

SPRING 2015

DESIGN JOURNAL

COOPER
HEWITT

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

JUNE 2015

DEAR COOPER HEWITT FRIENDS,

It's been six months since the eagerly awaited reopening of our doors, and we've already broken records—from the number of visitors and memberships to school-program participants. Our three-year renovation and revitalization has brought design enthusiasts of all ages to Cooper Hewitt, eager to play designer in our new interactive galleries. One of our favorite Yelp.com reviews captures the excitement perfectly: "This museum rocks and makes you understand why design is important!"

In March, we were proud to unveil the Pen, a global first that puts the power of design into visitors' hands. This unique technology, made possible by visionary funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies, has completely transformed the museum-going experience. With it, visitors can dive into our permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, collect design objects, and create their own designs as they explore our four floors.

I thank our partners in this one-of-a-kind design endeavor: Local Projects and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, which conceived the idea, and GE, Sistelnetworks, MakeSimply, and Undercurrent, which realized it alongside Cooper Hewitt's own team. It is an honor to have already won two gold Muse Awards from the American Alliance of Museums in the categories of Interpretive Interactive Installations and Video, Film and Computer Animation; a One Club Gold Pencil in the category of Responsive Environment; and an honorable mention at the Museums and the Web conference in the category "Best of the Web."

More galleries means more objects on view, and more curators studying and bringing the gems of the collection out for all to see. Special thank-you to Cooper Hewitt Trustee Elizabeth Ainslie and her husband, Lee, for supporting the hire of

Emily Orr, Cooper Hewitt's new Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary American Design. Among other responsibilities, Emily has had the lucky job of diving into the Donald Deskey and Henry Dreyfuss archives during her first few months.

The final focus of our massive, once-in-a-lifetime renovation and expansion is the Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden, a rare jewel of verdant space in Manhattan. Walter Hood, 2009 National Design Award winner, and his studio are evolving the original Richard Schermerhorn, Jr, garden design from 1901, creating terrace pavers, garden pathways, and a reimagined rockery that ties the garden to its larger context next to Central Park. In addition to aesthetic improvements, the project will address functional issues like irrigation and ample visitor seating.



The garden will be unveiled late this summer and will be open to the public—free of charge—starting at 8:00 a.m. daily, two hours before the museum opens. It will also be home to a bevy of public programs and events. On July 20, Cooper Hewitt will launch its first season of Design Camp. Geared toward children ages 7–12, the camp will offer weeklong design challenges and gallery explorations led by guest designers.

With summer just around the corner, we will be celebrating a brand-new season of exhibitions in addition to new events and programming, so be sure to visit our website regularly. This *Design Journal* issue gives you a sneak peek at what's coming up and what's been going on behind the scenes.

Pilar Viladas, Architecture and Design Editor of *Town & Country* magazine, presents

a fascinating profile of designer Thomas Heatherwick and his London-based studio on the occasion of his first American museum exhibition, *Provocations: The Architecture and Design of Heatherwick Studio*, curated by Cooper Hewitt Deputy Director Brooke Hodge and opening June 24. On June 19, *David Adjaye Selects* opens in the Nancy and Edwin Marks Collection Gallery. Adjaye guest-curates this twelfth exhibition in the Selects series, in which designers from a range of disciplines are invited to mine the Cooper Hewitt collection, and he's chosen fourteen West and Central African textiles to display—most of which will be exhibited for the first time.

Also in this issue, "Inside Conservation" provides a special look at our stellar conservation staff, who have been involved in the renovation and reinstallation of our galleries from the start. And I hope you find inspiration in our 2015 National Design Award winners—a staggeringly talented group chosen by an esteemed jury—who will be honored at the sixteenth National Design Awards Gala on October 15, 2015. I am proud to bestow the 2015 Director's Award on legendary textile designer Jack Lenor Larsen.

The past few months—and years—have been a whirlwind at Cooper Hewitt, and I thank you for your ongoing enthusiasm and support. I look forward to seeing you in the galleries and in the garden, and trust that our offerings will inspire you each time you visit us—in person or online.

Sincerely,

Caroline Baumann,
Director

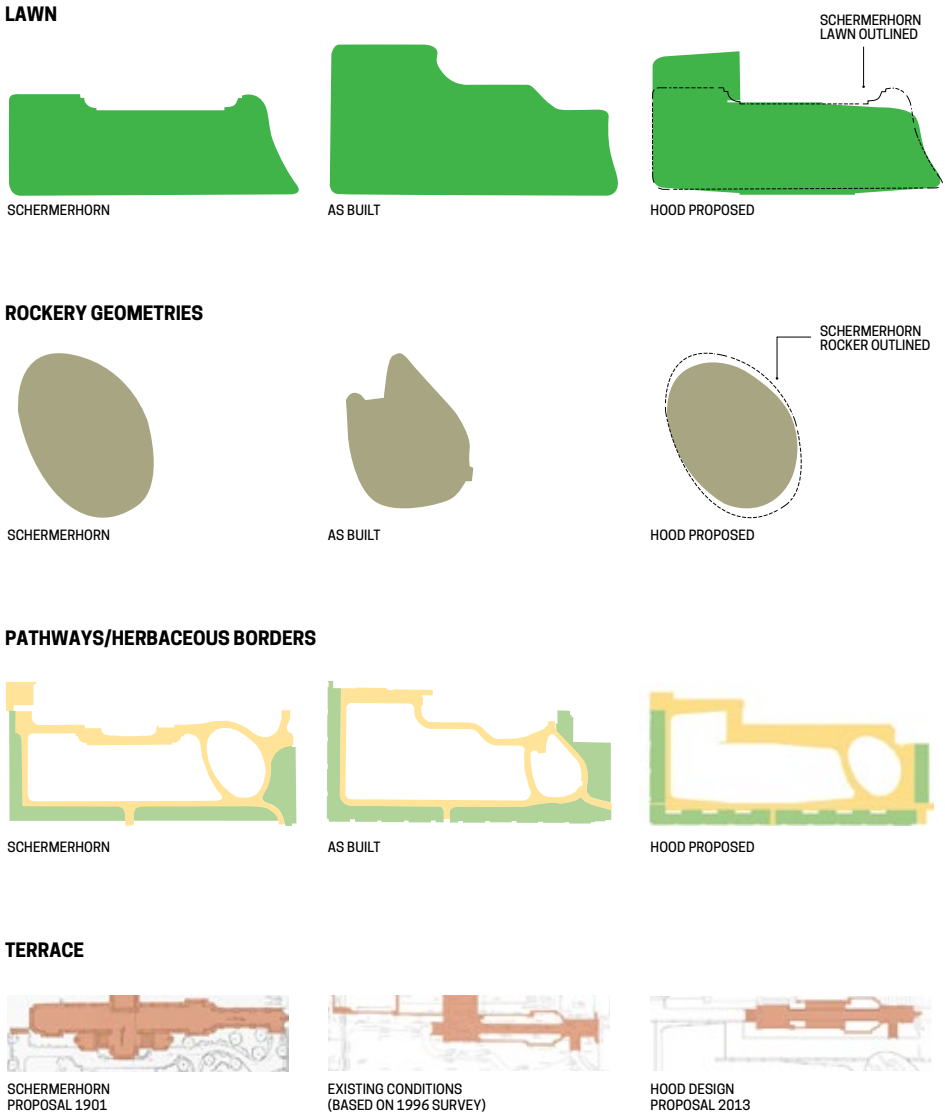
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WALTER HOOD REDESIGN— THE ARTHUR ROSS TERRACE AND GARDEN



In 1901, the garden at the Carnegie Mansion was envisioned as a playland for the Carnegies' five-year-old daughter Margaret. In 1991, in recognition of a major gift from Arthur Ross, the space became known as the Arthur Ross Terrace and Garden. The garden—a rare treasure in the middle of Manhattan—is the final phase of Cooper Hewitt's massive transformation, and will open for all to enjoy in the coming years.

01
The renovated rockery recalls Schermerhorn's unbuilt garden design.



02



02
Diagrams illuminating the differences between Schermerhorn's original plans for the garden, the as-built condition, and the new proposed design.

03
A new sloped walkway brings garden visitors into the lower garden, where the shade of silver leaf Linden trees, movable tables and chairs, and garden planting enliven the space.

American landscape architect Walter Hood, the principal of Hood Design (Oakland, California) and 2009 National Design Award winner, was selected to redesign Cooper Hewitt's garden. Hood has dedicated his career to public garden design, developing community-inclusive landscapes across the country, from San Francisco's M.H. de Young Museum and Oakland's Kapor Center for Social Impact to Curtis "50 Cent" Community Garden in Queens, New York, and Atlanta's Center for Civil and Human Rights.

Hood Design's process is rooted in culture, and, in order to imbue the new space with a sense of place specific to Cooper Hewitt, took into account: Richard Schermerhorn's original 1901 garden design drawings for Andrew Carnegie; the garden's location at the edge of Central Park and creating a contextual relationship between the two green spaces; a range of color and texture that provides seasonal interest; and Cooper Hewitt's diverse and growing programs. Together with RAFT Landscape Architecture, new terrace pavers, garden pathways, plantings, and a reimagined rock garden provide a new landscape experience for the museum. Hood's design and plantings focus on durable materials and hardy species that can withstand frequent use and climate fluctuations.

"Balancing the need for more program space outdoors with the responsibility to honor the historic nature of the garden and mansion was top-of-mind at each phase," says Hood. "We designed new garden spaces around the museum to create opportunities for engagement and discussion." The newly designed exterior face of the garden draws neighbors and visitors with its lighted corner pillars, and through the 90th Street entrance featuring a striking canopy designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro. With the museum's growing audience and free public access to the garden and café, the spaces can accommodate groups of various sizes, from two engaged in an intimate conversation to larger programs and events.

The redesign of the **ARTHUR ROSS TERRACE AND GARDEN** is made possible by major capital funding from The City of New York. Generous support is provided by Nancy Marks. Additional funding is provided by Enid and Lester Morse and the Arthur Ross Endowment Fund.

DAVID ADJAYE: TEXTILES. AFRICA. ARCHITECTURE.



01



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Architect **David Adjaye** curated and designed the twelfth installment of Cooper Hewitt's ongoing *Selects* series—in which prominent artists, writers, architects, and designers are invited to explore and respond to the museum's collection.

Susan Brown, Associate Curator of Textiles, worked with Adjaye on the exhibition and, here, talks to him about his process.

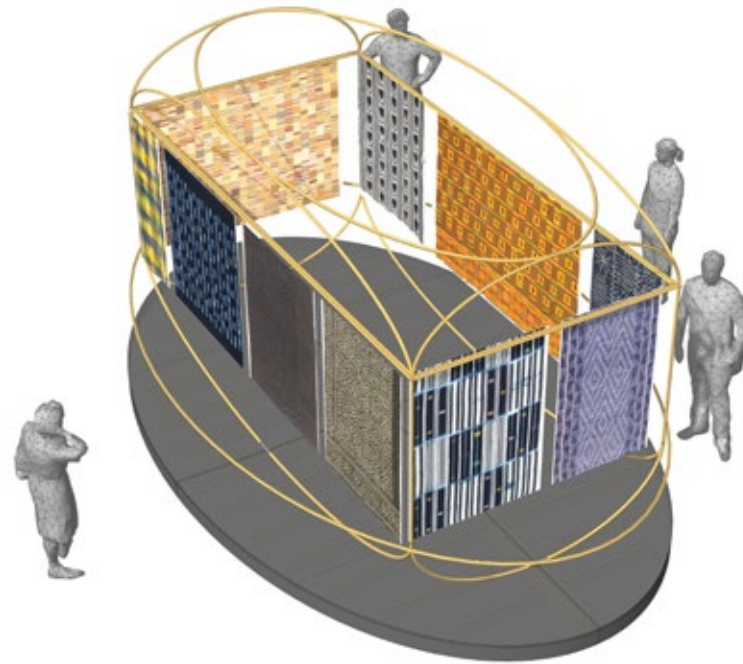
Overseeing offices in London, New York, Shanghai, and Accra, Adjaye is a truly global architect, with projects currently under construction on four continents, including the Smithsonian's new National Museum of African American History and Culture building on the National Mall in Washington, DC. He has earned a reputation for seamlessly blending the aesthetics of African and Islamic architecture with classically austere, modernist design. Born of Ghanaian parents and having visited each of the continent's fifty-four nations as an adult, Adjaye has been deeply inspired by the importance of textiles within the visual culture of Africa. Indeed, their forms and patterns are often reflected in his buildings. For his *Selects* exhibition, he mined the museum's little-known collection of sub-Saharan textiles.

SB: Invited to select among our more than 210,000 design objects, it's easy to imagine feeling overwhelmed, but you were very decisive in your selection. What attracted you to our collection of West African textiles?

DA: In my work, I am very much interested in dismantling overly simplistic narratives about Africa. This was one of the main impetuses behind compiling my book *Adjaye, Africa, Architecture* [2011]: to provide the global community with specific references to the incredible diversity within the continent. Cooper Hewitt's collection of African textiles, which have seen relatively little exposure, felt like an excellent chance to continue this project. These textiles, beyond being incredibly intricate and beautiful, tell an important story of regional specificity. Each of the textiles derives from a unique craft that has emerged from the particular histories and geographies of its makers. If there is any through-line in my body of work, it is exactly this: that art must draw on context to be emotionally resonant and culturally relevant. Otherwise, it is empty.

01
Bògòlanfini woman's wrapper, Bamana peoples, Mali, mid-20th century, Museum purchase through The Grodzins Fund for Textile Acquisitions, 2000-22-2

02
David Adjaye



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"THESE TEXTILES . . . TELL AN IMPORTANT STORY OF REGIONAL SPECIFICITY."

SB: You've designed a beautiful installation for the textiles. Can you describe your response to Andrew Carnegie's Drawing Room (familiarily called the music room)?

DA: The installation was about resisting a passive experience of the textiles. I did not want them to be sprawled out or framed in a staid manner that allowed the works to be objectified or technicalized too much. These textiles were designed to be worn, lived in, and interacted with. I wanted to design something that I felt could encourage visitors to experience that kind of direct emotional relationship with the works rather than to view them as foreign or in any way clinically.

The specifics of the form took its housing room as inspiration. I was immediately struck by the music room's incredible woodwork, the pattern of which I drew from when designing the cylinders on which to hang the fabrics. It was a way for me to capture the spirit of the room while still offering a new way to experience it, to bring its architectural elements into three dimensions.

SB: The project has also resulted in a collaboration with Knoll on a line of fabrics

inspired by the ones in the exhibition, which will launch in September. Had you ever thought of designing textiles? How does it compare to designing buildings?

DA: Working with Knoll Textiles's creative director Dorothy Cosonas on these textiles has been an incredibly exciting opportunity for me. Creative collaboration with artists and designers from different disciplines is not only very stimulating for me, but it opens up a discourse about the art of making things that often provides sources of inspirations for my building designs. These textiles are very much geared toward space making and atmosphere; considering geometry, material, and texture for these purposes shares a design logic with architecture. This is why I have never drawn a distinction between the world of art and the practice of architecture; they are intrinsically linked.

However, architecture is an inherently public endeavour—the successes and failures of each stage are highly visible. It is an amazing luxury to be able to manipulate and sculpt—at full scale—as you go along, to make changes and adjustments in real time. I took a real delight in the samples from the mills, the mock-ups, and the sketches.



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Susan Brown is Associate Curator of Textiles at Cooper Hewitt.

David Adjaye *Selects*: Works from the Permanent Collection is on view in the Nancy and Edwin Marks Collection Gallery June 19, 2015–February 7, 2016.

DAVID ADJAYE SELECTS is made possible by the Marks Family Foundation Endowment Fund.

03
Rendering of display structure for *David Adjaye Selects*.

04
Rendering of Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (current).

COOPER HEWITT LABS

David Adjaye Selects will be the first exhibition at Cooper Hewitt to feature **Object Phone**. The service allows visitors to access exhibition-related text in audio or SMS format using their mobile phones. Object phone is a pilot project produced by Cooper Hewitt Labs. For more information please go to objectphone.cooperhewitt.org.

INSIDE CONSERVATION:

REOPENING COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

01

By **Lucy Commoner**, with Perry Choe, Kira Eng-Wilmot, and Annie Hall

HISTORY OF CONSERVATION AT COOPER HEWITT

Cooper Hewitt has a long and deep history of caring for its collection. Although there were no conservators on staff when the museum was in its original home at the Cooper Union, the curators were active participants in the preservation of the collection. Following the model of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London—one of the institutions that inspired the founding Hewitt sisters to create Cooper Hewitt in 1897—the curators served both as interpreters and “keepers” of the collection, responsible for its accessibility, organization, and safe storage.

After joining the Smithsonian in 1967, and opening its doors in the mansion in 1976, Cooper Hewitt officially added its first staff conservator: Lucy Commoner, Textile Conservator. Soon after, paper conservator Konstanze Bachmann joined, and decades later—through an endowment challenge grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—the museum hired an objects conservator, Annie Hall.

Today, the museum has four staff conservators who are responsible for the preservation of the collection, operating out of four conservation laboratories located on the museum’s New York City campus and at an off-site research and storage center. The team includes: Lucy Commoner, Head of Conservation; Perry Choe, Senior Paper Conservator; Kira Eng-Wilmot, Senior Textile Conservator; and Annie Hall, Senior Objects Conservator.

WHAT DO CONSERVATORS DO?

Cooper Hewitt conservators support the curatorial division as well as the exhibitions and registrar departments to preserve not only the museum’s collection, but also loaned objects while on exhibition and in storage. The conservators analyze and treat objects to maximize their longevity, aesthetic and structural integrity, and technical interpretation through a fascinating combination of science and art.

COOPER HEWITT’S RENOVATION AND REINSTALLATION

The range of responsibilities of the conservation department is wide, and at no time was that more evident than

during the planning and execution of the museum’s renovation and reinstallation. In the first step in this multiphased project, Cooper Hewitt built a new off-site research and storage center that encompasses storage rooms, a conservation laboratory, a photography studio for digitizing the collection, offices, and a curatorial study room. Working with Smithsonian architects, engineers, and security staff, the conservators contributed their expertise to the design of the center, the materials used in its construction, the layout of the storage rooms, and the design and equipping of the conservation laboratory. Once the new off-site facility was complete, the conservators and registrars moved the majority of the collection from the Carnegie Mansion to off-site storage so that the renovation project could begin.

REDESIGNING AND RENOVATING THE CARNEGIE MANSION

The staff conservators were involved in advising on the building restoration aspects of the renovation of the historic mansion, and in creating an appropriate preservation environment within the building, which functions as the primary



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container for the collection. Many of the same building materials and finishes that contribute to interior pollution and an unhealthy environment for people can have detrimental effects on art objects, although objects are often more sensitive than the human body to damage from pollutants. During the renovation process, the conservators approved all the materials that were used for any new interior construction and finishes in the building, and worked on establishing optimum temperature and relative humidity levels in the building for preserving collections, while, at the same time, protecting the historic building and maintaining comfort levels for visitors.

NEW EXHIBITION CASES

Once the building itself meets conservation standards, exhibition cases serve as a secondary container and level of protection from dust and particulates in the air as well as a buffer against any unexpected environmental changes within the building. With a relatively small volume of air in the cases, it is essential to control all the materials within the case to ensure that they are archival quality, have stable longevity, and will not produce volatile corrosive chemicals, such as acids and formaldehyde.

The conservators worked with designers Diller Scofidio + Renfro and case manufacturer Goppion to select conservation-approved materials and finishes. The conservators and exhibition staff explored new approaches for the permanent cases that would facilitate the installation of objects, ensure their support and physical protection, and provide the sustainable flexibility desired by the curatorial staff.

MAINTAINING THE NEW PRESERVATION ENVIRONMENT

The conservators’ basic areas of management in the galleries are light, environment (temperature and relative humidity), and particulates (dust). All of the windows in the mansion are fitted with screens and filtering film to reduce the level of light in the galleries and to block the damaging ultraviolet portion of incoming daylight. The second source of light in the galleries is the new, computer-controlled overhead lighting system. For the first time, the museum is using energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) fixtures as the primary source of interior lighting. The conservators worked with the exhibitions department and lighting designers from Renfro Design Group to select and test the fixtures and to specify exact lighting intensity levels for each object on view.

Cooper Hewitt conservators have established a controlled range of temperature and relative humidity measurements that relate to different seasons of the year and to the requirements of the historic building. The same conditions are maintained in all of the museum’s facilities so that objects can be moved from one location to another without a change in environmental conditions.

Crucial to the maintenance of a stable environment is accurate monitoring. The museum received a generous grant from the Smithsonian Collections Care Initiative to support the purchase of environmental meters and wireless data-logging equipment to measure environmental and light level conditions in the gallery, storage, and collection work spaces throughout the renovated museum.



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Airborne particulates can have an abrasive effect on exposed objects as well as attracting insects and holding moisture. Dust in the museum environment comes from many sources, including visitors’ clothing and carpets in the museum. Exterior sources of dust and pollutants are reduced through special filters within the HVAC (Heating Ventilating and Air Conditioning) system. Interior sources of dust are controlled through good house-keeping, which involves exhibition staff, maintenance, and conservation staff working together to clean platforms, cases, and exposed objects on display. Although not the most glamorous of the conservators’ responsibilities, it is vitally important—in terms of both aesthetics and preservation—and gives the conservators the opportunity to carefully observe objects on display for any signs of damage.

It is this close observation and technical understanding of individual objects that is at the core of what conservators can contribute to any museum project that impacts the collection. Cooper Hewitt’s conservators were very gratified to have been such an integral part of this once-in-a-career opportunity to renovate and reimagine the museum for the future.

01 New exhibition cases in the renovated galleries.

02 Rolled textile storage in the museum’s off-site facility.

03 Contract conservators Kate Fugett and Anne Grady prepare objects at the museum’s off-site conservation lab.

CONSERVATION AT WORK

The reinstallation of the museum included nearly 500 objects from the museum’s permanent collection, each of which required its own level of analysis, treatment, and installation by the conservators.



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ANALYSIS:

TEXTILE CONSERVATION—FIBER IDENTIFICATION IN THE NEW CONSERVATION LAB

Conservators use various methods of scientific analysis to learn more about the objects in their care. Analysis contributes to the examination of an object’s condition over time and informs decisions regarding each object’s treatment and storage, while providing technical information that enhances the curatorial understanding of an object.

One mode of inquiry frequently used for the Cooper Hewitt textile collection is microscopy. A stereo microscope (which offers 5 to 50 times magnification) can be used to look closely at the surface of a textile to determine weave structure and technique as well as to examine damage more closely. Polarizing light microscopy (which provides 100 to 500 times magnification) is employed to identify the type of fibers used to construct the textile, which come from a variety of natural and synthetic sources. Cellulose-based vegetable fibers produced from plants include bast or stem fibers (such as flax, jute, hemp); seed fibers (such as cotton); and leaf fibers (such as sisal and abaca). Animal fibers are protein-based and include silk and the wool or hair of various animals. Examples of synthetic fibers are polyesters, spandex, and nylon. Every fiber type has a unique set of morphological qualities that can be identified under polarizing light microscopy. The medium of each of the textiles on exhibition has been corroborated through microscopy in tandem with the curators’ research, so that a thorough understanding of the object can be communicated to Cooper Hewitt’s visitors.

TREATMENT:

OBJECTS CONSERVATION—THE CONSERVATION TREATMENT OF A BIRDCAGE

One of the objects treated for installation in the new galleries is an eighteenth-century birdcage from China. Primarily produced in the era of Ch’ien Lung, a Chinese ruler known for his artistic sensibility, this birdcage marries beauty and function. Many of the components of the birdcage are ivory, including the cage bars, bowls and feeders, perches, ornaments, and a long, elegant worm feeder. Other materials include bone; metal; jade; amber; enamel; porcelain; carved, lacquered, and inlaid wood; and kingfisher feathers set in gilt metal. There is also a hanging chain of amethyst, jade beads, and jade rings.

04 Components of the Chinese birdcage (1916-26-1 a/jj) separately inventoried and tagged in preparation for shipping to the museum.

05 After treatment: Birdcage (China), 1735–96 and 1880–1910, Gift of Thomas F. Ryan, 1916-26-1-a/jj.

06 Kira Eng-Wilmot, Senior Textile Conservator, performing fiber identification through microscopy.

In preparation for display, a treatment strategy was developed in consultation with the curator, which included cleaning all of the elements and replacing missing parts—such as two of the ivory cage bars—which were replicated with bars made from cast epoxy and painted to match. In keeping with the nature of the birdcage, the intent was to restore the aesthetic integrity of the piece while also providing the correct structural support for stability. Over forty individual pieces were removed from the birdcage for treatment and then separately packed for shipment from the off-site facility to the museum. This required scrupulous documentation notes and reference images to ensure accurate reassembly of the birdcage, the conservator’s final task. The display requirements also included working with the design team to find solutions to support the cage from below, hanging the cord safely from above without taking excessive weight, in order to give the cage the illusion of floating in midair.

INSTALLATION:

PAPER CONSERVATION—A NEW APPROACH TO THE DISPLAY OF WORKS ON PAPER

For the second-floor galleries, which are dedicated to the display of objects from the museum’s permanent collection, the innovative and versatile design of the new exhibition cases allows for a fresh approach to the presentation of collection objects. The new system features pinnable fabric-covered walls that allow for the easy and safe vertical installation of flat objects; a custom bracket for displaying rolled textiles and wallcoverings; and a flexible system of shelves and tables for showcasing 3D objects.

Due to the flexibility of the case design, objects of varied formats (rolled, flat, and 3D) can be shown together within the same protected environment. The conservators and exhibition staff developed the concept of pinnable vertical panels for the case interiors, specifying a thick, high-density polyethylene foam covered with a thinner layer of soft, polyester foam and finally wrapped in the display fabric. All of these materials were tested by conservation for their chemical stability through a type of accelerated aging procedure called the Oddy test.



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With the new system, the conservator mounts flat and rolled objects in situ as opposed to framing works before the installation period. Flat works in mats no longer need to be framed, and rolled objects are no longer mounted in acrylic box frames, offering improved sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency.

TREATMENT:

OBJECTS CONSERVATION—THE CONSERVATION TREATMENT OF A STAIRCASE MODEL

A complex object that presented conservation challenges for the reopening was this staircase model given to the museum in 2007 by Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw. Made in France in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the piece is constructed from carved, joined, turned, bent, and planed oak. The conservator’s examination of the model revealed structural instability, largely due to old and new breaks from failing joints, and a range of aging repairs. The structural

complexity of the curved double staircase design contributed to the near collapse of the second-level balcony, which required the object to be supported while in storage.

The treatment to stabilize the object for exhibition involved a number of steps. Parts of the model were disassembled in order to access the areas to be treated, and the wood was carefully cleaned. Old degraded repairs were removed and the model was reconstructed using archival fill materials and adhesives. The methods and materials were chosen to allow for future “retreat ability” so that any subsequent conservation action would be achievable with minimal change to the original object.

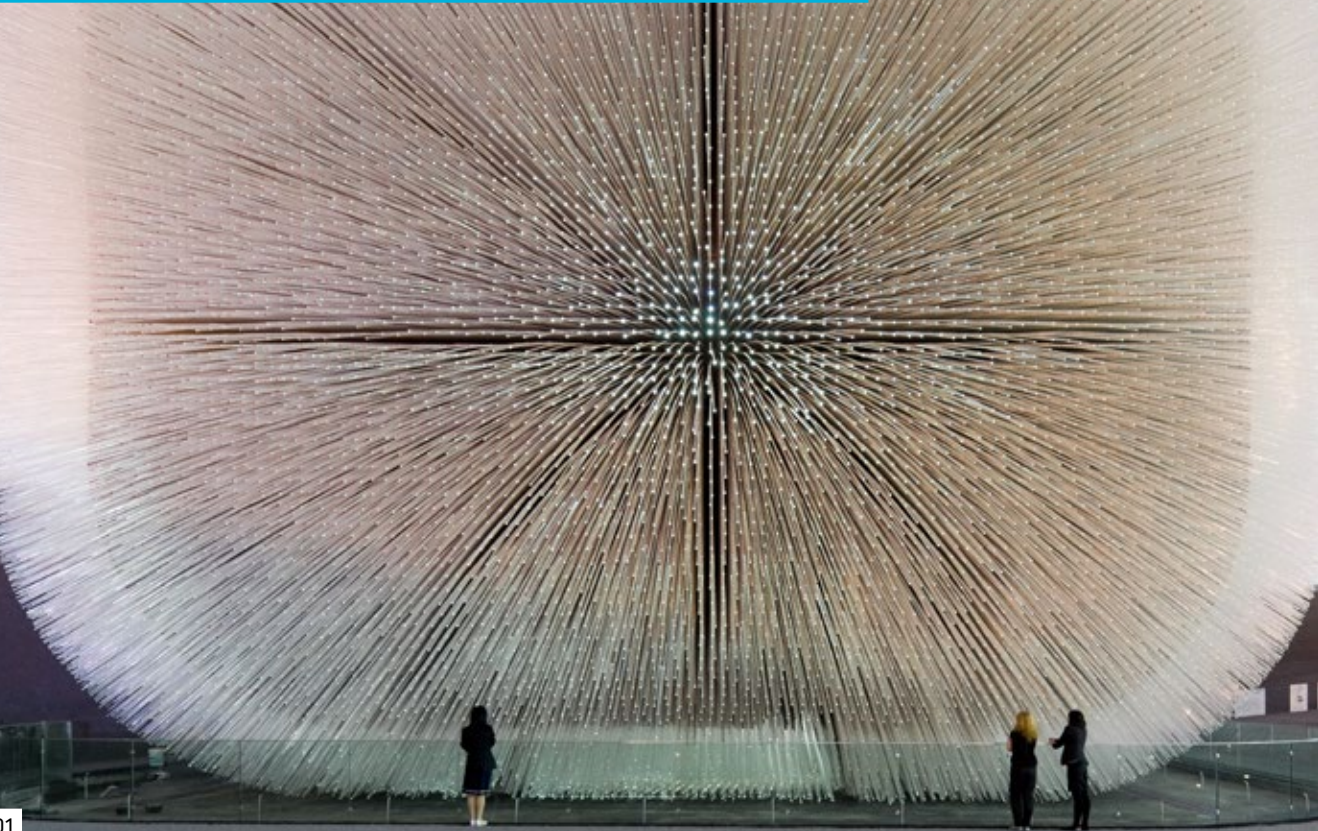
07 New exhibition case system for displaying the museum’s permanent collection.

08 Staircase model (2007-45-10) during conservation treatment.

09 After treatment: Staircase Model (France), mid-to-late 19th century, Gift of Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw, 2007-45-10.

SMALL, MEDIUM, AND LARGE:

SCALE IN THE WORK OF HEATHERWICK STUDIO



01

By **Pilar Viladas**

One of the hallmarks of Heatherwick Studio, which was founded by Thomas Heatherwick in 1994, is its fondness (and facility) for working at vastly different scales. Indeed, when you visit the studio's website, its projects are organized not by category, as is usually the case, but by "small," "medium," and "large."

At the 160-person studio—which includes architects, designers, and makers, and which is located in the Kings Cross neighborhood of London—a Christmas card is designed with the same enthusiasm, and in the same spirit of exploration and innovation, as a bus or a corporate headquarters.

This philosophy of design grew out of Thomas Heatherwick's upbringing, which exposed him to what he described in his introduction to *Thomas Heatherwick: Making* (a monograph on the studio's work) as "people who pursued strong personal interests, exposing me to different influences and encouraging me to develop any natural aptitudes I might have." Heatherwick's mother, an expert on beads, introduced him to "people who were forging iron,

blowing glass, machining metal," and "erecting timber building frames," among other things. His father took him to car shows and introduced him to forward-thinking architectural projects. His maternal grandfather's passion for the history of engineering rubbed off on the young Heatherwick, whose subsequent studies in design at the small scale—from glassblowing and ceramics to wood joinery, or what he called "exploring different scales of problem-solving"—gave him the skills to pursue his long-time interest in "the design of buildings and the built environment." He saw "an opportunity to take the aesthetic sensibilities for smaller scales of making . . . and introduce these into the large-scale world of building design."

Thus, the notion of a "hairy building" that resulted in the Barnards Farm Sitooterie—a small, porcupine-like pavilion made of 4,000 meticulously machined aluminum tubes, each of which transmits light from inside the structure—was implemented on a much larger scale in the studio's design for the UK Pavilion at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai. This time, the tubes—66,000 of them—were made of clear acrylic, and while they were also illuminated, in this case they were used to display 250,000 seeds of the world's wild plant species.

This scale shift is especially noticeable in another subset of the studio's projects—that of bridges. For a tiny pedestrian bridge project envisioned for the garden of an English stately home, hundreds of stainless-steel discs were welded onto what looks like an oversize piece of shimmering jewelry. Another (somewhat larger) pedestrian bridge, the toy-like Rolling Bridge in London—one of the first projects to bring the studio widespread exposure in the press—allows the bridge to open without one end simply hanging in midair by having it curl into a tidy octagon. A variation on this principle was used in the design of a much larger bridge, also in London, meant to cross the River Thames. That scheme remains unbuilt, but an entirely different kind of bridge spanning the Thames will begin construction in the fall. The studio's Garden Bridge, which connects North and South London, was conceived as a lush, elevated garden intended to create "a new kind of public space in the city."

And the scale of the studio's projects continues to grow. Pier55, a densely planted, undulating park and performance space in New York, will sit on a series of mushroom-shaped columns in the Hudson River. The Learning Hub—the winning entry in a competition sponsored by Nanyang Technological University in Singapore—rethinks the traditional idea of forward-facing classrooms accessed by windowless corridors by stacking fifty-six rounded tutorial rooms into a cluster of towers around a central atrium. The building, which was recently completed, will be open to students twenty-four hours a day and includes communal and recreational spaces, as well as gardens, terraces, and a planted roof.



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Provocations: The Architecture and Design of Heatherwick Studio is on view at Cooper Hewitt June 24, 2015–January 3, 2016. The exhibition is organized by Nasher Sculpture Center and curated by Cooper Hewitt Deputy Director Brooke Hodge.

- 01** UK Pavilion, Shanghai, China, 2007–10
- 02** Pier55, New York, New York, USA, 2014–18
- 03** Learning Hub, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 2011–14



04



05

Perhaps the most ambitious of Heatherwick Studio's current projects is Google's Mountain View Campus (California, USA), designed in collaboration with Danish architect Bjarke Ingels's firm, BIG. The design features undulating, translucent canopies that hover above lightweight, modular structures, which—unlike conventional office buildings—can be moved and reconfigured according to Google's needs. Landscape figures prominently in the project, with extensive greenery—groves of trees, walking paths, and gardens—integrated into the plan. Heatherwick calls the project an opportunity to "make a vibrant piece of town at

the same time as protecting and enhancing the local natural habitat." At over two million square feet, Google's headquarters is enormous, but in a video released by the company, Heatherwick is seen folding white paper into small umbrella shapes, which then appear in a computer animation, flying in large numbers toward the translucent roofs to become shading devices. Of course, any structure with such roofs would need shading, but the delicate, almost winsome way in which Heatherwick envisions it here typifies his insistence on small, human moments in even the biggest projects—which is why he will likely be designing a lot more of them.

Pilar Viladas writes about architecture and design. Formerly the design editor of T: The New York Times Style Magazine, she is currently the architecture and design editor of Town & Country magazine.

PROVOCATIONS: THE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN OF HEATHERWICK STUDIO is made possible by generous support from Edward and Helen Hintz. Additional funding is provided by the August Heckscher Exhibition Fund and the Ehrenkranz Fund.

04-05
Google Mountain View Campus, California, USA (current)

2015 NATIONAL DESIGN AWARD WINNERS

The National Design Awards were launched in 2000 to promote design as a vital humanistic tool in shaping the world, honoring excellence, innovation, and lasting achievement in American design. On May 5, 2015, ten jury-selected award winners and the winner of the Director's Award—chosen by Cooper Hewitt Director Caroline Baumann—were announced. The winners will be honored at a gala benefit dinner and awards ceremony on Thursday, October 15 at Pier Sixty in New York. For more information go to cooperhewitt.org/ndatickets.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

MICHAEL GRAVES



Michael Graves was a renowned architect and industrial designer, credited with broadening the role of architects and raising public interest in good design as essential to the quality of everyday life. He established Michael Graves Architecture & Design in 1964, and served as principal until his death in 2015. Widely recognized for designing consumer products for Alessi, Target, and Kimberly-Clark, he later focused on accessibility and healthcare, designing hospitals, housing for disabled veterans, and wheelchairs and hospital furniture for Stryker Medical. Graves served as the Robert Schirmer Professor of Architecture at Princeton University, where he taught for thirty-nine years.

Whistling bird teakettle, sugar bowl, and creamer, Alessi (1985).

DESIGN MIND

ROSANNE HAGGERTY



For thirty years, Rosanne Haggerty has worked to demonstrate the potential of design to improve the lives of people living in poverty through affordable housing and human services. Based in New York, she currently serves as founder and president of Community Solutions, an organization that assists communities throughout the United States in solving the complex problems facing their most vulnerable residents. Previously, Haggerty founded Common Ground Community, a pioneer in the development of supportive housing and research-based practices designed to end homelessness.

The Christopher redevelopment provides 207 units for low-income working persons and formerly homeless single adults, including forty first-in-the-nation Foyer units, which provide a housing-based career development model targeting young adults aging out of foster care (New York, New York, 2004). Project partner: OCV Architects.

CORPORATE & INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

HEATH CERAMICS



For over sixty years, Heath Ceramics has been known for handmade ceramic tableware and architectural tile that embody creativity and craftsmanship, elevate the everyday, and enhance the way people eat, live, and connect. Founded by Edith and Brian Heath in 1948, the historic company is now led by Catherine Bailey and Robin Petravic, who purchased and refounded the company in 2003, placing a strong emphasis on design while preserving Heath's hand-crafted techniques and designer-maker legacy. Today, Heath Ceramics is committed to quality over quantity, production at a human scale, local manufacturing, social and environmental responsibility, and thoughtfully designed spaces that don't just reflect its values, but also create them.

Summer seasonal bud vases in succulent lime, pomelo, mint, and storm (2007).

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

MOS ARCHITECTS



MOS Architects is a New York-based architecture studio, founded by principals Hilary Sample and Michael Meredith in 2005. Sample and Meredith teach at Columbia University and Princeton University, respectively, and their academic research occurs in parallel to the real-world constraints and contingencies of practice, informing and elevating both.

Winters Studio, a 7,000-square-foot artist studio overlooking Taconic State Park (Ancram, New York, 2009).

COMMUNICATION DESIGN

PROJECT PROJECTS



Founded by Prem Krishnamurthy and Adam Michaels in 2004, Project Projects is a graphic design studio in New York, New York, focusing on art, architecture, and culture. Combining a rigorously conceptual approach with innovative

modes of visual communication, the studio's work encompasses a wide range of contemporary graphic media. Project Projects considers and redefines the bounds of graphic design through editing and publishing books, curating exhibitions, and organizing public programs.

SALT (Istanbul), comprehensive identity system, custom typography, website design and development, exhibition designs, and bespoke e-book publishing platform (Istanbul, Turkey, 2010-ongoing).

INTERACTION DESIGN

JOHN UNDERKOFFLER



John Underkoffler is a user-interface designer and computer scientist. His work insists that capabilities critical to humans living in a digital world can come only from careful evolution of the human-machine interface (HMI). He is cofounder and CEO of Los Angeles-based Oblong Industries, whose products and technologies embody this idea to offer new forms of computation. Underkoffler's foundational work at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology included innovations in optical and electronic holography, large-scale interactive visualization techniques, and the I/O Bulb and Luminous Room systems.

TAMPER, gestural remix tool for cinema, originally commissioned for and exhibited at the University Art Museum, California State University (Long Beach, California, 2008). Subsequently exhibited at the New Frontier venue at the Sundance Film Festival (Park City, Utah, 2009). Video rendering code by Andy Wingo, Blake Tregre, Kwindla Hultman Kramer. Rotoscoping and diagrammatic hands by Ed Baker.

FASHION DESIGN

THREEASFOUR



Recognized as one of the most innovative fashion labels today, threeASFOUR was founded in New York City in 2005 by Gabriel Asfour, Angela Donhauser, and Adi Gil, who hail from Lebanon, Tajikistan, and Israel, respectively. Having worked together since 1998 (under the label AsFour), the trio uses fashion to promote the need for human coexistence and collaboration, and fuses technology with traditional craftsmanship.

Tree of Life, digital runway collection (Spring / Summer 2015). Model: Grace Bo.

2015 NATIONAL DESIGN AWARDS JURY



BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)
Casey Reas, Maurice Cox, Caroline Baumann, Margie Ruddick, Doreen Lorenzo, and Waris Ahluwalia

FONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)
Rick Valicenti, Amale Andraos, Todd Oldham, and Lindsey Adelman

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

COEN + PARTNERS



Founded by Shane Coen in 1991, Coen + Partners is a renowned landscape architecture practice based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Through a process of collaboration, experimentation, and questioning, the firm's work embraces the complexities of each site with quiet clarity and ecological integrity. The practice has built a distinguished body of award-winning work that is widely recognized as progressive and timeless.

Warroad Land Port of Entry, regional sensitivity is achieved through use of materials and forms responding to the vernacular of the northern borderlands (Warroad, Minnesota, 2010). Collaborators: Snow Kreilich Architects and the U.S. General Services Administration.

INTERIOR DESIGN

COMMUNE



Commune is a Los Angeles-based design studio with a reputation for working holistically across the fields of

architecture, interior design, graphic design, product design, and brand management. Founded in 2004 by Roman Alonso, Steven Johanknecht, Pamela Shamshiri, and Ramin Shamshiri, Commune is noted for its eclectic assemblages that work in harmony with their surroundings while paying homage to historical, traditional, and international design. The firm has designed residential, commercial, and hospitality projects worldwide; a wide array of home and lifestyle products; and graphic and branding concepts.

Interior design of retail space adjacent to the Standard Hotel (New York, New York, 2010).

PRODUCT DESIGN

STEPHEN BURKS

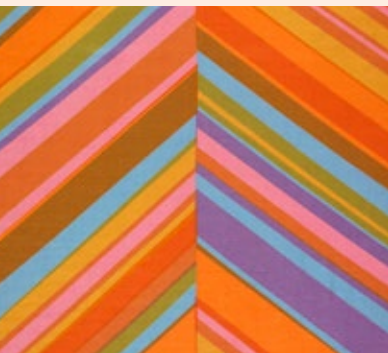


For over a decade, Stephen Burks has dedicated his work to building a bridge between authentic craft traditions, industrial manufacturing, and contemporary design. Since 2005, Burks has consulted with nonprofits, including Aid to Artisans, the Clinton Global Initiative, and the Nature Conservancy, uniting the artisan, the designer, and global brands in a triangle of immersive development. With his New York-based studio, Stephen Burks Man Made, Burks has produced innovative products, furniture, lighting, and exhibitions for a range of international clients.

Stephen Burks: Man Made, solo exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem (New York, New York, 2011), produced in collaboration with artisans from Dakar, Senegal. Dwell presents Stephen Burks: Man Made (Milan, Italy; April 2014). Stephen Burks Man Made Brand (2011-ongoing).

DIRECTOR'S AWARD

JACK LENOR LARSEN



Jack Lenor Larsen is an internationally renowned textile designer, author, and collector, and one of the world's foremost advocates of traditional and contemporary crafts. He founded his eponymous firm in 1952, and the company has grown steadily to become a dominant resource for signature fabrics. Larsen's own award-winning, handwoven fabrics of natural yarns in random repeats have evolved to become synonymous with twentieth-century design at its finest. Larsen is also widely recognized for LongHouse, his sixteen-acre estate in East Hampton, New York, that serves as a nonprofit outdoor art museum that exemplifies living with art in all its forms.

Obelisk, 1958, screenprinted linen. Gift of Jack Lenor Larsen, Incorporated, 1960-170-1.

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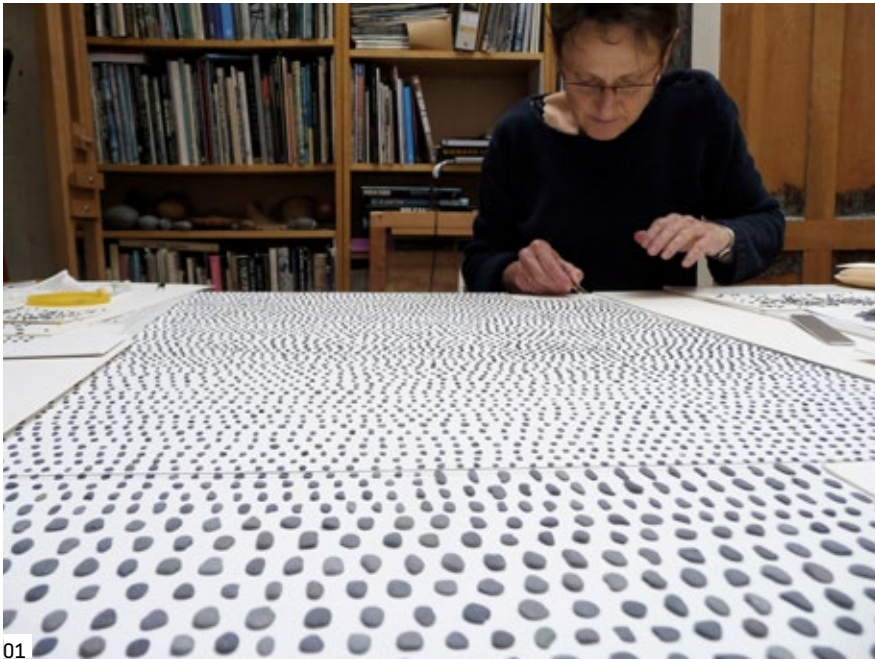
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CONNECTING WITH COLLECTIONS

SMITHSONIAN ARTIST RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

By **Susan Brown** and **Matilda McQuaid**

In 2014, Cooper Hewitt was thrilled to host British textile artist Sue Lawty and Mexican sculptor Damián Ortega as part of the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship (SARF) program. The fellowship, established in 2007, is intended to support the unique research approaches of visual artists by providing the opportunity to work with Smithsonian collections and scholars in a way that feeds their creative explorations. Visit <http://cprhw.tt/5ssh>.



01

SUE LAWTY: CLOTH AND ROCK

Sue Lawty’s passions encompass both ancient ethnographic textiles and geology. “Cloth and rock,” she writes, “although seemingly diametrically opposed, both carry a strong tactile element and can engender primal and deep visceral responses of connection, narrative, and memory.” As a serious trekker, she has a profound connection to the geology of place as an embodiment of time. She weaves with bast fibers—like raffia, hemp, nettle, and

linen—and elemental, earthbound lead, and creates assemblages of carefully ordered stones.

Taking full advantage of the Smithsonian’s unique melding of science, history, and art, Lawty divided her fellowship between the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), Washington, DC, and Cooper Hewitt. “While at NMNH, I moved seamlessly between Anthropology and Mineral Sciences, studying material qualities, structure, and rhythms, whether it be in the twined grasses of Native American baskets or millions-of-years-

old iron meteorites fallen to earth. Being introduced to the Widmanstätten patterns revealed on the cut and etched faces of the latter will be a catalyst in all aspects of my work.”

Among Cooper Hewitt’s diverse textile holdings, Lawty selected and studied items as diverse as raffia embroideries of the Kuba peoples, Ugandan bark cloth, exquisitely fine pre-Columbian tapestry fragments, and high-tech, stainless-steel textiles developed by present-day Japanese artist Junichi Arai. “I remember how, as an Ainu robe was gently uncovered, it set fingers tingling and mind racing, the exquisite panels of woven elm bark revealing the hand of the maker; a maker from a wholly different place and time. The materiality of the fiber and each nuance of preparation, spinning, and construction could be studied in minute detail—nothing between you and the very particular qualities of it.”

Lawty has described her work as “small elements, finely controlled,” and her eye has been continually drawn to the minute variations intrinsic to natural materials that have been meticulously selected, processed, and constructed by hand. “My two months as a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow were so concentrated and powerful, it is taking time to ‘come down.’ So now as I reflect on the experience of that complex and intense stimulation,



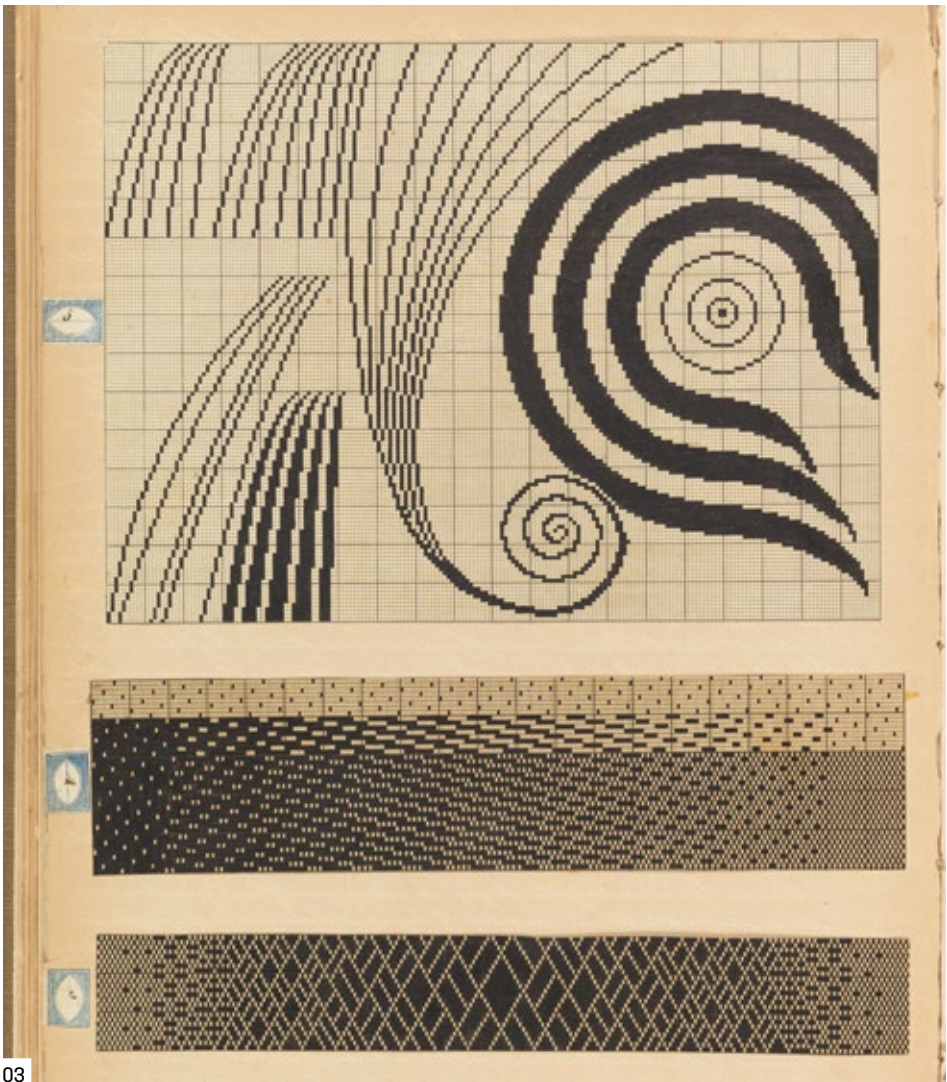
02

I recognize that I am in an extended period of distillation: revisiting notes, sketches, and the thousands of photographs. These visual records are essential for documenting the research undertaken, but they belie the visceral frisson of direct, undiluted contact with the objects. It is this, which the fellowship offers, that is the exceptional opportunity for an artist. It was over in a flash. The next stage is longer.”

DAMIÁN ORTEGA: TEXTILES AS CULTURAL SYMBOLS

Damián Ortega’s fellowship started off with his “interest in textiles as cultural symbols, one’s own cultural skin. It is the dress that has manifested sentiments and ideologies through time, and many of our experiences with cloth occur in a social context.” He was particularly focused on ideas of pattern and how information is translated visually on textiles, in sample books, and to other objects. His work with textile communities in Mexico reflects these ideas and can be seen as experiments in measuring and understanding time in the making of textiles.

Ortega was particularly intrigued by a weaver’s 1848 master’s thesis book written in delicate longhand and containing 141 *mises-en-carte* (point papers) and 104 fabric samples, in addition to numerous technical drawings, notes for loom arrangements, and fabric descriptions. Ortega appreciates how technical information translates into exquisite drawings with timeless abstract forms.



03

He also explored our significant collection of *katagami*—Japanese stencils used for dyeing fabric—which were especially popular during the Edo (1603–1867) and Meiji (1868–1912) periods. These stencils consist of numerous layers of Japanese mulberry paper joined together with fermented persimmon juice, which are then meticulously carved into patterns to be repeated on kimono fabrics. A net of fine silk threads (and sometimes human hair) helps to stabilize the stencils so that the paper will not warp or tear easily. This almost invisible support particularly captivated Ortega—that something so fine, such as silk and hair, can also be the underlying strength for another material.

In studying the collection, Ortega wanted to “understand the things books and talks can’t tell [us].” Working directly with the objects, Ortega said, “I see the process of time, the evolution of the medium, and the infinite forms a textile can take. I see it as a subjective study in which I will make an interpretational play between

textiles, music, and abstraction, and I will get to know and show ideas transmitted through textiles that are hidden behind the veil of the decorative and express them in other media. “

Susan Brown, Associate Curator of Textiles
Matilda McQuaid, Deputy Curatorial Director and Head of Textiles

01
Sue Lawty working on *Calculus*, 2009.

02
Ortega coordinated the timing of his fellowship to align with the installation of his *Controller of the Universe* (2007) for the Cooper Hewitt exhibition *Tools: Extending Our Reach* (on view through May 25, 2015).

03
Master weaver’s thesis book, French, 1848; *Système de la Mécanique à la Jacquard*, plate 140; Pen and ink with gouache on paper pages with cotton, linen, and silk samples; 44.8 h x 30.5 w x 5.8 cm d (17 7/8 x 12 x 2 3/8 in.); Museum purchase from Trustees’ Book Appropriation, 1939-40-1

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Above
Garden Bridge, London, 2012–18, Heatherwick Studio

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Small, Medium, and Large: Scale in the Work of Heatherwick Studio
01. Iwan Baan
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Lifetime Achievement: (top) Barry Johnson, courtesy of Michael Graves Architecture & Design, (bottom) Courtesy of Michael Graves Architecture & Design; Design Mind: (top) Courtesy of Community Solutions, (bottom) Courtesy of OCV Architects; Corporate & Institutional Achievement: (top) Courtesy of Heath Ceramics, (bottom) Jeffery Cross; Architecture Design: (top and bottom) Michael Vahrenwald; Communication Design: (top and bottom) Courtesy of Project Projects; Interaction Design: (top) Asa Mathat Photography, (bottom) Courtesy of Oblong Industries; Fashion Design: (top) Guang, (bottom) Jeffrey Hagerman; Jury: © Smithsonian Institution; Landscape Architecture: (top) Shelly Mosman, (bottom) Paul Crosby; Interior Design: (top) François Halard, (bottom) Spencer Lowell; Product Design: (top) Rainer Horsch, (bottom) Daniel Hakansson; Director’s Award: (top) Shonna Valeska, (bottom) Matt Flynn © Smithsonian Institution

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