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Title: *Scott Burton: Shape Shift*
Authors: Jess Wilcox and Heather Alexis Smith
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A New Art Publication Provides Vivid and Intimate View of the Art of Scott Burton

ST. LOUIS, MO, June 26, 2025 — The Pulitzer Arts Foundation in St. Louis and Alphawood Exhibitions in Chicago announce today the September 16, 2025 release date for *Scott Burton: Shape Shift*. The authoritative new publication comprehensively documents the exhibition of the same name, which will be on view at Wrightwood 659 from October 3, 2025 to January 31, 2026, having originated at the Pulitzer (Fall 2024).

The new book is designed to serve as an essential source for scholars, artists, and others interested in the intentions and legacy of Scott Burton (1939-1989), an original and path-breaking artist whose wide-ranging practice anticipated many of the strategies of today's art. *The New York Times* credited the exhibition, *Scott Burton: Shape Shift*, with contributing substantially to a revival of interest in the artist, whose legacy remained largely unexamined in the decades following his death from an AIDS-related illness in 1989.

During a closeted period in contemporary art, Burton imaginatively engaged the issue of queer identity and, at a time when the subject was alien to the art world, the democratic thrust behind public space. In doing so, the erudite artist drew upon a wide range of knowledge, from the decorative arts to minimalist sculpture, and beyond.

One hundred and thirty-five illustrations include never-before-published photographs and sketches and exceptional new photographs of the artist's furniture-like sculpture, both as discrete objects and in installation. *Shape Shift* also features original texts exploring Burton's work from different perspectives by the exhibition curators Jess Wilcox and Heather Alexis Smith; art historians David J. Getsy and Kathy Halbreich; and the artists Gordon Hall and Brendan Fernandes. Wilcox's essay outlines how Burton's

multifaceted practice—including lesser known performance, art criticism, and curating—builds towards his public art and challenges traditional retrospective readings of his work. Across seventeen object-based texts, Smith traces Burton’s development of key motifs, concepts, and materials, connecting them to his broader artistic and social agendas. Getsy writes on the resurgence of figuration in Burton’s late work in the context of the 1980s perspective on AIDS. An afterword by Halbriech reflects on her time working with the artist on a commission he realized at MIT in the 1980s and his ambition for art’s social usefulness. An adaptation of a performance lecture by Hall meditates on the philosophy, psychology, and social dynamics of waiting presented by Burton’s seating. Fernandes frames *In Two*, a series of scores, performances, and an installation of curtains commissioned as a homage to Burton, taking the form of a conversation between the two artists that unfolds across time and space. The publication contains an exhibition checklist, selected bibliography and exhibition history.

About the Pulitzer Arts Foundation

Located in the Grand Center Arts District, the Pulitzer Arts Foundation is dedicated to bringing world-class art and exhibitions to the St. Louis region. Exhibitions include both contemporary and historic art and are complemented by a wide range of free public programs, including music, literary arts, dance, and cultural discussions. Open and free to all, the Pulitzer is a cultural and civic asset to the St. Louis community and a popular destination for visitors from around the world. The museum is open Thursday through Sunday, 10am–5pm, with evening hours until 8pm on Friday. For more information, visit pulitzerarts.org.

About Alphawood Exhibitions

Alphawood Exhibitions is an affiliate of Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based, private grantmaking foundation working for an equitable, just, and humane society.

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