and postures often associated with machismo. Patterning the body also serves as a reference to the popularity of skin bleaching and tattooing. Patterson suggests that skin alteration is more than embellishment; it is an erasure motivated by a desire for presence.

For the series of five tapestries, Patterson borrowed the flamboyant aspects of dancehall dress to draw attention to murder victims whose images she sourced via social media. Inspired by these found images, Patterson stages photo tableaus that she has woven into jacquard tapestries. Using those tapestries as a substrate, Patterson then embroiders, beads, and

otherwise adorns the surface, working into and building up the images to create a visually seductive appearance that draws the viewer into bearing witness to the underreported and unacknowledged brutality experienced by those living on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder.

***...buried again to carry on growing...***

In MAD's Tiffany Jewelry Gallery, Patterson was invited to continue MAD's new POV series. She created *...buried again to carry on growing...*, an installation of selections from the permanent jewelry collection that reflects the perspective of her own studio practice.

Inspired by the Alnwick Garden's "Poison Garden" in Northumberland, England, Patterson's garden in the Tiffany Gallery presents a curated variety of dangerous flora and fauna to populate a landscape where camouflaged and patterned bodies commingle with bold and extraordinary selections from the jewelry collection.

Using the jewelry cases as terraria, Patterson turns the gallery into a sculptural installation consisting of three scenarios in which bodies and body parts, like the ones seen in *Dead Treez*, evoke the violence often endemic to marginalized communities. The jewelry selection is incorporated into the landscape, positioned to appear as though the pieces could belong to the bodies that are disappearing in the underbrush.

Patterson's work addresses how choices in clothing, jewelry, or other forms of personal adornment are endeavors to be visible on the part of populations rendered invisible by poverty, racism, and other oppressive socioeconomic conditions. Impoverished, inner-city communities in Jamaica often have the word "garden" in their names. Patterson's installation accentuates this contrast between places designed to be about beauty, growth, and life and the hardships and sorrow that are daily obstacles in neighborhoods that use the same name. In foregrounding this contradiction, Patterson raises urgent questions about what is at stake for people to blossom and thrive despite adversity.

Patterson's curated installation of jewelry drawn from MAD's collection is the second in the series POV, a project that invites guests' perspectives on the Museum's permanent collection through the lens of their own work.

The title *...buried again to carry on growing...* is inspired by the poem "Brief Lives" by Jamaican poet and author Olive Senior.

## **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND CREDITS**

*Dead Treez* was organized by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and curated by Karen Patterson. It was secured for the Museum of Arts and Design by William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator Shannon R. Stratton.

*...buried again to carry on growing...* is an original MAD exhibition, organized by Stratton with the support of Curatorial Assistant and Project Manager Barbara Paris Gifford.

*Ebony G. Patterson: Dead Treez* is made possible by the generous support of Judith and Stanley Zabar; Barbara Karp Shuster; Christopher K. Ho; Marian C. Burke and Russell Burke; Peri and Nacho Arenas; Bill and Christy Gautreaux, Kansas City, MO; Janice Savin Williams and Christopher J. Williams; and Monique Meloche Gallery. Additional support is provided by the Director's Circle, a leading Museum support group.

## RELATED PROGRAMMING

### Talks

#### In Conversation: Ebony G. Patterson

Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 7:00 pm

Join Ebony G. Patterson as she takes to the Theater at MAD with exhibition curator Karen Patterson for an evening discussion.

#### In Conversation: Krista Thompson on *Shine*

Thursday, March 24, 2016, 7:00 pm

### Cinema

#### Jamaican Sound System

Film Series

March 4–18, 2016

\$10 general / \$5 members and students

The Jamaican sound system first appeared in the postwar period of early 1950s inner-city Kingston. DJs would load up a truck with a generator, turntables, and huge speakers and set up street parties, playing imported American R&B for Jamaicans who were barred under colonial rule from participating in dances uptown. Once the country gained independence in 1962, the sound began to change by incorporating locally sourced music—starting with ska, then moving through rocksteady, reggae, and dub to present-day dancehall.

Jamaican Sound System reflects on the socioeconomic and political changes that took place in Jamaica leading to what cultural theorist Julian Henriques has called a kind of “sonic dominance.” Themes of social injustice, poverty, violence, and sexuality create an undercurrent linking these films to the music itself.

#### *The Harder They Come* (Perry Henzell, 1972, Jamaica)

March 4, 2016, 7:00 pm

#### *Rockers* (Theodoros Bafaloukos, 1978, Jamaica)

March 11, 2016, 7:00 pm

#### *Dancehall Queen* (Rick Elgood and Don Letts, 1997, Jamaica)

March 18, 2016, 7:00 pm

#### *En Masse: A Tale of Two Protests | Part 1: Uptown Masquerade*

Film Preview by Michelle Serieux

March 25, 2016, 7:00 pm

### Encounters

#### Gender Meditation: A Guided Drawing Experience

November 19, 2015, 6:30 pm

#### *...buried again to carry on growing...* A Guided Tour

December 10, 2015, 6:30 pm

#### Viewer as Witness: A Guided Viewing Experience

January 21, 2016, 6:30 pm

Bring on the Bling: A Guided Collaborative Project

February 18, 2016, 6:30 pm

Socially Constructed: A Guided Hands-On Workshop

March 17, 2016, 6:30 pm

## **Family**

MADreads: A Literacy-Based Family Program

December 20, 2015, and February 21, 2016, 10:30 am

Studio Sunday: A Hands-On Intergenerational Workshop

March 6, 2016, noon

## **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.

For high-resolution images, visit our press image archive:  
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## **SOCIAL**

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