



museum of arts and design

SHANNON R. STRATTON RESIGNS HER POST AS CHIEF CURATOR OF THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN



Shannon R. Stratton.
Photo: Jenny Woods

NEW YORK, NY (January 25, 2019) – The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) announced today that **Shannon R. Stratton** has stepped down from her position as William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator. Stratton will continue working with the Museum as a consultant through May 2019 to complete curatorial responsibilities for the upcoming exhibition *Roger Brown: Virtual Still Lives*, on view May 2 through September 15, 2019.

“During her tenure at MAD, Shannon has been instrumental in bolstering the Museum’s curatorial program, expanding the permanent collection, fostering meaningful collaborations with artists, designers, and other institutions, and developing creative ways to engage contemporary audiences,” said **Chris Scoates**, MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director. “We are grateful for her curatorial vision, which has challenged preconceived perceptions of craft both within and outside of the Museum, and for the countless ways in which she enriched our organization.”

Stratton joined MAD in June 2015 and led her team in organizing more than thirty exhibitions, including the critically acclaimed *Sterling Ruby: Ceramics* (2018); *Tanya Aguiñiga: Craft & Care* (2018); *Derrick Adams: Sanctuary* (2018); *Voukos: The Breakthrough Years* (2016); and *Ebony G. Patterson: Dead Treez* (2015). Stratton’s curatorial work includes the innovative *Atmosphere for Enjoyment: Harry Bertoia’s Environment for Sound* (2016); *Sonic Arcade: Shaping Space with Sound* (2017); and MAD’s first time-based media exhibition, *In Time (The Rhythm of the Workshop)* (2016). Her vision included raising the profile of under-recognized women artists, through exhibitions such as *Coille Hooven: Tell It By Heart* (2016), which showcased the work of one of the first feminist ceramists, and *Surface/Depth: The Decorative After Miriam Schapiro* (2018), curated by Windgate Research and Collections Curator **Elissa Auther**, which shined a light on the late painter’s legacy.

In 2018, Stratton launched MAD’s Burke Prize for contemporary craft, to critical acclaim. Named for craft collectors Marian and Russell Burke, the prize constitutes an unrestricted award of \$50,000, given annually to an artist age forty-five or under working in glass, fiber, clay, metal, or wood. **Cannupa Hanska Luger** is the first recipient of the Burke Prize, which recognizes the achievements of a young artist working in and advancing the media and disciplines that shaped the American studio craft movement for which the Museum was founded.

Further expanding on MAD founder Aileen Osborn Webb’s mission to support working artists, Stratton oversaw, with the Museum’s Education Department, the curation of *Studio Views: Craft in the Expanded Field* (2017), a micro-residency/exhibition hybrid that provided artists with the space to create large-scale, immersive, and community-engaged projects. She also established artist fees to ensure fair compensation for artists participating in exhibitions.



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In addition to expanding and diversifying programming, Stratton initiated and spearheaded a full analysis of the Museum's permanent collection upon her arrival. She and her team subsequently developed a three- to five-year collecting strategy focused on contemporary ceramics, fiber, and jewelry. Since then, she has overseen the acquisition of more than 130 works for the permanent collection, with a focus on women, people of color, and LGBTQ artists.

"It has been gratifying to reflect on the work my team and I were able to accomplish over the last four years," Stratton said. "I worked with a phenomenal group of artists, curators, educators, registrars, designers, and preparators to bring these shows to life, and I'll be forever grateful. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for MAD as it continues to navigate craft's expanded role in art and design."

Stratton leaves MAD to resume work as an independent organizer and writer. In addition to leading programming at The Poor Farm in Little Wolf, Wisconsin, as Artistic Director, she will be launching *Slow Frequency*, an international network of site-responsive art interventions and events, and completing a book on Harry Bertoia's Sonambient barn, to be published by SoberSCOPE Press.

Stratton joined MAD following twelve years as founder and Executive Director of Threewalls, a Chicago-based contemporary arts organization that presents exhibitions and public programs, and provides grants and resources to artists and other organizers through projects like the Propeller Fund and *PHONEBOOK*. In addition, she co-founded the Hand-in-Glove conference and the associated Common Field, a national network for artists and organizers, which together amplified the visibility and viability of arts organizers and projects across the United States.

Stratton has also worked as an independent curator and researcher with specific interests in fiber art and artist-run and independent organizations. Her writing on craft is included in *Collaboration through Craft* (Berg, 2012) and the forthcoming *Craft on Demand: The New Politics of the Handmade* (Bloomsbury, 2019). Her exhibition *Faith Wilding: Fearful Symmetries* toured US venues from 2014 to 2018, with a monograph released by Intellect Books and the University of Chicago Press in 2018. *Even Thread Has a Speech*, her curatorial contribution to the upcoming exhibition series *Lenore Tawney: Mirror of the Universe*, opening at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in fall 2019, focuses on contemporary artists working in fiber after Tawney.

Stratton received a BFA from Alberta College of Art and Design, and both an MFA in Fiber and Material Studies and an MA in Art History, Theory, and Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she served as an adjunct associate professor from 2006 to 2015.

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



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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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