



museum of arts and design

MAD FOREGROUNDS WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO POSTWAR VISUAL CULTURE AND EXPLORES THEIR LEGACY IN UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Forty-two artists, including Ruth Asawa, Anni Albers, Edith Heath, Sheila Hicks, Dorothy Liebes, Lenore Tawney, Margaret Tafoya, Eva Zeisel, Polly Apfelbaum, Vivian Beer, Front Design, Michelle Grabner, Magdalene Odundo and Hella Jongerius

NEW YORK, NY, April 21, 2015 – From April 28 to September 27, 2015, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) presents *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today*, an exhibition that considers the notable contributions of women to modernism in postwar visual culture. In the 1950s and '60s, an era when painting, sculpture and architecture were dominated by men, women had extensive impact in alternative materials such as textiles, ceramics and metals. Largely unexamined in major art historical surveys, due to either their gender or their choice of materials, these pioneering women achieved success and international recognition, establishing a model of professional identity for future generations.

Featuring more than 100 works, *Pathmakers* focuses on a cadre of women—including Ruth Asawa, Edith Heath, Sheila Hicks, Karen Karnes, Dorothy Liebes, Alice Kagawa Parrott, Toshiko Takaezu, Lenore Tawney and Eva Zeisel—who were influential as designers, artists and teachers, using materials such as clay, fiber and metals in innovative ways. Significantly, the group came to maturity along with the Museum of Arts and Design itself, which was founded in 1956 as the center of the emerging American modern craft movement.

“Pathmakers places women at the center of the midcentury modernist narrative, and makes a powerful case for the importance of craft and design media as professional pathways,” stated Glenn Adamson, MAD’s Nanette L. Laitman Director. “Founded by a woman and with half of its collection representing works by female artists, MAD continues to champion the inclusion of women in the narrative of art and design history, along with other groups that have traditionally been marginalized.”

The exhibition also highlights contributions of European émigrés, including Anni Albers and Maija Grotell, who brought with them a conviction that craft could serve as a pathway to modernist innovation. Parallels between women creating work in Scandinavia and the United States are emphasized by the inclusion of important Scandinavian designers such as Rut Bryk, Vuokko Nurmesniemi and Vivianna Torun Bülow-Hübe.

“We aim to expand the historical view of the postwar period, to showcase important artists and designers, and to introduce names that have been overlooked,” said exhibition curator Jennifer Scanlan.

The legacy of the midcentury women is conveyed through a section of the exhibition that presents works by contemporary female artists and designers that reflect and expand upon the work of the earlier generation. International and US-based artists and designers featured in this section include Polly Apfelbaum, Vivian Beer, Front Design, Christine McHorse, Michelle Grabner, Hella Jongerius, Gabriel A. Maher, Magdalene Odundo and Anne Wilson.

A press preview for the exhibition will be held on **Monday, April 27, 2015, from 4:00 to 5:30 pm.** Exhibition curator Jennifer Scanlan will lead a walk-through of the exhibition.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

- A striking installation of four of **Ruth Asawa's** singular hanging sculptures, which attracted renewed critical attention after her first retrospective in 2006, at the age of 80. The artist's volumetric yet delicate forms drawn in the air out of wire were groundbreaking in their use of a nontraditional material.
- **Marianne Strengell's** *Forecast Rug* for the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa). In the postwar period, Alcoa was looking for new uses for aluminum, which had seen extensive military use during World War II. The company commissioned Strengell to develop an all-aluminum textile with the softness and warmth of the handwoven, bringing this industrial material into the home market.
- A wide selection of **Eva Zeisel's** designs, which have come from her archives and personal collection. This includes some of her most rare designs, such as the *Bellybutton* room divider, a prototype that never went into production, which demonstrates Zeisel's interest in organic form, as well as her playful sense of humor.
- **Vivianna Torun Bülow-Hübe's** *Vivianna Bangle Watch* for Georg Jensen, which has no clasp, no numbers and a mirrored face. Torun, as she was known, said of this design, "The watch is open ended to symbolize that time should not bind us, and the dial like a mirror reminds us that life is now."
- **Margaret Tafoya's** signature "bear paw vessels," which marry traditional Pueblo ceramic techniques with contemporary form. Tafoya, one of a small group of Native American ceramists responsible for reviving Pueblo pottery traditions in the midcentury, was the matriarch of a family of influential potters. She inspired generations of ceramics artists with the purity of her lines and the beauty of her burnished black surfaces.
- A portion of **Hella Jongerius'** redesign of the United Nations Delegates' Lounge, including a replica of the curtain of ceramic beads that covers the two-story window at the west end. Because of security restrictions at the United Nations, the curtain that is installed in the lounge is not as originally conceived. The exhibited curtain, re-created especially for *Pathmakers* and hand-knotted in her studio, is the design as Jongerius intended it.
- **Polly Apfelbaum's** large site-specific installation of her textiles inspired by the 1950s publication *A Handweaver's Pattern Book*, along with her handmade ceramic beads. Each of the 30 textiles is vibrantly colored with a different pattern, using a rainbow of markers and a simple stencil.

- **Gabriel A. Maher's** *DE___SIGN*, which investigates the ways in which design reinforces, and even helps shape, the concepts of "male" and "female." Through a garment, as well as videos of a series of collaborations with dancers and other performers, Maher looks at stereotypically male and female posture and clothing.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION, ASSOCIATED PUBLICATION AND CREDITS

Pathmakers is organized by guest curators Jennifer Scanlan and Ezra Shales, along with Barbara Paris Gifford, Curatorial Assistant and Project Manager.

After its presentation at the Museum of Arts and Design, the exhibition will travel to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, where it will be on display from October 30, 2015, to February 28, 2016.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a special issue of the *Journal of Modern Craft*, guest edited by MAD's Windgate Research Curator Elissa Auther. The issue, to be published in July 2015, will serve as an in-depth exploration of subjects raised in the exhibition. It will feature articles by the exhibition curators, as well as international scholars including Helena Kåberg, Professor and Curator at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Sweden; Dr. Sarah Lichtman, Assistant Professor of Art and Design Studies and Director of the Cooper Hewitt Master's in Decorative Arts and Design; and Dr. Simon Olding, Professor and Director of the Crafts Study Centre at the University for the Creative Arts in Surrey, UK.

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EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Curator-Led Tour of *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today*

Thursday, April 30, 2015 - 6:30 pm

Free with Pay-What-You-Wish Admission

Discover the exhibition *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today* with curator Jennifer Scanlan as your guide.

Do We Need Exhibitions Just for Women? Examining the Specialization of Exhibitions by Gender

Thursday, May 7, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Free with Pay-What-You-Wish Admission

In recent years, institutions and galleries have begun to present exhibitions and programming that focus exclusively on women artists, from MoMA's yearlong exhibition *Designing Modern Women 1890–1990* to feminist art conferences and MAD's exhibition *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today*. This focus on female artists has opened up questions about the effects, negative and positive, of grouping creative designers and artists by gender. Gathering curators, artists and academics, this panel discussion explores how exhibitions and institutions organize and shape the perception of creative makers through the categories of gender.

Women in Industrial Design: A Changing Field?

Thursday, May 21, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Free with Pay-What-You-Wish Admission

In certain areas of the design world—interiors, textiles and tableware—women have been extremely successful. In others—namely furniture and product design—they have been conspicuously absent. This panel takes a look at the past, present and future of women in design. Curators, industry leaders, teachers, journalists and designers examine why women continue to make up such a small segment of sectors of industrial design and debate whether the immediate future promises any change.

Designing Women: Women Who Design Womenswear

Talk Series with Jeremy Lewis, Editor-in-Chief and Founder of *Garmento* zine

Thursdays, April 30, May 28, June 18 and July 9, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Tickets are available for \$12 (\$8 members and students) and may be purchased online [here](#) or by calling 800.838.3006.

Rachel Comey

Thursday, April 30, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Laura Cramer and Starr Hout (APIECE APART)

Thursday, May 28, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Mona Kowalska (A DÉTACHER)

Thursday, June 18, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Ryan Roche

Thursday, July 9, 2015 - 7:00 pm

Resourcing the Handweaver's Pattern Book

Thursdays, June 18, July 16 and August 20, 2015 - 6:30 pm

Free with Pay-What-You-Wish Admission

First published in 1944, *A Handweaver's Pattern Book* collects 345 threadings, tie-ups and treadlings for a variety of weave structures. It has become a cult classic for the medium, used for inspiration in traditional weaving techniques, as well as the basis for contemporary art as seen in the installation by Polly Apfelbaum on view in *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today*. Taking *A Handweaver's Pattern Book* as source material, artist Debra Rapoport leads free, drop-in, hands-on making salons, where novices and experts alike will make their own contemporary creations using weaving techniques and a variety of traditional and nontraditional materials.

My Studio Is a Small Business: Professional Practice for Designers

Saturdays, May 23, June 20, June 27, July 11 and August 15, 2015 - 1:00 pm
Tickets are available for \$20 (\$15 members and students) and may be purchased online [here](#) or by calling 800.838.3006.

Many designers are taught the techniques to craft exemplary work, but not how to run a sustainable business. This series of afternoon-long seminar courses on the entrepreneurship of design studios gives an introduction to the many aspects of running a successful small business in today's market. Focused on topics from creating a brand, marketing and pricing to building a pop-up shop, each afternoon lesson will include active learning as well as provide online resources to continue deepening understanding.

Creating a Brand and Awareness

Saturday, May 23, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Creating a Pop-Up Shop

Saturday, June 20, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Pricing for Profit and Sustainability

Saturday, June 27, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Product Photography

Saturday, July 11, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Marketing Your Work Online

Saturday, August 15, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Sun and Screens: Workshops in Screen Printing Summer Fashion

Saturdays, June 13, July 18 and August 8, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Tickets are available for \$75 (\$65 members) and may be purchased online [here](#) or by calling 800.838.3006.

Silkscreened Patterned Scarves

Saturday, June 13, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Tricolor Silkscreened Summer Beach Bags

Saturday, July 18, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Summer Wraps with Silkscreened Abstractions

Saturday, August 8, 2015 - 1:00 pm

Studio Sunday

Sundays, June 7 and September 13, 2015 - 2:00 pm

Free with Museum Admission

Imagine what it would be like to create artwork using metal. Would your metal sculpture be strong and shiny? Wire-wrapped or braided? Stationary or in motion? Wearable or mounted on the wall? Explore how many important women used metal to make their artwork by visiting the exhibition *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today*, and create your own metal artwork inspired by the work of historic designer Eva Zeisel and contemporary works by Front Design.

Open to ages 6 and up, this intergenerational workshop is included with museum admission for families to work with artist-educators, who provide insight into creative processes, inspired by MAD's exhibitions.

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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#Pathmakers #MADmuseum

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