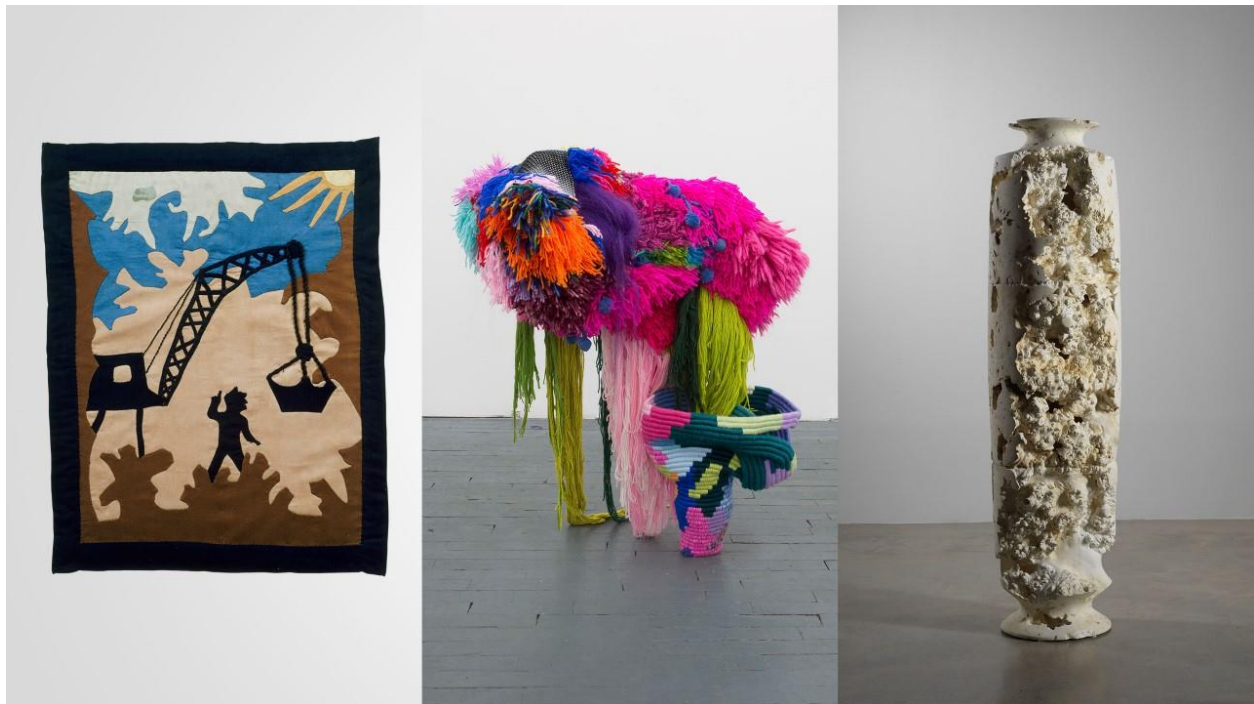




museum of arts and design

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS PERMANENT COLLECTION THROUGH MORE THAN 60 HISTORIC WORKS AND NEW ACQUISITIONS

Craft Front & Center
Opens February 4, 2023



Images (from left to right): Ruth Clement Bond (designer) and Rose Marie Thomas (maker), *Tennessee Valley Authority Appliqué Quilt Design of Man with Crane*, 1934; Sara Zapata, *A little domestic waste IV*, 2017; and Eleanor Lakelin, *Column Vessel I* (from the “Echoes of Amphora” series), 2022.

NEW YORK, NY (February 2, 2023) – An ongoing exhibition of the Museum of Arts and Design’s (MAD) growing permanent collection of more than 3,500 objects, *Craft Front & Center* will feature a fresh installation of more than 60 historic works and new acquisitions dating from the golden age of the American Craft movement to the present day. Organized into themes of material transformation, dismantling hierarchies, contemplation, identity, and sustainability, the exhibition illuminates how the expansive field of craft has broadened definitions of art. *Craft Front & Center* opens on February 4, 2023.

Established at the Museum’s beginning in 1956, MAD’s permanent collection was the vision of Museum founder Aileen Osborne Webb, the collector and philanthropist who pioneered an understanding of craft and the handmade as a creative driving force of art and design. With the aim of broadening access to the collection’s holdings, the multiyear exhibition will showcase the value of the handmade in the display of contemporary works and recent acquisitions. *Craft Front & Center* will be updated periodically with new

displays of rarely seen works and recent additions, as well as serve as inspiration for hands-on workshops and off-site field trips.

“This is the first long-term exhibition of the permanent collection since MAD opened its doors at our home in Columbus Circle in 2008,” said Elissa Auther, MAD’s Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs and William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator. “Inspired by the Museum’s radical, founding mission to champion craft as central to the advancement of art, the exhibition expands the story of craft conventionally told by scholars and museums and makes the case for the relevance of the handmade in culture and society today.”

The exhibition opens with a presentation of rarely seen textiles. Linking three generations of pioneering quilt artists, the installation features Ruth Clement Bond’s designs for a series of Tennessee Valley Authority quilts celebrating African American contributions to modern society, Faith Ringgold’s fusion of painting, craft, and literary traditions for her story quilt *Shades of Alice*, and Bisa Butler’s vibrant painterly portrait *Lyric with a Lollipop* (on loan to MAD), capturing a vivid slice of contemporary Black American life. Together, these quilts ask visitors to reconsider the art/craft divide and recognize how craft artists have galvanized the art world to broaden definitions of fine art to include a greater diversity of artists and materials.

Illustrating craft’s commitment to material innovation, artist Anna Mlasowsky’s *Chorus of One* is the result of two years of experimentation with a “glass ceramic” material at the Corning Incorporated Research Laboratory. Mlasowsky fashioned the material, originally conceived for dental, architectural, and body armor applications due to its impact and shatter-resistant qualities, into a cloak of protective scales, similar to those of an armadillo. In a video accompanying the sculpture, a dancer dons the cloak and gives a revealing performance highlighting the material’s visual and aural properties.

Inspired by the collection’s rich holdings in artworks made from wood, the exhibition considers the material through the lens of sustainability. Among the selections is the recent acquisition of Eleanor Lakelin’s *Column Vessel I* (from the “Echoes of Amphora” series), a composite of three hand-picked sections of timber from a newly felled chestnut tree in her native England, one in an avenue of diseased trees that shaded Reading Goal, where Oscar Wilde was incarcerated in 1885 and penned a poem named for the prison.

Throughout the exhibition’s run, the Museum will host public programs and workshops designed to extend the exhibition’s content and encourage a more expansive understanding of craft. On February 9, MAD Collection artists Beau McCall, Armarinhos Teixeira, and Sarah Zapata—all represented in *Craft Front & Center* with works recently acquired by the Museum—will be in discussion with independent curator M. Rachael Arauz about their innovative use of materials to express and explore the nature of identity in their individual craft practices.

A series of interactive workshops will be held in April and May, exploring culinary craft through a tasting of handcrafted sake, the history of indigo and hand-dyeing instruction, and the traditions and practice of Eastern Woodland-style beadwork. Additionally, this spring, the Museum will launch a lifelong learning seminar series for those wishing to gain

a deeper understanding of craft history and contemporary practice through conversations, field trips, and artist studio visits.

An audio tour for *Craft Front & Center* will be available on the Museum's mobile guide on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app created by Bloomberg Philanthropies, part of its longstanding commitment to supporting digital innovation in the arts. On the app, visitors will be able to hear directly from select exhibition artists about their work and practice.

For more information on *Craft Front & Center* and related programming, please visit madmuseum.org.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Craft Front & Center has been made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Museum of Arts and Design together: Democracy demands wisdom. The exhibition is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Research was supported by a Craft Research Fund grant from the Center for Craft. Additional support from The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

ARTISTS ON VIEW (ALPHABETICAL)

Alexandra Agudelo (Colombia, b. 1959); Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola (US, b. 1991); Marcus Amerman (Choctaw Nation, b. 1959); Darren Appiagyei (UK, b. 1993); Mitsuko Asakura (Japan, b. 1950); Derek Bencomo (US, b. 1962); Ruth Clement Bond (US, 1904–2005); Jeffrey Brosk (US, b. 1947); Bisa Butler (US, b. 1973); Michael Cummings (US, b. 1945); Dewey Garrett (US, b. 1947); Teri Greeves (Kiowa, b. 1970); Ted Hallman (US, b. 1933); Jessica Harrison (UK, b. 1982); Coille McLaughlin Hooven (US, b. 1939); William Hunter (US, b. 1947); Diane Itter (US, 1946–1989); Ferne Jacobs (US, b. 1942); Ron Kent (US, 1931–2018); Dan Kvitka (US, b. 1958); Eleanor Lakelin (UK, b. 1960); Bud Latven (US, b. 1949); Robert Longhurst (US, b. 1949); Charles Loloma (Hopi, 1921–1991); Carolyn Mazloomi (US, b. 1948); Beau McCall (US, b. 1957); Philip Moulthrop (US, b. 1947); Tiff Massey (US, b. 1982); Anna Mlasowsky (Germany, b. 1984); Joo Hyung Park (South Korea, b. 1982); Grayson Perry (UK, b. 1960); Michael Peterson (US, b. 1952); Dylan Poblano (Zuni, b. 1974); Faith Ringgold (US, b. 1930); Hap Sakwa (US, b. 1950); Norm Sartorius (US, b. 1947); Mike Shuler (US, b. 1950); Bob Stocksdale (US, 1913–2013); Del Stubbs (US, b. 1952); Dennis Sullivan (US, b. unknown); Toshiko Takaezu (US, 1922–2011); Nádia Taquary (Brazil, b. 1942); Lenore Tawney (US, 1907–2007); Rose Marie Thomas (US, 1902–unknown); Armarrinhos Teixeira (Brazil, b. 1974); Denise Wallace (Alutiq/Sugpiaq, b. 1957); Samuel Wallace (US, 1936–2010); Howard Werner (US, b. 1951); Sarah Zapata (US, b. 1988).

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields and presents the work of artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill. 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 twenty-first-century innovation, and fosters a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design. For more information, visit madmuseum.org.

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PRESS CONTACTS

Museum of Arts and Design

Wendi Parson

Deputy Director, Communications and Marketing

+1 212 299 7749

wendi.parson@madmuseum.org

Iman Nelson

Marketing and Media Relations Manager

+1 212 299 7733

iman.nelson@madmuseum.org