

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kelly Shindler to Lead The Fabric Workshop and Museum as New Executive Director



Photo credit: Constance Mensh

Philadelphia, PA, July 31, 2024— The Board of Directors of The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is pleased to announce that Kelly Shindler has been appointed Executive Director, effective September 23, 2024. From her earliest professional experiences at MASS MoCA, to her work at Art21, the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, and most recently The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Shindler has assembled a formidable skill set as a curator, storyteller, fundraiser, and grantmaker over a twenty-year career. Harry Philbrick, who has served as FWM’s Interim Executive Director since March 1, 2023, will depart with the transition in September.

“After a thorough nation-wide search, we’re thrilled to find in Kelly Shindler a dynamic professional whose breadth of experience and deep knowledge of Philadelphia and our program make her a perfect fit. On behalf of the Board, it’s my pleasure to

welcome her to The Fabric Workshop and Museum as our new Executive Director,” says FWM Board President Maja Paumgarten. “Throughout her career in Philadelphia and across the US, Shindler has been a champion of artists and their work, a fierce advocate for cultural relevance and inclusivity, and a credible and trusted partner of the diverse communities that her organizations serve. Kelly will position FWM to be innovative and entrepreneurial in its undertakings, building on its storied history of artist collaborations.”

Shindler joins FWM after eight years at The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage in Philadelphia, where she most recently served as Director of Exhibitions & Public Interpretation, a position held since 2020.

“The Fabric Workshop embodies a singular paradigm for artistic practice that must be protected and nurtured in our vulnerable cultural sector,” said Shindler. “With the Studio as its beating heart, it has brilliantly realized the dreams of many influential artists and shared them with broad audiences. I am proud to honor Kippy Stroud’s visionary legacy while guiding this beloved institution into its next meaningful chapter in collaboration with its talented staff and committed stakeholders.”

Paumgarten said, “While we welcome Kelly to the team, I want to express my utmost appreciation to Harry Philbrick for seeing us through the transition and continuing to advance the Workshop’s artistic and educational mission. As The Fabric Workshop and Museum approaches its 50th anniversary celebration in 2027, we’re enthusiastic about our future with Kelly at the helm.”

Kelly Shindler

An accomplished curator and administrator, Shindler has dedicated her career to amplifying creative voices and visions inside regional and national arts institutions across the US. At The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, a multidisciplinary grantmaker serving the Greater Philadelphia region, Shindler stewarded the organization’s support of its constituents by emphasizing service and collaboration. Most notably, she was an important thinking partner and collaborator in the design and implementation of a \$10.2M COVID-19 recovery fund initiative for Philadelphia’s cultural sector—a life-saving force for many arts organizations as they sought to stabilize operations, develop new approaches to programming and public engagement, and deepen commitments to DEIA initiatives. She also served on the planning team for the 2023 Philadelphia Cultural Treasures Project Grants, a collaborative fund providing Philadelphia-based BIPOC-led organizations and artists with critical support. Most recently, Shindler has worked in partnership with the Center’s Executive Director to design its current *Evolving Futures* grant initiative for strategic business model change.

At the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, where Shindler served as Associate Curator from 2011–2016, she organized nearly thirty solo and group exhibitions with artists at all stages of their careers, including *Deana Lawson* (2016), *Tala Madani: First Light* (2016; co-organized with MIT List Visual Arts Center), *The Propeller Group: Fusion (After a Universe of Collisions)* (2016), *Arlene Shechet: Urgent Matter* (2016), *Sheila Hicks* (2015), *Dear Nemesis: Nicole Eisenman 1993–2013* (2014–15; traveled to the ICA Philadelphia and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego), *Lari Pittman: A Decorated Chronology* (2013), and *Rosa Barba: Desert–Performed* (2012). Crucially, she expanded organizational and individual fundraising by securing over \$300,000 in support.

Shindler arrived at CAM St. Louis following a multifaceted tenure at Art21, Inc. the New York-based producer of the critically acclaimed docuseries *Art:21—Art in the Twenty-First Century*. There, she held various rising roles in documentary production, learning and

engagement, and content development. She led the organization's programmatic efforts and created its contemporary art education resources. Shindler established the Art21 Blog and served as its founding Editor-in-Chief. With one of the earliest guest blogging programs of its time, the site functioned as an arts writing incubator for myriad now-established journalists and curators. By the time Shindler left the organization in 2011, she had helped grow its partnerships to over 400 organizations internationally. Art21 has consistently filmed at FWM, documenting the creative process and exhibitions of artists such as Kiki Smith, Matthew Ritchie, and, most recently, Rose B. Simpson.

Shindler has also independently organized exhibitions for venues as varied as a ship on the Hudson River and the Art Institute of Chicago, and toured moving image programs to cinemas and festivals worldwide through her curatorial project Package Deals. She holds dual-MA degrees in Art History and Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

A Space for Artists

Founded in 1977 by Marion "Kippy" Boulton Stroud as a combined atelier and training facility for artists interested in the possibilities of printing on fabric, FWM has garnered an international reputation for engaging a broad range of contemporary artists to experiment and collaborate with its in-house Studio. With a heavy emphasis on new materials and techniques, this creative journey has been known to change the direction of an artist's practice and often results in the creation of original artworks, editions, and playful, imaginative exhibitions. Recent Artists-in-Residence include Rose B. Simpson, Henry Taylor, Jayson Musson, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, and Sonya Clark.

Each year, the Apprentice Training Program—the Workshop's founding education initiative in which artists develop skills for professional textile design and production—engages two dozen creatives from high schoolers to emerging artists and educators. With a commitment to skill building, FWM's Education program offers workshops that invite the public to learn printing and craft techniques such as screenprinting, dyeing, weaving, and garment-making.

Upcoming Exhibition

This winter, FWM will present *Soft/Cover*, an exhibition that takes over all galleries in its building to explore fabric as garment and as architecture, including projects created with Louise Nevelson, Robert Morris, Richard Tuttle, Carrie Mae Weems, Toshiko Takaezu, Marjorie Strider, and Vito Acconci, among others. Part homage to the institution's historical collaborations, it will also debut the outcome of current projects with artists new to the Workshop, including Brendan Fernandes, Mildred Beltré Martinez, John Killacky, Julia Chiang, Borna Sammak, Aimee Koran, Armando Veve, and Jenny Walton.

About The Fabric Workshop and Museum

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art museum devoted to the creation, presentation, and preservation of innovative works of art. Its mission—collaborating with artists, revealing new possibilities—embodies a 45-year commitment to helping artists experiment with the expressive possibilities of a broad spectrum of new materials and techniques. Through its renowned Artist-in-Residence Program, FWM provides artists at all stages of their careers with the opportunity to collaborate with its studio staff and take their work in fresh and often unexpected directions. FWM presents large-scale exhibitions, installations, and performative work, utilizing innovative fiber and other media including sculpture, installation, video, painting, photography, ceramics, and architecture. Founded in 1977, FWM brings this spirit of creative investigation and discovery to an eager audience, broadening access to art and advancing its role as a catalyst for innovation and social connection.

Hours: Wednesday—Friday, 12:00–6:00 pm, Saturday–Sunday, 12:00–5:00 pm

Entry: Free admission (suggested donation of \$5). Walk-ins welcome; advance reservations available at fabricworkshopandmuseum.org/tickets

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Media Contact

Justin Rubich

FWM Communications

Tel: 215.561.888 x224

Mob: 321.422.9734

jrubich@fabricworkshopandmuseum.org