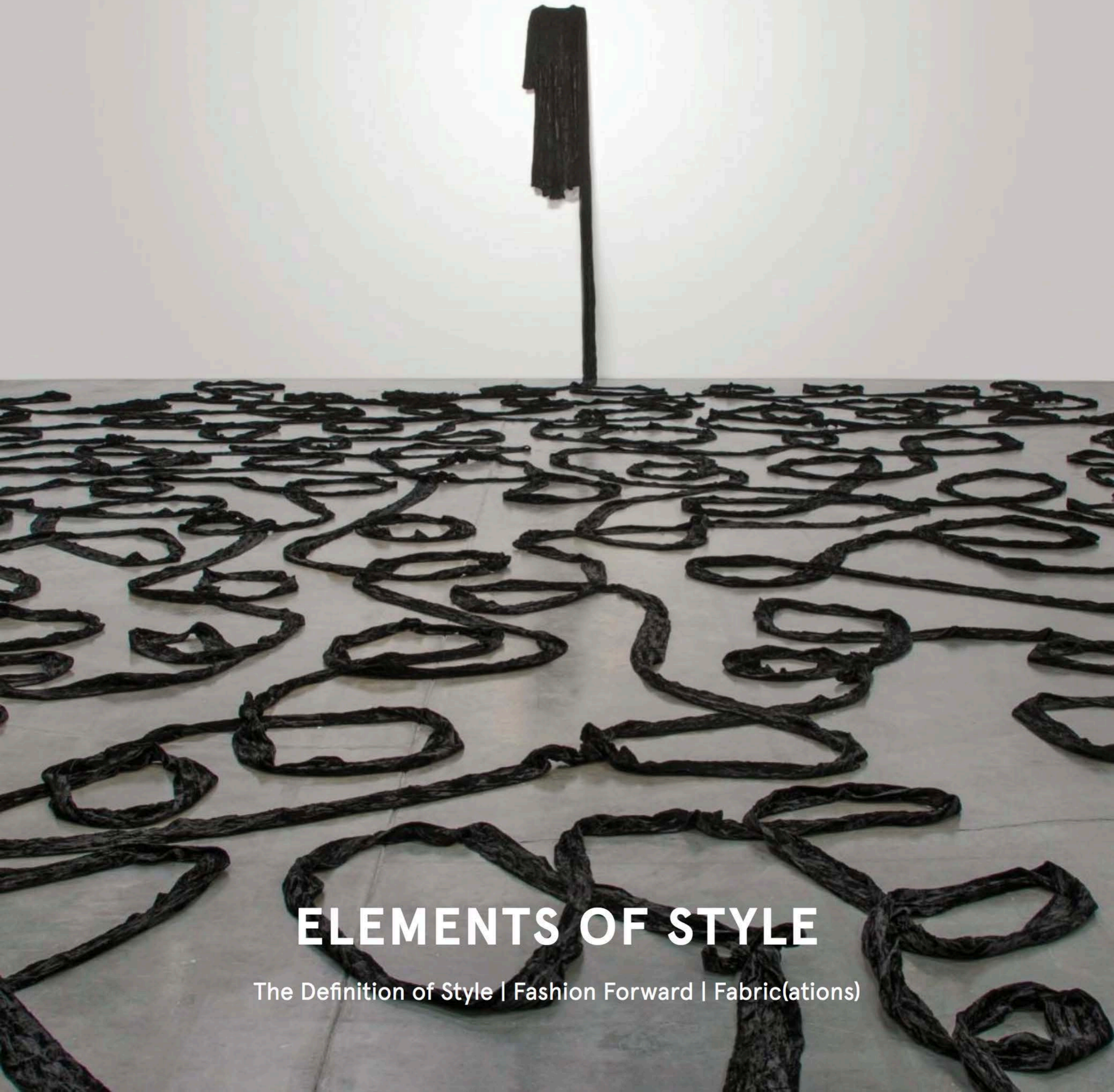


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# PRATTFOLIO

THE MAGAZINE OF PRATT INSTITUTE



**ELEMENTS OF STYLE**

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# The Definition of Style

Five iconic Pratt artists and designers on what style means to them.

By Charlotte Savidge

Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines style as "a particular way in which something is done, created, or performed; a particular form or design of something; a way of behaving or of doing things." A recent look at the most popular articles in *The New York Times's* Style Section online includes pieces on subjects ranging from sheet pan chicken and Indian pilgrimage feasts to rethinking passion and remaking *Downton Abbey's* Lady Edith. As one of the world's foremost colleges of art and design, Pratt Institute recognizes the contributions its alumni and faculty have made to the world of style. In the pages that follow, iconic Pratt artists and designers in five creative fields discuss what style means to them and how their approach extends throughout their personal and creative lives.

## Laura Bohn, B.F.A. '77 Interior Design



**Laura Bohn** is founder of Laura Bohn Design Associates, a New York-based international interior design consulting firm. Bohn has produced a wide range of residential and commercial interiors in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, including the conversion of a Beaux Arts bank into an 11-unit residential building where she also lives. The recipient of two *Interior Design* Roscoe awards for her fabric and wallpaper designs, Bohn was inducted into the *Interior Design* Hall of Fame in 1998.

### What is your definition of style?

Style is the ability to discriminate. It is the packaging of curated ideas, being selective with an understanding of the “big picture.” Having a critical eye, an awareness of detail, and—last but not least—an ability to reinterpret ordinary things in a new way.

### How would you describe your style as an interior designer?

I’m a modernist at heart, my goal being to simplify the way of living to the most essential level, but making sure that it is still practical, welcoming, and dramatic.

### What three words would you use to describe your personal style?

Bold, classic, and timeless (I hope).

### What do you consider the most important element of your personal style?

My spiky white hair; I can always be spotted a mile away.

### What role has your style played in your career?

I am as passionate about fashion as I am about interior design; it’s a designer’s curse to be visually critical of everyday objects. Detail and proportion dictate everything you do, even down to buying a toothbrush.

### What influence did your time at Pratt have on your style as an interior designer?

I learned minimalism at Pratt. My professor at the time, well-known interior designer Joe D’Urso, instilled in me the love of simplicity and the detailing of it. He taught me the thrill of “the plan” and how you move through the space.

### Has your style changed since your time at Pratt? If so, how?

My basic training as a minimalist is still in place. My plans always consider how you move through the space and what you will see next, creating elements of surprise. My style developed while working for other designers—editing and rejecting ideas as they happened—always collecting inspiration along the way.

### What person, living or dead, do you consider the epitome of style and why?

My mother, who was seriously stylish. She was an artist, a designer, and an athlete, among other things. She’s the reason I became a designer, as she was such a good designer herself.

Above: Interior of a Bridgehampton residence designed by Laura Bohn. Courtesy of Laura Bohn Design Associates.

# BEYOND THE GATES

Pratt's Presence in the Public Realm

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L-R: 2014 Pratt Institute Alumni Achievement Award recipients Albert Konetzni Jr. (accepting on behalf of his father, Albert Konetzni), Adam Selman, Jennifer Wen Ma, Laura Bohn, Goulda Downer, Bruce M. Newman. Photo by Margarita Corporan.

## Esteemed Pratt Graduates Honored at 2014 Alumni Achievement Awards

The Pratt Institute 2014 Alumni Achievement Awards, which recognize graduates who have distinguished themselves in their fields, were presented to six accomplished alumni at the University Club on March 20. This year's recipients were Laura Bohn (B.F.A. Interior Design '77), Goulda Downer (B.S. Nutrition & Dietetics '84), Albert Konetzni (Certified Illustrator '35), Bruce M. Newman (B.F.A. Interior Design '53), Adam Selman (B.F.A. Fashion Design '04), and Jennifer Wen Ma (M.F.A. Fine Arts '99).

In their acceptance speeches, the award recipients emphasized the impact that Pratt has had on their careers. Adam Selman—a designer, stylist for Rihanna, and recipient of the Early Career Award—said that Pratt taught him to value his vision and strive to be a fashion leader.

Jennifer Wen Ma, a multimedia artist who received the International Career Award, and whose works include visual effects for the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, added “Pratt is a place to dream, to nurture and be nurtured, to experiment and explore.”

In addition to Ma and Selman, Trustee Emeritus Bruce Newman, whose numerous gifts to Pratt have supported campus beautification, received the Distinguished Service Award; Dr. Goulda Downer received the Community Commitment Award for her contributions to society, particularly through her work in HIV/AIDS care; Albert Konetzni received the Lifetime Achievement Award in honor of his long career as an art director at Disney; and Laura Bohn received the Distinguished Career Award for her award-winning work as an interior designer.