



The Fabric Workshop and Museum

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) stimulates experimentation among leading contemporary artists, sharing the creative process with the public as a museum, studio, and educational center.

About

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) is an internationally-acclaimed contemporary art space devoted both to the creation and presentation of innovative works of art. Through its renowned Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program, FWM collaborates with mid-career and established artists to expand their practices while documenting the course of artistic production from inspiration to realization. Research and fabrication occur on-site in studios that are open to the public, inviting visitors to discover more of the artistic process as well as selected materials from an archive of past projects. The AIR Program—the creative nucleus of FWM—serves as the genesis for the Museum’s groundbreaking exhibition program, its impact furthered by related opportunities for local students and emerging artists. Apprenticeships for high school, college and post-graduate students are bolstered by public programming for all ages, providing technical skills as well as new horizons for creative expression.

Major support of FWM is provided by the Marion Boulton “Kippy” Stroud Foundation. FWM receives state art funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support is provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia Cultural Fund, Agnes Gund, and the Board of Directors and Members of The Fabric Workshop and Museum.

History

Since its inception in 1977, The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) has developed from an ambitious experiment to a unique contemporary art museum, including a significant permanent collection documenting over 40 years of artistic innovation, a critically acclaimed on-site and touring exhibition program, and an extensive educational outreach program of tours, apprenticeships, lectures, and internships.

At the outset, Marion “Kippy” Boulton Stroud (1939-2015) envisioned founding an organization that combined the activities of the Finnish fabric printing company Marimekko—which promotes design excellence in everyday objects—with contemporary printmaking ateliers such as Gemini G.E.L. and Universal Limited Art Editions (U.L.A.E.) which encourage artists to experiment with techniques unfamiliar to them, such as lithography or etching. With these models, Stroud established an inner-city art education program that provided a creative outlet for artists of all ages, while also training them for careers in the textile industry.

Through Stroud's leadership, FWM developed into an internationally-renowned contemporary art museum, distinguished by one of the country's most innovative residency programs and complimented by well-regarded education and apprenticeship programs. In 1996, the word "Museum" was officially added to the name of the institution to reflect its growing collection of contemporary art, its commitment to the presentation and preservation of these holdings, and its broadening educational component.

Working alongside FWM's highly trained staff as part of the celebrated Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program, leading contemporary artists have realized a wide spectrum of ambitious projects and installations. Over the years, experiments with fabric have expanded to embrace new materials and methods; artworks resulting from this collaborative creative process have pushed the definitions and possibilities of contemporary art practice with the integration of innovative techniques, applications, and presentations. FWM's permanent collection currently holds more than 5,000 objects created by past Artists-in-Residence.

After Stroud's untimely death in 2015, Susan L. Talbott stepped in as Interim Executive Director shortly after retiring from a seven-year-long tenure at the helm of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT. Upon arrival, she immediately began instituting organizational and physical innovations at FWM and soon assumed the role of Executive Director, furthering Stroud's vision with the imaginative capacity of a contemporary art curator and the skills of a seasoned museum director.

In April 2019, Talbott announced her retirement after nearly four years of service, effective late September. During this time, she will continue to oversee the operations and programming of FWM while assisting the Board of Directors in its search for and eventual transition to a new Executive Director. Recently, FWM also announced the appointment of Karen Patterson as the museum's first-ever titled curator. Patterson, who joined FWM from the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, WI, assumed her new curatorial post in July 2019.

Programs

Artist-in-Residence Program

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) invites contemporary artists to create new work using experimental materials and techniques. The internationally-acclaimed program hosts mid-career and established regional, national, and international contemporary artists who have a demonstrated commitment to innovation and exploration. To that end, FWM supports artistic experimentation by providing honorariums and materials to artists, and employing its facilities and staff to address their creative needs. Artists are invited by the Executive Director in consultation with FWM's Artist Advisory Committee (AAC). The AAC, comprised of a distinguished group of artists, curators, scholars, and museum professionals, meets 1-2 times a year to recommend, review, and select artists for upcoming residencies.

Education Programs

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) offers a myriad of opportunities for students, teachers, and families to engage with our exhibitions, studios and teaching artists, including: College and Post-Graduate Apprentice Training Program, High School Apprentice Training Program, Study Tours and Hands-on Workshops, K-12 On-Site Studio Programs, Family, Teen and Adult Programs.

- **College and Post-Graduate Apprentice Training Program (ATP)**

ATP is a holistic experience enabling artists to develop skills in silkscreen printing and working with fabric to expand their studio practice. With the support of FWM master printers, apprentices develop skills in screen-printing on fabric, learning how to create repeat designs, mix colors with textile pigment, registering multiple screens, and printing one-color and three-color repeat yardage. Apprentices also assist with projects related to studio operations, visitor services, education, and the FWM archive. Past apprentices have come to FWM from across the U.S. and beyond.

- **High School Apprentice Training Program (HSATP)**

HSATP is an after-school art program for students interested in developing new tools for artistic expression and self-empowerment in a professional museum and studio environment. The program offers exceptional art education for teenagers from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds, expanding resources and improving art education for high school students in the Philadelphia region. Twelve-week sessions in the spring and fall explore screen-printing textiles with an emphasis on building collaborative skills. During the summer eight-week session, apprentices receive training in public speaking and giving tours, deepening their understanding of museum operations.

- **Study Tours and Hands-On Workshops**

Specialized tours of FWM’s exhibitions and studios are available for pre-school and school-age (elementary, middle, high and home school) participants, as well as college and adult groups. Tours may include screen-printing, drawing, sculpture or movement exercises in the galleries; exhibition-inspired workshops engage the minds and bodies of young artists with age-appropriate activities connecting to the process, materials, and concepts expressed in an artist’s work. Qualified schools are invited to inquire about Bus Grants and discounted workshop rates; a limited number of grants are available.

- **K-12 On-Site Studio Programs**

The On-Site Studio Program extends FWM’s studio-based artmaking activities into Philadelphia public schools. FWM-trained teaching artists—often former college apprentices—work with K-12 classes and their teachers to develop a curriculum that suits their art education needs. Teaching artists guide and facilitate collectively-designed screen-printing projects that participating students print by hand in FWM’s professional print studio. On-Site Studio is funded by local foundations and serves hundreds of K-12 students annually.

- **Family and Teen Programs**

FWM’s public programs explore contemporary art in innovative ways designed to connect to and inspire families and younger audiences. Using the museum’s exhibitions and unique studio environment as a foundation for learning, Family and Teen Programs feature hands-on activities that stimulate curiosity while encouraging children and adults to learn about art and culture together.

- **Adult Programs**

Drawn from the concepts and processes that shape the current exhibition, FWM’s adult programs introduce our adult audiences to new methods of making and self-expression.

Permanent Collection

The Fabric Workshop and Museum (FWM) both makes and presents, documenting the course of artistic production from inspiration to realization. Residencies with more than 800 artists have helped generate a permanent collection of more than 5,000 objects—completed works, material research, and experimental prototypes—chronicling FWM’s history of collaboration and tracing major movements in the field since 1977. An extensive archive of photographs and video documentation also highlights artists making and speaking about their work. The collection will soon be accessible to the public through a web-based platform thanks to an IMLS-funded digitization project. Works in the permanent collection fall into three categories:

- **Commissioned Works by Artists-in-Residence**

Works include large-scale installations, sculptures, drawings, paintings, hand screen-printed fabric garments and textiles;

- **Artist Boxes**

Archival boxes include samples, prototypes, swatches, and other materials related to the creative process and gathered at the end of each artist’s residency;

- **Photography and Video**

Documentation of the creative process from artists’ residencies, artist and curator lectures, exhibitions, special fabrication techniques, and education-related activities.

Accessibility

The main entrance to FWM at 1214 Arch Street is accessible to individuals using standard-sized wheelchairs. Please note that the main entrance does not have an automatic opener and FWM does not have reserved parking spaces. All floors of FWM are accessible by elevator and have accessible, single user restrooms. Public access to floors varies based upon our exhibition and public programming schedule. Manual wheelchairs are available free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. No reservations are necessary; please inquire at the reception desk on the 1st floor. If you have questions or concerns about accessibility at FWM, or if you require a specific accommodation, we would be happy to discuss how we can help meet your needs. For all requests and inquiries, please call [\(215\) 561-8888](tel:215-561-8888) ext. 233 (voice).