

COOPER HEWITT

2 E 91ST STREET
NEW YORK NY 10128

PHONE 212.849.8400
FAX 212.849.8401
COOPERHEWITT.ORG

MEDIA ONLY

GREGORY GESTNER
212.849.8420
GESTNERG@SI.EDU

JENNIFER NORTHROP
212.849.2954
NORTHROPJ@SI.EDU

STAFF BIOS

CURATORIAL

CARA MCCARTY **CURATORIAL DIRECTOR**

Since 2007, Cara McCarty has been Cooper Hewitt's Curatorial Director, where she directs the museum's curatorial vision, oversees its four curatorial departments, plans for collections management and acquisitions, and leads exhibition planning. She has also served as a member of the task force for the museum's renovation, and was involved in all decisions related to the new space, from the overall master plan to the display cases.

From 1992 to 2007, McCarty was curator and head of the department of decorative arts and design at the Saint Louis Art Museum, where she developed the museum's 20th- and 21st-century design collection and organized major design exhibitions. McCarty also served on the oversight committee for the museum's 2013 expansion, designed by David Chipperfield.

McCarty's recent exhibitions and accompanying publications include "Tools: Extending Our Reach" (co-curated with Matilda McQuaid), "Why Design Now?: National Design Triennial," "Currents 101: Patrick Jouin," "Tadao Ando: Architect," "Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles" (also co-curated with McQuaid), and "Masks: Faces of Culture."

Prior to her tenure in St. Louis, McCarty held several curatorial positions in the department of architecture and design at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. There, she organized a number of exhibitions and wrote the accompanying publications, including "Modern Masks and Helmets," "Information Art: Diagramming Microchips," "Designs for Independent Living," and "Mario Bellini: Designer."

McCarty holds a bachelor's degree in art and architectural history from Stanford University, and pursued graduate studies in art history at Hunter College. From 2004 to 2005, she was a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

MATILDA MCQUAID **DEPUTY CURATORIAL DIRECTOR, HEAD OF TEXTILES**

As Deputy Curatorial Director and Head of the Textiles Department at Cooper Hewitt, Matilda McQuaid organizes national and international exhibitions and publications, while overseeing one of the world's premier textile collections—including more than 27,000 textiles produced over 2,000 years, beginning with the Han Dynasty of China.

Since joining the museum in 2002, McQuaid has curated a number of critically acclaimed exhibitions, including "Josef + Anni Albers: Designs for Living," "Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance" and "Color Moves: Art and Fashion by Sonia Delaunay." She co-curated "Tools: Extending Our Reach," one of Cooper Hewitt's inaugural exhibitions, with Cara McCarty.

McQuaid came to Cooper Hewitt after a fifteen-year tenure at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, where she served as a curatorial assistant and then associate curator. She curated more

than thirty exhibitions at MoMA, including “Shigeru Ban: A Paper Arch,” “Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles,” and “Lilly Reich: Designer and Architect.”

An accomplished author and editor in the fields of art, architecture, and design, McQuaid’s publications include *Tools: Extending Our Reach*; *Shigeru Ban Architect*; *Envisioning Architecture: Drawings from The Museum of Modern Art*; *Structure and Surface: Contemporary Japanese Textiles*; *Architecture: A Place for Women*; *Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance*; and *National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?*

McQuaid holds a master’s degree in architectural history from the University of Virginia and a bachelor’s degree in art history from Bowdoin College.

SARAH COFFIN

CURATOR, HEAD OF PRODUCT DESIGN AND DECORATIVE ARTS

Sarah Coffin was appointed Curator and Head of the Product Design and Decorative Arts Department at Cooper Hewitt in 2004. She is responsible for organizing national and international exhibitions, publications, and education programs, as well as overseeing the development of the department’s collection.

She served as project manager for the inaugural permanent collection exhibition, curator of the Models and Prototypes gallery exhibition and co-curator of “Passion for the Exotic: Lockwood de Forest, Frederic Church” with Gail Davidson. She recently curated “Set in Style: The Jewelry of Van Cleef & Arpels” and was principal author of its catalogue, and has served as in-house curator and essay author for a number of other exhibitions.

A distinguished expert in the field of 17th- and 18th-century decorative and applied arts, Coffin has worked extensively on 18th-century and Arts and Crafts Movement English and American silver and furniture, objects of vertu, portrait miniatures, antique jewelry, and chess sets. She was a specialist in gold boxes at Sotheby’s for more than 25 years.

Earlier in her career, Coffin worked in the European sculpture and decorative arts department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in the department of furniture and woodwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Coffin holds a bachelor’s degree in art and architectural history from Yale University and a master’s degree in art and architectural history from Columbia University. She has taught and lectured at NYU, George Washington University, and Yale.

GAIL S. DAVIDSON

CURATOR, HEAD OF DRAWINGS, PRINTS, AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Dr. Gail S. Davidson joined Cooper Hewitt’s Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design Department as Assistant Curator in 1987, becoming Curator in 2002. Most recently, Davidson partnered with her curatorial colleagues in readying the exhibitions “Making Design” and “Hewitt Sisters Collect,” and co-curated “Passion for the Exotic: Lockwood de Forest, Frederic Church” with Sarah Coffin.

During her tenure, Davidson has curated six exhibitions, including “Frederic Church, Winslow Homer, and Thomas Moran: Tourism and the American Landscape,” the traveling exhibition “House Proud: 19th-Century Watercolor Interiors from the Thaw Collection,” and co-curated

“Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730–2008.” She was a lead author of three books in connection with these exhibitions.

Davidson has increased the museum’s works-on-paper holdings with major acquisitions, including 1,500 Wiener Werkstätte drawings for textiles and wallpapers; design and architecture drawings by such figures as Ilonka Karasz, Joris Laarman, Richard Meier, and Louis Kahn, among others; and acquired 420 posters between 2000 and 2014.

In addition to lecturing throughout the U.S. and abroad, Davidson is a member of the Print Council of America, the American Association of Museum Curators, and the Exhibition Committee of the Joseph Gallery, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She received her Ph.D. from Harvard University in the area of 17th- and 18th-century French drawings and prints.

ELLEN LUPTON

SENIOR CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Ellen Lupton is Senior Curator of Contemporary Design at Cooper Hewitt. After joining the museum in 1992, she mounted her first exhibition, “Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office.” Since then, she has organized numerous exhibitions, publications, and public programs at the museum, including the inaugural exhibitions “Beautiful Users” and the Process Lab, as well as “Graphic Design—Now in Production,” co-organized by Cooper Hewitt and the Walker Art Center, “Mixing Messages: Graphic Design and Contemporary Culture,” “Letters from the Avant-Garde” and “Skin: Surface, Substance + Design.”

Lupton, a renowned graphic designer, also serves as director of the graphic design MFA program at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, where she has authored numerous books on design processes, including the bestselling *Thinking With Type*; *Graphic Design Thinking*; and *Graphic Design: The New Basics*. Her latest book is *Type on Screen: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Developers, and Students*.

Lupton holds a bachelor’s degree from The Cooper Union and a doctorate in communication design from the University of Baltimore. She received the AIGA gold medal for lifetime achievement in 2007.

CYNTHIA E. SMITH

CURATOR OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DESIGN

Cynthia E. Smith serves as Cooper Hewitt’s Curator of Socially Responsible Design. Trained as an industrial designer, Smith integrates her work experience with her advocacy on human rights and social justice issues, leading multidisciplinary design and planning projects for cultural institutions for over a decade. Smith is responsible for organizing “Design for the Other 90%” series, which aims to address global social issues with functional and affordable design solutions for the majority of the world’s population. The inaugural exhibition was followed by “Design with the Other 90%: CITIES,” shown at the United Nations. She is now working on “Design with the Other 90%: USA” (opening June 2016), which has taken her around the country researching the intersection of poverty, prosperity, innovation, and design in America’s communities.

She has co-authored *The Politics of Genocide: U.S. Rhetoric vs. Inaction in Darfur* for the *Kennedy School Review*, co-organized the *Social Impact Design Summit* and public forum with the National Endowment for the Arts, and co-curated “Why Design Now?: National Design Triennial.”



Smith joined the museum after earning a graduate degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Named a "20/20 New Pioneer" by *Icon* design magazine and one of *Metropolis* magazine's "next generation of curators," Smith has served on numerous international design juries and lectured widely on socially responsible design.

SUSAN BROWN

ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF TEXTILES

An Associate Curator, Susan Brown joined Cooper Hewitt in 2001. She has worked on a number of exhibitions, including curating "Fashioning Felt" and co-curating and editing the catalogue for "Color Moves: Art and Fashion by Sonia Delaunay" with Matilda McQuaid. Additional exhibitions include "Quicktakes: Rodarte" with Gregory Krum, "Solos: Matali Crasset," and "Extreme Textiles: Designing for High Performance" with Matilda McQuaid.

Currently, she is working with architect David Adjaye on his upcoming exhibition for the "Selects" series (opening June 2015), in which the museum invites guest curators to create installations drawn from the Cooper Hewitt collection. The first awardee of the Bill Moggridge Professional Development Program Grant, Brown recently traveled to Japan to study shibori, a type of indigo resist-dyeing.

Brown has a master's degree from the Museum Studies: Costume and Textiles program at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She has written and lectured extensively on the topic of felt, including lecturing regularly for the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU. She also teaches in the History of Design and Curatorial Studies masters program offered by Cooper Hewitt and Parsons, The New School for Design. Currently, she serves on the board of the Textile Society of America.

LUCY COMMONER

HEAD OF CONSERVATION, SENIOR TEXTILE CONSERVATOR

Lucy Commoner joined Cooper Hewitt in 1977, and currently serves as Head of Conservation and Senior Textile Conservator. She is responsible for the conservation and preservation of the museum's collection of more than 210,000 decorative and applied arts objects, ranging from the second century BC through the 21st century.

During her tenure at the museum, Commoner has been a member of the task force for the renovation and expansion project to create an off-site study, storage, and conservation facility for the museum. She also has served in a curatorial capacity and published several exhibition catalogues, including "Folding Fans in the Collection of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum" and "Multiple Choice: From Sample to Product." Her areas of expertise include folding fans, fiber identification and microscopy, exhibition and mounting techniques for textiles, the construction and maintenance of a preservation environment, and museum storage systems, for which she designed the industry standard.

Commoner is an adjunct professor at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts Conservation Center, and has lectured and published extensively on textile conservation. She holds a bachelor's degree in art history and studio art from Brown University, and studied weaving and textile design at Rhode Island School of Design.

ANDREA LIPPS **ASSISTANT CURATOR**

An Assistant Curator focused on contemporary design, Andrea Lipps joined Cooper Hewitt in 2008, and is co-organizing the forthcoming exhibition “Design Triennial” (opening December 2015). During her tenure at the museum, she has contributed to numerous books and exhibitions, including “Design With the Other 90%: CITIES,” “Why Design Now?: National Design Triennial,” and “Design for the Other 90%.”

Prior to joining Cooper Hewitt, Lipps worked in the architecture and design department at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, assisting on “Design and the Elastic Mind” and “Home Delivery: Fabricating the Modern Dwelling.” She has published articles in leading design magazines, served on international design juries, and has taught in the History of Design and Curatorial Studies masters program offered by Cooper Hewitt and Parsons, The New School for Design, as well as in the MFA program at the School of Visual Arts.

She holds a master’s degree in history of decorative arts and design from Parsons/Cooper Hewitt, where she wrote her thesis in design history on 20th-century post-disaster design, integrating her interest in design with earlier work in international human rights. She also holds a bachelor’s degree in French, sociology, and women’s studies from the University of Michigan.

GREGORY HERRINGSHAW **ASSISTANT CURATOR OF WALLCOVERINGS**

Gregory Herringshaw has worked at Cooper Hewitt for more than twenty years. Currently, he serves as the Assistant Curator in charge of the Wallcoverings Department. In this capacity, he is responsible for the continued growth and preservation of the collection, ongoing research, and making the collection accessible to staff and scholars. Cooper Hewitt’s wallcoverings collection is the largest in the country, containing more than 10,000 pieces dating from the late 17th century to the present.

During his time at the museum, Herringshaw has curated the exhibitions “Wall Stories: Children’s Wallpaper and Books” and “Artist-Designed Wallpapers.” He has been working on the Immersion Room, a new high-tech space that will allow visitors to digitally view Cooper Hewitt’s wallcoverings as never before.

Herringshaw has lectured on the effect of technology on surface design, and has a special interest in early 20th-century American wallpaper. He received an MA in museum studies from the Fashion Institute of Technology and a BFA in studio arts from Wayne State University.

CAITLIN CONDELL **CURATORIAL ASSISTANT OF DRAWINGS, PRINTS, AND GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Caitlin Condell joined Cooper Hewitt in 2012 as the Curatorial Assistant for Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design. She organized “Maira Kalman Selects” and is working on the upcoming exhibition “How Posters Work” (opening May 2015).

Before joining the museum, Condell worked at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, where she curated the exhibition “Making Room: The Space Between Two and Three Dimensions.” Previously, she worked at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, where she assisted on the exhibitions “Picasso: Themes and Variations,” “William Kentridge: Five Themes,” “Fluxus Preview,”

“Kirchner and the Berlin Street,” “In & Out of Amsterdam,” and “Impressions from South Africa, 1965 to Now.”

Condell has contributed to numerous books, including the forthcoming *How Posters Work* and the newly published *Making Design*, created in collaboration with renowned book designer Irma Boom. She received her master’s degree in the history of art from Williams College, and holds a bachelor’s degree in art history and creative writing from Oberlin College.

EDUCATION

CAROLINE PAYSON

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

As Director of Education, Caroline Payson is responsible for conveying the mission of Cooper Hewitt and the importance of design in everyday life through education programs that serve a wide range of audiences, including teachers, students, professional designers, scholars, and the general public; creating and managing signature programs onsite, locally, and nationally; and serving as education content director of the museum’s website.

Payson oversees all of the Education Department’s major initiatives, including the website’s Educator’s Resource Center (400 standards-based lessons in all curriculum subject areas and videos modeling best practices); Design in the Classroom; the Cooper Hewitt Design Center in Harlem; and the National Design Awards and National Design Week, which connects the public to the National Design Awards through a series of public programs, the *People’s Design Award* online, and 300 events nationwide.

Her international work has included a five-year partnership with the Queensland Government to extend design education into classrooms; lectures and workshops at The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, The Australia Museum, State Library of Queensland, State Library of Victoria, The Swedish National Museum, and the National Design Museum, Zurich; and short-term assignments from the US Department of State in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Bucharest, Romania; Pretoria, South Africa; and Moscow, Russia.

Prior to joining the museum, Payson served as director of educational services for Maryland Public Television, and in a number of faculty and administrative positions at the New School University/Parsons School of Design, including associate dean and chair for liberal studies. She received her master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University and her undergraduate degree from Sarah Lawrence College.

KIM ROBLEDO-DIGA

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

Kim Robledo-Diga oversees exhibition and program interpretation at Cooper Hewitt. She worked on the Process Lab, which offers hands-on experiences for visitors of all ages and abilities, providing opportunities to learn about design and design thinking in fresh, interactive ways.

Previously, Robledo-Diga served as manager of professional development at Cooper Hewitt. In that role she developed and managed Cooper Hewitt’s nationally recognized *Smithsonian Design*

Institute and City of Neighborhoods professional development programs, as well as teacher curricula for K–12 educators nationwide on the innovative pedagogy of design thinking.

Prior to joining Cooper Hewitt, Robledo-Diga was the director of innovation and learning at the Newark Museum, where she developed and executed new strategies for learning experiences to engage the museum’s diverse audience. Robledo-Diga holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art.

HALIMA JOHNSON **YOUTH PROGRAMS MANAGER**

Halima Johnson joined Cooper Hewitt as Youth Programs Manager in 2012. In this role, she administers all of Cooper Hewitt’s *DesignPrep* high school program activities, including the *DesignPrep* teen badging program, the Digital Curators project, and other initiatives for teen programs.

Johnson earned a bachelor’s degree in industrial design from the Rhode Island School of Design. Throughout her high school experience, Johnson grew up at Cooper Hewitt as a teen, attending *DesignPrep* and participating in the earliest iteration of the Cooper Hewitt Scholars program.

MICHELLE CHENG **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

As the Professional Development Manager for Cooper Hewitt, Cheng manages the Design in the Classroom professional development program and provides support for Arts Achieve: Impacting Student Success in the Arts, a project funded by the Investing in Innovation Fund.

Prior to joining the museum, Cheng was director of education at the New Haven Museum, where she designed and implemented education programs for all ages and cultivated relationships with the local community. She has worked at a variety of institutions in the art and history field, including Providence Preservation Society and Newport Restoration Foundation.

Cheng holds a bachelor’s degree in art history and comparative literature from Binghamton University and a master’s degree in art and design education from Rhode Island School of Design.

VASSILIKI GIANNOPOULOS **NATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS MANAGER**

Vassiliki Giannopoulos is the National Design Awards Manager at Cooper Hewitt, overseeing all aspects of the awards, from the nomination through the selection process, as well as the annual awards ceremony and related events during National Design Week.

Prior to joining Cooper Hewitt, Giannopoulos served as public relations director at Creative Arts Workshop, a nonprofit visual art center in New Haven, CT. She has worked in various capacities within the arts, design, and education fields, including with Site Projects, a nonprofit that commissions internationally recognized artists to create public art in New Haven; design atelier The Studio of Martha Burns; New Haven Public Schools; and the Hellenic American Educational Foundation.

Giannopoulos holds a master’s degree in arts administration from Columbia University and a bachelor’s degree from Smith College, where she studied studio art and computer science.

DIGITAL & EMERGING MEDIA

SEB CHAN

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL & EMERGING MEDIA

Seb Chan joined Cooper Hewitt in 2011 and oversees all of the museum's digital renewal efforts, including all web, mobile, and online projects, as well as interactive gallery experiences, digital content, and digital strategy.

Previously, Chan served as head of digital, social, and emerging technologies at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. In that capacity, he led teams that were responsible for the museum's pioneering work in open access, mass collaboration, web metrics, and digital engagement, as well as large-scale Australian cross-sector projects, mobile apps, geo-location services, and other digital experiences.

In addition to his museum work, Chan has worked as a cultural sector consultant with organizations across the world, and was co-author of Culture24's *Lets Get Real* action research projects, which helped evolve data-informed digital decision-making in the UK performing arts and heritage sectors. He serves on several non-profit boards and advisory councils; was a member of the Australian Government's Gov 2.0 Taskforce; and is a regular speaker at digital and cultural sector conferences and events.

For a decade, Chan has also organized and curated electronic art and music festivals and international tours, and was founding editor-in-chief for the long-running music magazine *Cyclic Defrost*. He holds a degree in social work from the University of New South Wales, where he trained as a social researcher.

AARON STRAUP COPE

HEAD OF ENGINEERING

Aaron Straup Cope has been head of engineering at Cooper Hewitt since 2012. In this capacity, he is responsible for the digital infrastructure and systems architecture, including the collections website, the museum's application programming interface (API), interactive technologies, as well as programming.

Prior to joining Cooper Hewitt, Cope worked as a senior engineer at Flickr from 2004 to 2009, where he focused on their geotagging, machine tags, and gallery features. He has also served as design technologist and "director of inappropriate project names" at Stamen Design, where he created the mapping projects "prettymaps" and "map=yes projects."

Previously a member of the Near Future Laboratory, Cope has also served on the advisory board to the Built Works Registry, and was co-director of Revolutionary Technologies for the Spiny Bar History Society. Cope studied painting at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and his work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the NACIS Atlas of Design, and 20x200.