



museum of arts and design

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN EXPLORES THE STORYTELLING POWER OF JEWELRY THROUGH WORKS BY DOURIEAN FLETCHER

Douriean Fletcher: Jewelry of the Afrofuture
October 4, 2025–March 15, 2026



Douriean Fletcher, *Messenger Collection*, gold and semi-precious stones, c. 2021. Photo: Courtesy of artist.

NEW YORK, NY (June 26, 2025)– This fall, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) presents the first major museum exhibition dedicated to jewelry artist Douriean Fletcher, whose work spans independent design, costume, and film. On view from October 4, 2025, to March 15, 2026, *Douriean Fletcher: Jewelry of the Afrofuture* centers Fletcher's jewelry as a powerful narrative tool in art, identity, and visual storytelling.

Fletcher's jewelry articulates Black identity, embodies spiritual meaning, and has helped define cinematic characters and imagined worlds. With over 150 works on view, the exhibition explores Fletcher's evolution from self-taught metalsmith to a designer whose handmade adornments have shaped memorable aesthetics in contemporary cinema, most notably Marvel Studios' *Black Panther* film franchise.

The artist's practice exemplifies the ethos of Afrofuturism, a cultural movement that reclaims Black identity and history while envisioning egalitarian futures. Inspired by the storytelling traditions of

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Zulu beadwork, the ornate beauty of ancient Egyptian adornment, and the innovation of African American jewelers, Fletcher explores the use of symbolism in spiritual practice—reimagining and creating new talismanic forms that address personal and collective transformation. Fletcher’s oversized jewelry with narrative elements speaks to empowerment, spirituality, and intergenerational connection.

“My work channels Afrofuturism by honoring ancestral technologies while imagining new futures through adornment. Each piece is an energetic portal, rooted in a desire to remain connected to African cosmologies and designed to activate personal power, spiritual memory, and liberation across time,” said Fletcher.

The exhibition unfolds across three thematic sections: Fletcher’s formative years and studio practice; her breakout film and television work, including pieces designed for major motion pictures; and her current artistic explorations. Visitors will encounter elaborate brass and gold pieces inspired by ancestral traditions, iconic costume jewelry from blockbuster films, and Fletcher’s most recent works, including her collection for luxury department store Bergdorf Goodman.

A highlight of the exhibition is the jewelry Fletcher made for Queen Ramonda and the Dora Milaje from the blockbuster films *Black Panther* (2018) and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022). These pieces, displayed with a selection of the films’ costumes by Academy Award–winning costume designer Ruth E. Carter, offer a behind-the-scenes look at how adornment defines character, advances world-building, and represents Black sovereignty on screen. Fletcher’s jewelry for television miniseries *Roots* (2016) and motion picture *Coming 2 America* (2021) also are featured. While working on *Black Panther*, Fletcher made history in 2016, becoming the first jeweler to be granted membership by the Motion Picture Costumer Union, IATSE Local 705.

Co-curated by professor and design historian Sebastian Grant and Barbara Paris Gifford, MAD’s Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, Craft, and Design, the exhibition includes process sketches, and behind-the-scenes imagery of Fletcher at work. Visitors will discover the references behind her designs, from a Maasai neckpiece to the structural experiments of Alexander Calder and Art Smith. The exhibition also features MAD’s first presentation of several ancient objects from Africa and Mesoamerica.

A dynamic schedule of public programs will accompany *Douriean Fletcher: Jewelry of the Afrofuture*, offering visitors hands-on, art-making experiences and deeper insight into the exhibition’s themes. On October 5, Fletcher will lead an intimate beading workshop focused on mindfulness and community-making through craft. A second artist-led, jewelry-making workshop, held on December 16, will explore techniques using soft metals. On November 20, co-curator and design historian Sebastian Grant will deliver a lecture on the intersection of jewelry and Afrofuturism. A virtual discussion between the artist and Anthony Francisco, former Senior Visual Development Artist for Marvel Studios, scheduled on February 26, will delve into the process of designing iconic super heroes. The exhibition’s film series features special screenings of *Black Panther* (December 18), *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (January 8), and *Coming 2 America* (date TBD), each introduced by original video commentary from the artist.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

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ABOUT DOURIEAN FLETCHER

Douriean Fletcher is a jewelry artist whose work bridges tradition and imagination. A self-taught metalsmith, she creates pieces that draw from African and African American adornment practices, spiritual symbolism, and personal storytelling. Her bold, sculptural designs—crafted from materials such as brass, gold, and semi-precious stones—have been featured in major film productions, including *Black Panther* (2018), *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022), and *Coming 2 America* (2021), where her jewelry played a key role in shaping the visual identity of fictional worlds.

Raised in Pasadena, Calif., Fletcher began making jewelry as a personal exploration of identity and cultural heritage. Her early work was shaped by her travels to South Africa, where she studied traditional forms of adornment and their role in community and ceremony. In 2016, she became the first jewelry designer to be recognized by the Motion Picture Costumer Union. This distinction made her the sole jewelry artist on the production teams of the films to which she contributed. In addition to her film work, Fletcher maintains an independent studio practice, with recent collections featured by luxury retailers such as Bergdorf Goodman. Her work has been celebrated for its layered references and commitment to handcraft, blending past, present, and future in wearable form.

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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