



museum of arts and design

**ARTIST LAUREN KALMAN COVERS JEWELRY CASES
FROM MUSEUM'S PERMANENT COLLECTION
IN OVER 2,000 GOLDEN BRASS KUDZU LEAVES**

Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful...
October 20, 2016–March 15, 2017



NEW YORK, NY (October 14, 2016) – From October 20, 2016, to March 15, 2017, the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) presents *Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful...* Taking up the subject of gold, specifically its use in jewelry and adornment, the installation by metalsmith and performance artist Lauren Kalman is the second POV exhibition in MAD's Tiffany & Co. Foundation Jewelry Gallery.

The title refers to Austrian architect Adolf Loos' 1908 treatise "Ornament and Crime," an essay that has been called one of the most radical polemics of design criticism in the twentieth century. In it, Loos declares decoration regressive, degenerate, primitive, and criminal—characteristics he associates with women and minorities, and makes synonymous with moral decay. He advocates instead for a new aesthetic based on rational and unornamented design, which became known as Western-European modernism.

In Kalman's installation, she protests Loos' spare aesthetic and commits a "crime" by covering the inside and outside of MAD's upright white jewelry cases in thousands of golden brass

leaves. They weave in and around modernist and contemporary jewelry pieces from MAD's collection, upending the minimalist austerity of the gallery.

To create the installation, Kalman surveyed MAD's jewelry collection and chose over 60 gold pieces from the midcentury forward. Gold as a decorative metal is rich in symbolism, representative of luxury, power, wealth, and sentiment. It is the material of choice in mythology and fairy tales to signify transformation and magic. While modernist art jewelers rejected it for these reasons, contemporary artists have been playing with these meanings ever since.

To represent the modernist studio jeweler's rejection of gold, Kalman highlights pieces by Ronald Hayes Pearson and Margaret De Patta. The installation includes gold masterpieces by John Paul Miller, Margret Craver, and Irena Brynner, as well as subversive works by Otto Künzli, J. Fred Woell, and Gijs Bakker. Works by Eunmi Chun and Judy Kensley McKie explore medieval alchemy, the practice of turning ordinary substances into gold, while pieces by Lola Brooks and Frank Tjepkema celebrate tropes of love and eternity.

"Lauren Kalman's intervention is a sculptural and tactile critique of modernism," said MAD's Assistant Curator Barbara Paris Gifford, "deftly considering both sexuality and class through the lens of design history."

"MAD's jewelry collection holds amazing pieces by artists who are both contemporaries I admire and historical innovators who have influenced the field," Kalman said. "It has been a thrill to be able to respond to these objects with this POV installation."

Kalman employs her golden leaves as representative of the leaves of kudzu, an invasive vine species that engulfs, spreads, and creates new decorative forms wherever it thrives. As guest curator and installation designer, the artist recontextualizes the jewelry gallery at MAD in an act that is, similarly to the invasive kudzu, both beautiful and suffocating. Kalman further challenges Loos' equation of decoration and femininity in her image and video work made for the exhibition. Through the purity of gold, contrasted with the blunt physicality of her own body, she claims the feminine as a position of power rather than shame.

MAD's POV series invites guests' perspectives on the Museum's permanent collection through the lens of their own practices. *Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful...* is organized by Assistant Curator Barbara Paris Gifford.

Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful... is part of MAD Transformations, a series of six exhibitions presented this fall that address artists who have transformed and continue to transform our perceptions of traditional craft mediums. Building upon the exhibition *Voultkos: The Breakthrough Years*, which celebrates the work of an artist known for drastically changing the way clay is categorized as an art material and discipline, the MAD Transformations exhibitions consider fiber, clay, and jewelry and metals—disciplines (along with glass and wood) that compose the bedrock of the Museum of Arts and Design's founding mission and collection, and that continue to morph in the hands of contemporary artists today.

EXHIBITION CREDITS

Support for *Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful...* is generously provided by Michele and Marty Cohen, Rotasa Foundation, Susan and Larry Ach, Nancy and David Solomon, and Janet and John Winter.

SCREENING AND Q&A

Lauren Kalman: The Museum of Broken Desires

Friday, October 14, 2016 – 7:00 pm

\$10 general / \$5 members and students

The Theater at MAD

Tickets: <http://tickets.madmuseum.org/public/loader.asp?target=hall.asp?event=2587>

This event includes a screening of Kalman's video work from throughout her career, showcasing her interdisciplinary process with a focus on her sculpture and performative works. The artist will introduce the works and stay for a Q&A with Assistant Curator Barbara Paris Gifford.

"The Museum of Broken Desires" (2015)

"Constellation" (2011)

"Hard Wear" (2006–2009)

"Spectacular" (2012)

"Corpus, Figure, Skate" (2008)

"Certainly Red" (2009)

"Dress Up Dress Down: Hanging by Teeth" (2007)

"The Museum of Broken Desires" (2015)

"The Museum of Broken Desires" explores performance and objects as projections of infatuation. It looks at traditional modes of conveying and codifying displays of power on individual and monumental scales.

"Constellation" (2011)

"Constellation" features star-like LED lights that are programmed to illuminate the back of a model, in a manner similar to the spread of a skin rash.

"Hard Wear" (2006–2009)

Gold, as the image of perfection, is juxtaposed with the reality of bodily corruption in "Hard Wear." When gold is presented in perishable or unattractive forms, its perceived inherent qualities of permanence and beauty become unreliable.

"Spectacular" (2012)

"Spectacular" is a critical investigation into the depiction of illness, stigmas of illness, and sexualization of the abnormal in both contemporary and nineteenth-century visual culture.

"Corpus, Figure, Skate" (2008)

"Corpus, Figure, Skate" relates the subconscious desire to reunite physicality with the body, despite the body's attempts to repress it. A roller skate is used as a symbol for the body's denied physicality.

"Certainly Red" (2009)

"Certainly Red" combines grotesque, undesirable aspects of the body with objects we consider beautiful. The work explores how the pursuit of human beauty has left its mark on the body. This pursuit becomes blurred as the objects approach disfigurement.

"Dress Up Dress Down: Hanging by Teeth" (2007)

"Dress Up Dress Down" depicts the transgression of the physical body despite attempts to mold it. As the piece progresses, gender binaries disintegrate, skin is revealed, fluids are spilled, and the individual is erased.

Lauren Kalman: The Museum of Broken Desires is co-curated by Katerina Llanes, former Manager of Public Programs, and Carson Parish, Audio-Visual Coordinator and Film Programmer, in conjunction with the exhibition *Lauren Kalman: But if the Crime Is Beautiful...*

ABOUT LAUREN KALMAN

Lauren Kalman is a visual artist based in Detroit. Her practice is invested in contemporary craft, video, photography, and performance. Her work investigates beauty, adornment, body image, and the built environment. Raised in the Midwest, Kalman completed her BFA with a focus in Metals from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and her MFA in Art and Technology at the Ohio State University. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Beijing World Art Museum, among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Detroit Institute of Art. She is an Assistant Professor of Art and Art History at Wayne State University.

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. The Museum will be celebrating its Diamond Jubilee 60th Anniversary this year.

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Image captions:

Lauren Kalman, *But if the Crime Is Beautiful...* (*Strangers to the Garden*) installation, 2016. Courtesy of the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, PA.

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