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COOPER HEWITT ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES AND STAFF

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Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum today announces several trustee and staff appointments. Bart Friedman, Shelby Gans and Jon Kamen join Cooper Hewitt's board of trustees. Led by chair Barbara Mandel and president Beth Comstock, the board includes 39 distinguished civic and business leaders dedicated to the continued growth of the museum. The museum also welcomes Catherine Birch, director of retail, Wendi Parson, director of communications and marketing and Micah Walter, director of digital and emerging media.

"I am truly delighted to welcome these newest members to the Cooper Hewitt family. They bring to the museum not only their superb expertise, but also a passion for great design," said Caroline Baumann, director of the museum. "Having recently celebrated the one-year anniversary of our reopening, we are poised to cross new milestones with audience development, program outreach and scholarship, and I look forward to the guidance and leadership of these key staff and trustees."

BART FRIEDMAN, TRUSTEE

Friedman is a senior partner at the Wall Street law firm Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP and is chairman of its Business Development Committee. He has practiced at Cahill for more than 30 years, advising financial institutions and global corporations, boards of directors, audit committees and officers and directors of publicly-held companies in significant corporate and securities matters, and corporate compliance and enforcement challenges. Friedman serves as board member, chair of the audit committee and member of the executive committee of The Brookings Institution; board member, chair of the audit committee and compensation committee and member of the executive committee of Lincoln Center; chair of the board of the Sanford C. Bernstein family of mutual funds; lead director of Zurich-based Allied World Assurance Holdings; and serves on the membership committee of the Council on Foreign Relations.

SHELBY M. GANS, TRUSTEE

Gans has actively worked in the performing and visual arts for more than 30 years. In the San Francisco Bay Area, she serves on the boards of the San Francisco Ballet, The Baker Institute for Children with Hearing Loss and the Friends of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. In Washington, D.C., Gans currently serves as a commissioner of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and is a member of the Smithsonian American Art Forum. In 2007, she joined the Smithsonian's National Board. In New York, Gans has served on the board of Mark Morris Dance Group since 2001 and chaired its 25th and 30th Anniversary Gala celebrations.

JON KAMEN, TRUSTEE

Kamen is founding chairman and CEO of RadicalMedia, which produces content across all platforms of media. Originally renowned for its commercial and advertising success, it has transformed and grown to develop, produce and distribute television, feature films, music programming, live events, digital content and design. RadicalMedia has been recognized with an Academy Award for the documentary "The Fog of War," a Grammy for the "Concert for George" and was most recently nominated for a 2016 Academy Award for "What Happened, Miss Simone?" Kamen serves on the board of trustees of the Rhode Island School of Design and the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation.



CATHERINE BIRCH, DIRECTOR OF RETAIL

As director of retail, Birch oversees the creative vision, merchandising and strategy of SHOP Cooper Hewitt, both online and in store. Reinforcing Cooper Hewitt's role as America's design museum, Birch will forge new collaborations with leading designers and core vendors to create exclusive product for the SHOP, and implement a merchandise assortment strategy focused on the best in design. A retail veteran with a passion for modern design, Birch brings extensive experience and a global network of artists, designers, vendors and manufacturers to the position. Prior experience includes director, merchandising and product development at Fab.com; general manager and vintage buyer at RRL, Ralph Lauren; and product manager at Moss.

WENDI PARSON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

As director of communications and marketing, Parson serves as the principal leader responsible for all media relations, graphic design, social media, marketing and advertising strategies for the museum and oversees visitor experience. Prior to her new role, she lent her expertise to leading organizations in the design and innovation sectors, including: NYU Tandon School of Engineering; Smart Design, an award-winning design consultancy; and Taxi 07, a project of the Design Trust for Public Space. Previously, Parson worked for ten years inside Detroit's automotive industry in communications posts at both General Motors Corporation and Ford Motor Company, notably supporting GM Design and product launch activities at Ford. She is a graduate of the master's program in the history of design and curatorial studies, offered jointly by Cooper Hewitt and Parsons School of Design.

MICAH WALTER, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL & EMERGING MEDIA

In his new role as director of digital and emerging media, Walter oversees all aspects of Cooper Hewitt's groundbreaking digital experience. Part of Cooper Hewitt's staff since 2010, Walter has served as webmaster, interactive media manager, and a key member of the digital and emerging media department tasked with the digital transformation of the museum. Walter's work has spanned the areas of digital content strategy, management and infrastructure planning, programming and development of web applications, utilizing a wide variety of languages, systems and technologies. Before joining the museum, Walter received a master's degree in photographic and electronic media from Maryland Institute College of Art, a bachelor's degree in imaging and photographic technology from Rochester Institute of Technology and worked as a freelance photojournalist in Washington, D.C. and in the Middle East.

ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. On Dec. 12, 2014, Cooper Hewitt reopened in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, which offers 60 percent more exhibition space to showcase one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The renovation of the Carnegie Mansion and museum campus was recognized with LEED Silver certification. Currently on view are 9 exhibitions and installations featuring hundreds of objects throughout four floors of the mansion, including the fifth installment of the museum's contemporary design exhibition series, "Beauty—Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial;" "Thom Browne Selects" and "Pixar: The Design of Story." Visitors can experience a full range of new interactive capabilities, including the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, draw their own designs in the Immersion Room and address design problems in the Process Lab.

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