

Shaker Museum

CLAUDIA GOULD, FORMER JEWISH MUSEUM DIRECTOR, TO LEAD SHAKER MUSEUM DURING TRANSFORMATION ERA

New York cultural figure brings record of innovation and institutional revitalization as Shaker Museum embarks on \$30M expansion designed by Selldorf Architects

CHATHAM, NY, August 13, 2025 — Shaker Museum, home to the world's most significant collection of Shaker material culture, has named Claudia Gould, renowned for her transformative tenure at the Jewish Museum, as its next Executive Director. Gould's appointment arrives as the museum commences the boldest evolution in its history: construction of a new flagship space by Selldorf Architects in downtown Chatham. Within the new space, there will be a renewed push to connect the Shaker legacy of design, egalitarianism, and community to today's audiences.

Gould steps into the top post in the museum's milestone 75th year, at a moment when the American arts landscape is increasingly attentive to a dialogue between past and present. Known nationally for curatorial risk-taking and visionary leadership, Gould will oversee the museum's growth—including strategic planning, fundraising, and public engagement—at a time when institutions are reimagining their roles and relevance.

"Shaker Museum occupies a unique role in the global cultural landscape. Its permanent collection of Shaker material continues to inspire and invite collaboration with artists and designers making work today; and its values of simplicity, equality, cooperation, and mindful

industry feel urgently contemporary,” Gould said. “I’m honored to join an institution poised to share the Shaker ethos in a facility that will both honor and expand their legacy. I look forward to working with the board and community to ensure the collection’s relevance and resonance now and for the future.”

As Director of the Jewish Museum from 2011 to 2023, Gould oversaw an ambitious renovation, grew its endowment, and brought a dynamic, cross-disciplinary program to one of New York’s most storied cultural institutions. By bringing a contemporary lens to the whole institution, Gould revitalized the museum in effect moving the needle without moving the mission. Previous roles include transformative posts at the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (ICA Philadelphia) and Artists Space, further cementing Gould’s reputation as a leading voice in museum innovation, inclusion, and scholarship.

“Claudia’s leadership arrives at a pivotal moment—not just for Shaker Museum, but for upstate New York’s cultural landscape,” said Paul Cassidy, Board Chair. “Her track record in deepening engagement, amplifying under-told stories, and stewarding institutional growth will be invaluable as we open a new era for the museum and Chatham as a cultural destination.”

Over the past 36 months, during the design review phase for its new facility, Shaker Museum has continued to present meaningful work and create experiences both locally and internationally. The museum has presented a series of pop-up exhibitions curated by talents including Katie Stout, Emily Adams Bode, and hettler.tüllmann, all members of the museum’s Makers’ Circle of contemporary creators. In the fall of 2024, “CRADLED,” an exhibition curated by Academy Award-winning actress and producer Frances McDormand and conceptual artist Suzanne Bocanegra for Shaker Museum, opened at the Kinderhook Knitting Mill. The exhibition explored the core Shaker values of compassion, caretaking, and community, particularly through the use of adult-sized cradles which were built by Shakers to provide nurturing care and respect at the end of life. Additionally, “The Shakers: A World in the Making,” a traveling exhibition featuring significant pieces from Shaker Museum’s collection, was unveiled at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany in June 2025. Next year, this exhibition will travel to ICA Philadelphia and the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Shaker Museum's 30,000-square-foot expansion is being designed by Selldorf Architects, recognized for their work at the Frick Collection, LUMA Arles, and the National Gallery (London). Designed to anchor downtown Chatham while echoing the Shakers' ideals, the new museum will showcase highlights from the 18,000-object permanent collection, offer public spaces for education and engagement, and serve as a hub for dialogue about design, social history, and contemporary culture.

The \$30 million project includes generous grants from Empire State Development (ESD) and the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and will position Shaker Museum as a standout in New York State's cultural landscape.

About Shaker Museum

With more than 18,000 objects, Shaker Museum stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives. Founded in 1950, the museum celebrates its 75th anniversary and several milestones this year. In April, it broke ground on its new permanent home in Chatham, NY, designed by Selldorf Architects. In May, it began relocating its library and administrative offices to 29 Jones Avenue in Chatham. In June, "The Shakers: A World in the Making," a collaborative exhibition featuring 150 pieces from Shaker Museum's collection, opened at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. And in August, the museum welcomed Claudia Gould as its new Executive Director. In addition to Chatham, current museum locations include collections storage in Old Chatham, NY, pop-up exhibition space in Kinderhook, NY, and the historic Mount Lebanon Shaker Village site in New Lebanon, NY. View the museum's collection online anytime at shakermuseum.us.

A photo of Claudia Gould may be downloaded [here](#).

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