



# crafting modernism

Midcentury American Art and Design

Jeannine Falino

GENERAL EDITOR

Jeannine Falino with Jennifer Scanlan

CURATORS

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WITH ESSAYS BY

GLENN ADAMSON

DONALD ALBRECHT

ELISSA AUTHER

DAVID L. BARQUIS

ULYSSES GRANT DE

PATRICIA FAILING

JEANNINE FALINO

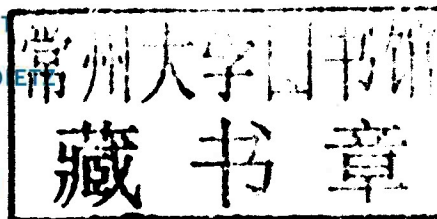
CAROLINE M. HANNAH

URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN

BRUCE METCALF

JENNIFER SCANLAN

LOWERY STOKES SIMS



ABRAMS, NEW YORK

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



FOR THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

GENERAL EDITOR AND CURATOR: Jeannine Falino

FOR ABRAMS, NEW YORK

EDITOR: Andrea Danese

DESIGNER: Sarah Gifford

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Jules Thomson

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Crafting modernism : midcentury American art and design / Jeannine Falino,  
general editor ; Jeannine Falino & Jennifer Scanlan, curators ; with essays  
by Glenn Adamson ... [et al.].

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8109-8480-6

1. Decorative arts—United States—History—20th century. 2. Modernism (Aesthetics)—United  
States—History—20th century. I. Falino, Jeannine J. II. Scanlan, Jennifer. III. Adamson, Glenn.  
IV. Title: Midcentury American art and design.

NK808.C72 2011

745.0973'09045—dc22

2011009558

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-4197-0099-6

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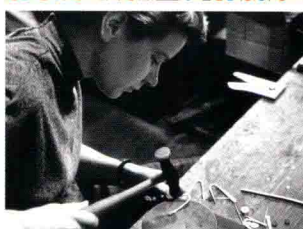
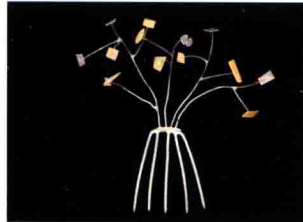
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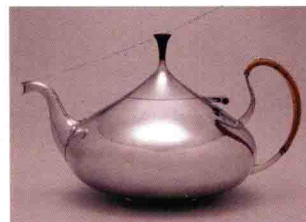


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THIS BOOK IS PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION

## Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design

VOLUME 4 OF THE HISTORY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN CRAFT

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

OCTOBER 11, 2011–JANUARY 15, 2012

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 27–MAY 21, 2012

*Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design* is made possible in part through the generosity of the National Endowment for the Arts; the Henry Luce Foundation; and the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design. Major support for the exhibition catalogue has been provided by the Windgate Charitable Foundation.



FRONTISPIECE, CAT. 1

Irving Harper, designer for George Nelson and Associates Schiffer Prints Division; Mil-Art Co., Inc., manufacturer, *China Shop*, c. 1953. Printed cotton. 62½ x 52½ in. (158.8 x 133.4 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Geoffrey N. Bradfield, 1995; 1995.355.

RIGHT

John Mason working on *Blue Wall* in the Glendale studio, 1959. Courtesy of John Mason.

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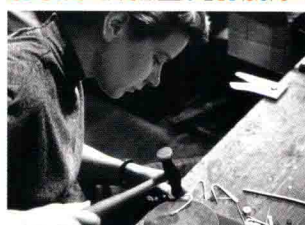
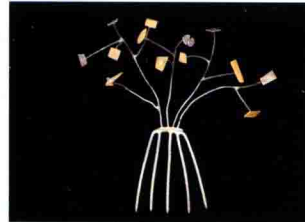
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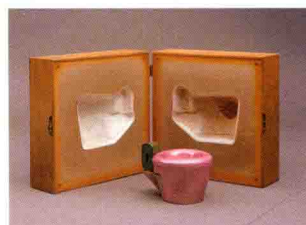


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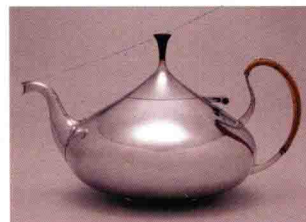


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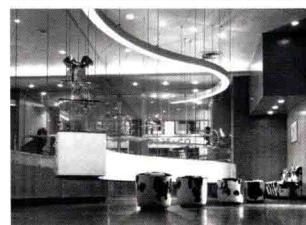


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## CONTRIBUTORS

**GLENN ADAMSON** is deputy head of research and head of graduate studies at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A). He leads a graduate program in the history of design, collaboratively offered by the V&A and the Royal College of Art. Dr. Adamson is co-editor (with Tanya Harrod and Edward S. Cooke Jr.) of the triannual *Journal of Modern Craft*. He is a frequent contributor to museum catalogues and to such journals as *Crafts* and *American Craft*. His other publications include *Thinking Through Craft* (2007), *The Craft Reader* (2010), *Industrial Strength Design: How Brooks Stevens Shaped Your World* (2003), and, with Gary Michael Dault, David Dorenbaum, and Gord Peteran, *Gord Peteran: Furniture Meets Its Maker* (2008). Adamson also maintains a blog titled "From Sketch to Product" on the V&A website and is presently curating an exhibition of postmodernism, to be held at the V&A in 2011.

**DONALD ALBRECHT** is Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) and an independent curator. He has been curator and catalogue author, *The Mythic City: Photographs of New York by Samuel H. Gottscho, 1925–1940* (MCNY, 2005) and *The High Style of Dorothy Draper* (MCNY, 2006); co-curator and co-author, *Cars, Culture and the City* (MCNY, 2010); curator and catalogue editor, *Paris/NewYork: Design Fashion Culture, 1925–1940* (MCNY, 2008) and *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames* (Library of Congress and Vitra Design Museum, 1997); and curator and catalogue co-editor, *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future* (Finnish Cultural Institute, the Museum of Finnish Architecture, National Building Museum, with support of Yale University School of Architecture, 2006).

**ELISSA AUTHER** is associate professor of contemporary art at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Her book, *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art* (2010), focuses on the broad use

of fiber in American art of the 1960s and '70s and the changing hierarchical relationship between art and craft expressed by the medium's new visibility. She has also written on a range of subjects: the art criticism of Clement Greenberg, the history of "the decorative," the use of yarn and other types of fiber in feminist antiwar activism, artist-produced wallpapers, and the contemporary film installations of Isaac Julien. In addition, she co-directs *Feminism & Co.: Art, Sex, Politics*, a public program at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver that focuses on issues of women and gender through creative practice. She is currently at work on *The Countercultural Experiment: Consciousness and Encounters at the Edge of Art*, an exhibition and catalogue scheduled for 2011, which investigates the diverse visual and material culture of the American counterculture of the 1960s and '70s.

**DAVID L. BARQUIST** is the H. Richard Dietrich, Jr., Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He served for twenty-three years as assistant, associate, and acting curator of American decorative arts at the Yale University Art Gallery. His 1992 publication *American Tables and Looking Glasses in the Mabel Brady Garvan and Other Collections at Yale University* received the 1993 Charles F. Montgomery Prize from the Decorative Arts Society for "the most distinguished contribution to the study of American decorative arts." Barquist is the author of *Myer Myers: Jewish Silversmith in Colonial New York* (2001), which accompanied a traveling exhibition of the same title. With Carol Borchert Cadou, he co-curated another traveling exhibition, *Setting the President's Table: American Presidential China from the Robert L. McNeil, Jr., Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (2008–9), and contributed "Presidents and Porcelain: 'To Fix the Taste of Our Country Properly'" to a parallel publication titled *American Presidential China: The Robert L. McNeil, Jr., Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (2008).

**ULYSSES GRANT DIETZ** has been the curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum since 1980, responsible for more than one hundred exhibitions. He conducted a major study of the Newark Museum's 1885 Ballantine House (a twenty-seven-room brick mansion), which reinterpreted this building that was restored as the centerpiece of the decorative arts department in 1994 with the installation "House & Home." Dietz was project director for *The Glitter & The Gold: Fashioning America's Jewelry* (1997), an exhibition and book on Newark's once-vast jewelry industry. He also curated *Great Pots: Contemporary Ceramics from Function to Fantasy* (2003) and *Masterpieces of Art Pottery, 1880–1930* (2008) and wrote the accompanying catalogues. Dietz is co-author of *Dream House: The White House as an American Home* (2009).

**PATRICIA FAILING** is a visual arts writer and professor of art history at the University of Washington, Seattle, where she teaches modern and contemporary art and art criticism. Other research areas include legal

and ethical issues in the visual arts and the sculpture of Edgar Degas. She has written many articles for *Art News*, *American Craft*, *Sculpture Review* and *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, among others, and is the author of *Howard Kottler: Face to Face* (1995).

**JEANNINE FALINO**, Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) curator, was formerly the Carolyn and Peter Lynch Curator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Art of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She has lectured and written extensively on American decorative arts from the colonial period to the present, with a focus on the colonial period, the Arts and Crafts era, and twentieth-century craft and design. She recently served as co-editor and lead author of *Silver of the Americas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, vol. 3 (2008); guest co-curator, *Artistic Luxury: Fabergé—Tiffany—Lalique* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 2008); curator, *Edge of the Sublime: Enamels by Jamie Bennett* (Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA, 2008); co-editor, *American Luxury: Jewels from the House of Tiffany* (2008); and contributor, *Craft in America: Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects* (2007). She is also the author of *Shaped by the Revolution: Portraits of a Boston Family—Speakman, Rowe, Inman, Linzee, Coffin, and Amory* (2005).

**CAROLINE M. HANNAH** is a design historian and writer, and a PhD candidate at the Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture. Her dissertation "Henry Varnum Poor: Crow House, Craft, and Design" has received support from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Jane and Morgan Whitney Predoctoral Fellow); the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (James R. Renwick Predoctoral Fellow in American Craft); the Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design, Hendersonville, NC (Craft Research Fund grant); and the Bard Graduate Center (academic and writing fellowships). She has also served as acting assistant curator of American decorative arts at the Yale University Art Gallery.

**URSULA ILSE-NEUMAN** joined the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) in 1992 and is presently curator of jewelry. She has curated more than thirty exhibitions in all media and has written extensively on jewelry in the museum's collection: *Inspired Jewelry* (2009), *Glass Wear: Glass in Contemporary Jewelry* (2007), and *Zero Karat: Jewelry from the Donna Schreier Collection* (2002). She was co-author for *Corporal Identity: Body Language, 9th Triennial for Form and Content, USA and Germany* (2003), held in collaboration with the Museum of Applied Arts in Frankfurt, Germany. Her forthcoming exhibitions at MAD are *Light, Space, Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta* (2012) and *Multiple Exposures: Jewelry and Photography* (2013). She has lectured widely in the U.S., Europe, and Asia and is curator of the American section of *Abhushan: Design Dialogues in Jewelry* (2011), organized by the World Crafts Council in New Delhi, India.



**BRUCE METCALF** is a studio jeweler and writer from the Philadelphia area. He received a BFA from Syracuse University in 1971 and an MFA from Tyler School of Art in 1977. Since then he has taught at Kent State University, the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and several other schools. He has written extensively about issues in contemporary craft in numerous domestic and foreign publications, and is co-author with Janet Koplos of *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft* (2010). Metcalf's own jewelry designs, sculpture, and drawings have also been widely seen in national and international exhibitions over the past forty years. A retrospective exhibition, *The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf* (Palo Alto Cultural Center, 2008), toured the U.S. (2008–10).

**JENNIFER SCANLAN** is associate curator at the Museum of Arts and Design (MAD), where she has organized many exhibitions, including *Eat Drink Art Design* (2010); *Cheers! A MAD Collection of Goblets* (2008); *Why? 25 Case Studies* (2006); and *Paul Stankard: A Floating World—Forty Years of an American Master in Glass* (2004). Recent publications include "Joseph Cavalieri" in *Neues Glas/New Glass* (2010). She was also co-author of the exhibition catalogue *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* (2006); and contributed "Paul Stankard: An American Master in Glass" to *SOFA NY* (2004) and "Illuminating Vision: Light in Abstract Glass Sculpture" to *Dual Vision* (2005). Scanlan has lectured internationally at the Conference of the International Committee of Design History and Design Studies (Brussels, Belgium, 2010); Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute (Taichung, Taiwan, 2009); Association for the Study of Jewelry and Related Arts (New York, 2007); and the Glass Art Society Conference (Adelaide, Australia, 2005). She has a BA in art history and Italian from Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, and an MA in the history of decorative arts, design, and culture from the Bard Graduate Center, New York. She has also taught at the Courtauld Institute of Art Summer School in London, England, and is an instructor in the Historic Preservation Program at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

**LOWERY STOKES SIMS** is the Charles Bronfman International Curator at the Museum of Arts and Design. Sims co-curated the inaugural exhibition, *Second Lives*, for MAD's 2008 reopening at New York's Columbus Circle. In 2010 she organized the museum's venue for the traveling exhibition *Bigger Better More: The Art of Viola Frey*, co-curated *Dead or Alive*, and curated *The Global Africa Project*. A specialist in modern and contemporary art, Sims is known for her expertise in the work of African, Latino, Native, and Asian American artists. She served as executive director, president, and adjunct curator for the permanent collection at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2000–2007). While on the education and curatorial staff of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1972–99), she organized many exhibitions, including retrospectives of the work of Stuart Davis (1991) and Richard Pousette-Dart

(1997). Sims has lectured and guest-curated exhibitions nationally and internationally. She was a fellow at the Clark Art Institute (spring 2007); visiting professor at Queens College and Hunter College in New York City (2005–7); and visiting scholar in the department of art at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (fall 2007). Sims is on the board of ArtTable, Inc., the Tiffany Foundation, and Art Matters, Inc.

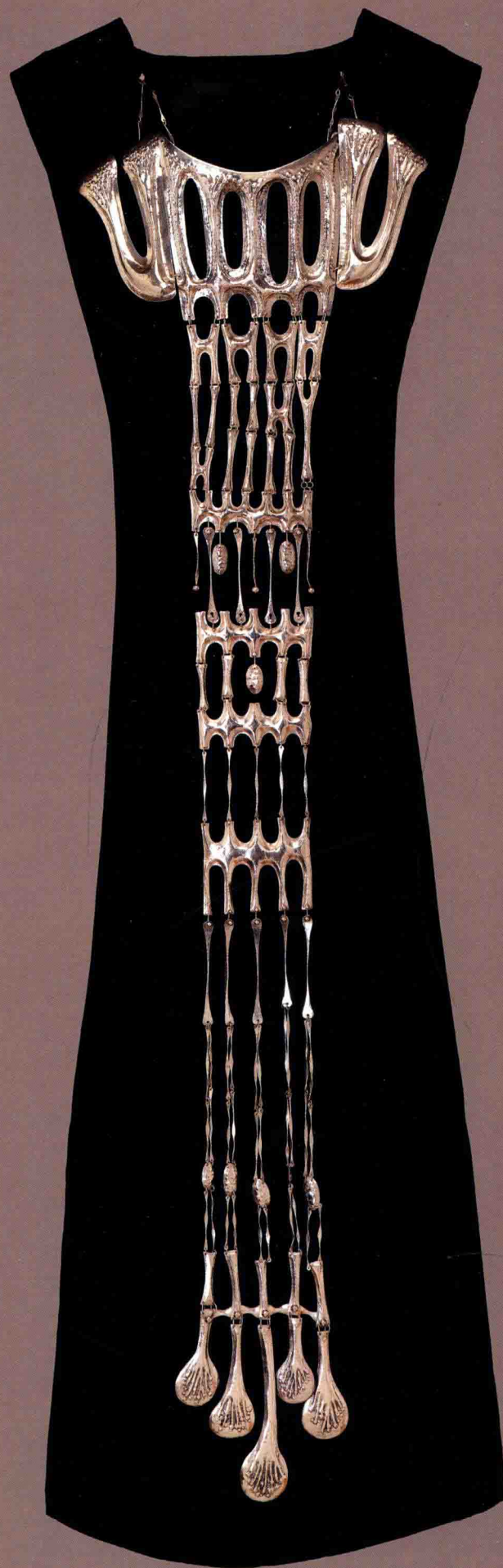
**TARA LEIGH TAPPERT** is an independent scholar, an archivist, and American art consultant. Through Tappert and Associates, she provides research, writing, and collections management services to arts and cultural organizations as well as private clients. Her scholarly focus is on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American art and culture and twentieth-century American craft history. She is the author of "Out of the Background: Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture" (1994; published online, 2009) and has written the Resource Lists, containing biographies and institutional histories, for MAD's three previous volumes on the history of twentieth-century American craft. She is currently investigating the ways in which the U.S. military embraced arts and crafts—in World War I as rehabilitation for healing and vocational training and in World War II as recreation to promote well-being and efficacy—with funding from the Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, Hendersonville, NC.



CAT. 2

**Ibram Lassaw, *Untitled (Necklace)*, c. 1950. Bronze. 6⅞ x 1⅞ in. (15.5 x 5 cm). Collection of Ernestine Lassaw, East Hampton, New York.**





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ARLINE M. FISCH

*Body Ornament*, 1966

STERLING SILVER, SYNTHETIC CREPE, AND SILK

FRONT: 45 X 12¼ IN. (114.3 X 31.1 CM);

BACK: 41 X 4½ IN. (104.1 X 11.4 CM);

VESTMENT: 53 X 15½ IN. (134.6 X 39.4 CM)

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN,

GIFT OF THE JOHNSON WAX COMPANY, THROUGH

THE AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL, 1977



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design* is the fourth in a series of exhibitions, catalogues, and conferences titled the Centenary Project. Originally funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Lila Wallace–Reader's Digest Fund, the Centenary Project was conceived by Janet Kardon, former director of the Museum, as the first in-depth examination of twentieth-century American craft. The first three acclaimed exhibitions—*The Ideal Home*; *Revivals! Diverse Traditions*; and *Craft in the Machine Age*—took place between 1993 and 1995. Plans for a fourth exhibition, focusing on the important post–World War II era, were suspended when scholars agreed that more time and perspective were needed before the topic was ready for presentation. The project was renewed in 2008, allowing us to present this important exhibition at our new location at 2 Columbus Circle. The 2011 exhibition has benefited from the guidance, support, and thoughtful contributions of an exceptional number of people.

In difficult economic times, we are profoundly grateful to the institutions, foundations, and individuals whose financial support made this project possible. The Centenary Project, including *Crafting Modernism*, was made possible at the outset by a major grant from the Lila Wallace–Readers' Digest Fund. Additional support for *Crafting Modernism* was provided by National Endowment for the Arts, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design. Major support for the exhibition catalogue was provided by the Windgate Charitable Foundation.

At the Museum, Director Holly Hotchner and Chief Curator David McFadden provided essential leadership for this project at the institutional level. Their dedication to the project over a number of years and their willingness to commit institutional resources to develop a major scholarly exhibition have ensured a legacy for the Museum as the first to present a comprehensive review of midcentury studio craft and design. We are also grateful for the support of MAD's board of trustees, many of whom are passionately

committed to the importance of the project and this exhibition in particular.

For insight into such a wide-ranging topic, we called on a group of scholars whose diverse perspectives were particularly helpful in establishing a broad and balanced approach. Advisors who generously offered their time and feedback at various stages of the project included: Glenn Adamson; Donald Albrecht; Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio, Clark + Del Vecchio; Edward S. Cooke, Yale University; Arthur Danto, Columbia University; Diane Douglas, Seattle City Club; Janet Kardon; Pat Kirkham and Catherine Whalen, Bard Graduate Center; Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture; Gerhardt Knodel; Mark Leach, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art; Bruce Metcalf; Jane Milosch, Smithsonian Institution; Michael Monroe; Derek Ostergard; Suzanne Ramljak, *Metalsmith* magazine; and Tara Tappert.

The catalogue is greatly enriched by the knowledgeable contributions of our essayists: Glenn Adamson; Donald Albrecht; Elissa Author; David Barquist; Ulysses Grant Dietz; Patricia Failing; Caroline Hannah; Ursula Ilse-Neuman; Bruce Metcalf, and Lowery Stokes Sims; Tara Tappert was lead author for the Artist Resource List. Our wise editor, Martina D'Alton, handled our lengthy manuscript with good humor, grace, and wit. We would also like to thank our publisher, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., for support of the catalogue from the beginning, and especially Senior Editor Andrea Danese, Managing Editor David Blatty, Designer Sarah Gifford, and Editorial Assistant Caitlin Kenney, for their dedication to creating a beautiful and lasting publication.

An exhibition and catalogue of this scope calls for a project manager of exceptional organizational talents. Assistant Curator Nurit Einik not only capably managed administrative and myriad other details, but she contributed her wide-ranging skills in everything from spreadsheets to graphic design, enhancing the project at every level. During the course of the project, we were fortunate to have the talented staff of the Museum of Arts and Design, including: John D'Ambrosio, Marisa Bartolucci, Dorothy Globus, Ellen Holdorf, Willow Holdorf, Judith Kamien, Cathleen Lewis, Josh Lucas-Falk, Brian McElhose, Molly McFadden, Brian MacFarland, Jane Ro, Robert Salemo, and Jake Yuzna. Keelin Burrows and Osanna Urbay were involved in early stages of this project. We would also like to single out Ursula Ilse-Neuman and Derek Ostergard, along with Ursula's assistants Jessica Nicewarner and Sarah Archer, whose early work on the exhibition laid fundamental groundwork. Wendy Evans Joseph, designer, and Chris Good, project manager, of Cooper Joseph Studio, created a rich and handsome setting for the varied objects in this exhibition.

To those private collectors who generously opened their doors to us, many of whom wish to remain anonymous, we are especially grateful for the opportunity to examine rare treasures. And to the museum curators, registrars, and collections managers at sister institutions around the country who kindly set aside time in their schedules to discuss

and share their collections, guide us in our search, and lend their prized works, we offer heartfelt thanks. Among the many who assisted in our efforts, we wish to recognize David Barquist, Elizabeth Agro, Kathryn Hiesinger, and Shanon Schuler, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Margaret Bullock, Tacoma Art Museum; Timothy Anglin Burgard, Elizabeth Cornu, and Stephen Correll, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Ashley Callahan, Georgia Museum of Fine Art; Christina Burke, Philbrook Museum of Art; Simona and Jerry Chazen; David Park Curry and Brittany Emens, Baltimore Museum of Art; Cheri Falkenstien-Doyle, Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian; Jamie Franklin, Bennington Museum; Catherine Futter, Nelson-Atkins Museum; Mary Douglas, Kamm Teapot Foundation; Barbara Haskell and Sasha Nicholas, Whitney Museum of American Art; Helen A. Harrison, Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center; Stephen Harrison, Cleveland Museum of Art; Rebecca R. Hart, The Detroit Institute of Arts; Barry Harwood, Brooklyn Museum; Eunice Haugen, Goldstein Museum of Design, University of Minnesota; Peter Held, Ceramics Research Center, Arizona State University; Sanford Hirsch and Nancy Litwin, The Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc.; Patricia Kane and John Stuart Gordon, Yale University Art Gallery; Susan Kowalczyk, Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art; Juliet Kinchin, Aidan O'Connor, and Paul Galloway, Museum of Modern Art; Matthew Kirsch, The Noguchi Museum; Kelly L'Ecuyer, Lauren Whitley and Emily Zilber, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Leah Levy, the Jay deFeo Estate; Kristin Makhholm, Minnesota Museum of American Art; Mary McNaughton and Kirk Delman, Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery, Scripps College; Forrest L. Merrill; Julie Muñiz, Oakland Museum of California; Tina Oldknow, Corning Museum of Glass; Diana Pardue, The Heard Museum; Sue Ann Robinson, Long Beach Museum; Debora Ryan, Everson Museum of Art; Judy Sourakli, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington; Bobbye Tigerman, Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Rebecca Tilghman, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Kevin Tucker, Dallas Museum of Art; Jill A. Wiltse and H. Kirk Brown III; John Zarobell, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Additionally we are exceptionally grateful to a number of people who offered valuable assistance, resources, and counsel, greatly benefiting both the exhibition and catalogue. These included: Soomi Hahn Amagasu, George Nakashima Woodworker, S.A.; Mary Barringer, editor, *Studio Potter*; Dick Boak, C.F. Martin & Co; Judith Burton, Columbia University Teachers College; Jan Brooks and Lane Coulter; Ralph Caplan; Tripp Carpenter; Margaret Carney, The Blair Museum of Lithophanes; Dane Cloutier; Harry Cooper, National Gallery of Art; Barbara Cowles; Helen Drutt; Kathryn Dudley, Yale University; Anna Fariello, Western Carolina University; Grant Feichtmeier; David Fine; Judith Hoos Fox, curatorsquared; Suzanne Frantz; Andrea Gill, John Gill, and Mary McInnes, New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University; Jenny M. Gill; Andrew Glasgow; Dale Gluckman; Deborah Goldberg; Toni Greenbaum; David Hanks; Mary Hu and