



# NYC Museum Highlight - Ebony G. Patterson at the Museum of Arts and Design

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by Pat Rogers

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) exhibits Ebony G. Patterson's "Dead Treez" featuring intricate mixed-media installations and jacquard photo tapestries that explore what it means to be visible in terms of class, gender, race and the media. The art is highly adorned, decorative and aggressive with both images and objects intending to attract and seduce the viewers, challenging them to look closer, according to the New York City museum. This is the first solo New York City museum show by Ebony G. Patterson, who is based in Kingston, Jamaica and Lexington, KY.

Patterson's current works explore the constructions of the masculine within popular cultural using the Jamaican dancehall culture as platform to launch the discussion. Using the ways popular cultural influences and defines masculinity as a leaping point, Patterson's work has explored how males "adorn" themselves including the fashionable practice of skin bleaching and the bling culture and masculinity within urban culture, according to her [artist website](#).

Her art aimed to raise questions about body politics, gender, and beauty in relation to gender, stereotyping, race along with body and ritual, Patterson explains in her artist statement. It also examines masculinity in relationship to the feminine and the ways the two parallel each other. Making use of a range of mediums (drawing, painting, installation, street projects, mixed media tapestries, mixed media photographs, wallpaper and more), Patterson's work explores image, language, gender, masculinity and the notion of gender and identity as masquerade, she writes. These explorations have pushed her art to become more decorative, decadent, iconic and confrontational, according to Patterson.

In "Dead Treez", Patterson presents five eye-popping tapestries and a life-size figural tableau of ten male mannequins, dressed in a kaleidoscopic mix of floral fabrics. Meant to present a complex vision of masculinity, the installation is a meditation on dancehall fashion and culture, regarded as a celebration of the disenfranchised in postcolonial Jamaica. according to MAD. Her tapestries depict murder victims, as sourced through social media, embellished to seduce viewers into witnessing the underreported brutality experienced by those on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder.

In the museum's Tiffany Jewelry Gallery, Patterson continues MAD's new POV series with "...buried again to carry on growing...", an installation of the permanent jewelry collection through the perspective of her own studio practice. Extending themes from "Dead Treez", the artist turns the gallery into a garden-like environment of poisonous plants with three scenarios, in which bodies

sheathed in patterned fabrics have succumbed to violence often endemic to marginalized communities. Throughout the cases, works of jewelry selected from MAD's permanent collection are positioned to appear as though the pieces once belonged to the bodies that are disappearing in the underbrush.

"Dead Treez" was organized by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin and curated by Karen Patterson. It was secured for the Museum of Arts and Design by William and Mildred Lasdon Chief Curator, Shannon R. Stratton. "...buried again to carry on growing..." is an original MAD exhibition, organized by Stratton with the support of Curatorial Assistant and Project Manager, Barbara Paris Gifford.

Ebony G. Patterson has been selected to exhibit in the 32nd annual [Bienal de São Paulo - \*Incerteza viva\* \[Live Uncertainty\]](#), which will be held September 10 to December 11, 2016. Patterson is represented by [Monique Meloche Gallery](#) in Chicago.



Installation View of "Ebony G. Patterson: Dead Treez" at the Museum of Arts and Design. Photo: Butcher Walsh © Museum of Arts and Design.



"the passing (dead daadi)," by Ebony G. Patterson, 2013. Hand embellished tapestry, 90 x 68 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago Hirshberg Collection, LA.



Installation View of "... buried again to carry on growing ..." A POV by Ebony G. Patterson at the Museum of Arts and Design. Photo: Butcher Walsh © Museum of Arts and Design.

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**BASIC FACTS:** "Ebony G. Patterson: Dead Treez" opened November 10, 2015 and continues through April 3, 2016. The Museum of Arts and Design is located at 2 Columbus Circle, New York, NY 10019. [www.madmuseum.org](http://www.madmuseum.org).

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