

## The Museum of Arts and Design Hopes a Biennial Will Help Brighten Things Up

Benjamin Sutton, Tuesday, April 8, 2014



*La Ciudad Frondosa* (2011–2012), a hand-embroidered tapestry by Argentine duo Chiachio & Giannone, will be featured in "New Territories: Laboratories for Design, Craft, and Art in Latin America." Museum purchase with funds provided by Nanette L. Laitman, 2014.

Photo: courtesy Museum of Arts and Design

The [Museum of Arts and Design](#) (MAD) has had a tough century so far. In 2002 it made the semantically controversial decision to change names, from American Craft Museum—thereby earning the ire of the craft community—and in 2008 it moved to 2 Columbus Circle, radically altering the building, much to the dismay of preservation-minded observers. Its former director, Holly Hotchner, the driving force behind those transformations, left in April of 2013. Glenn Adamson took over in October, and already he's re-energizing the institution with plans for a new biennial, an ambitious survey of an entire continent's emerging designers, and a slew of shows honoring MAD's history.

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“Our program is really focused on makers and making, but we are also a museum about the creative economy,” Adamson, who previously worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum and wrote [a highly critical article](#) about MAD for *Art in America*, said this week during a luncheon at the Columbus Circle institution. “It would be great if our exhibitions were covered in the business pages just as often as they are in the arts pages.” That may come to pass, as MAD is launching a biennial exhibition, the first edition of which will highlight the work of 100 artists, artisans, fabricators, and other assorted “makers” based in New York City. That exhibition is will open on July 1 and run through October 12.

“It is as much an event as an exhibition, and it has the excitement of a summer festival,” Adamson boasted. The curator is MAD’s director of public programs, Jake Yuzna—collaborating with a selection jury chaired by Murray Moss and including Joe Ahearn, Lisa Dent, and Robert Wilson, who looked over hundreds of nominated artists—and has designs on virtually every available corner of the museum.



Misha Kahn, *Pig Bench* (2012).  
Photo: Misha Kahn.

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Installation view of "Re: Collection."  
Photo: Benjamin Sutton.

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In the more immediate future, the museum will pay tribute to its founder, Aileen Osborne Webb, with the exhibition “What Would Mrs. Webb Do?,” opening in September 2014. And, in a similar spirit, the newly opened exhibition “[Re: Collection](#)” tracks the career of MAD’s recently retired chief curator David McFadden, showcasing works the institution acquired during his 16-year tenure, including an incredible tapestry from [Judy Chicago](#) and Audrey Cowan’s *Holocaust Project* series (1993) and a cabinet of Quaker dishes by [James Turrell](#), Nicholas Mosse, and Bill Burke. MAD’s prospects are looking up thanks to this mix of expansive surveys and inwardly focused shows.

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