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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Famous Chicago Sculptures Move to Racine, Wisconsin

The Racine Art Museum (RAM) announces the debut display of six steel sculptures by Chicago artist John Kearney. The works, which depict two giraffes, a pelican, two goats, and a standing female nude, are installed on the grounds of RAM's Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts (Wustum) in Racine, Wisconsin. The works are welded out of recycled steel automobile bumpers and are close to life sized.

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John Kearney

Giraffe, ca.1979, Steel

Private collection

Photography: Jon Bolton, Racine

The pair of giraffes and a nanny goat were once familiar sights on Elaine Place in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood on the city's north side. For a long period of time, they were installed outside a residential property belonging to the sculptures' owners. When that apartment building was sold to a new owner, Kearney's giraffes were not included in the sale. The pieces were placed in storage, in need of a new home. Their removal was covered in depth by the

Chicago area media in November 2012 because these animal sculptures were embraced and cherished by the neighborhood residents, who often decorated the works for specific holidays.

The pieces are now on loan to RAM from a private collection. The exhibition of these works in Racine was arranged and facilitated by Chicago area art dealer and consultant, Jeffrey Kraft of JL Kraft Fine Art.

"Wisconsin residents always welcome Chicagoans when they travel here for vacations and getaways. We are pleased the giraffes and their friends will be spending time with us on our grounds at RAM's Wustum Museum as they vacation in our state," said Bruce W. Pepich, Executive Director and Curator of Collections at Racine Art Museum.

The six sculptures, which have recently been restored, are placed in different locations throughout Wustum's 13-acre grounds, which include a one-acre formal garden designed in the 1950s by the noted Wisconsin landscape architect Alfred L. Boerner (1900-1955). Boerner was also the architect of the Boerner Botanical gardens constructed in Milwaukee County in the 1930s. The Wustum gardens are also home to sculptures by Milton Hebard and Anna Hyatt Huntington that create a dialogue with Kearney's pieces.

The sculptor, John Kearney, was born in Omaha, Nebraska in 1924, but has spent much of his life working in Chicago. Kearney studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and in Italy. He is the co-founder of the Contemporary Art Workshop in Chicago, which operated from 1949 until 2009. Kearney is known for creating large-scale figurative works—often depicting animals—out of automobile bumpers or bronze. His works can be found in the permanent collections of: the Canton Art Institute, Ohio; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk,

Virginia; Ft. Wayne Museum of Art, Indiana; Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; and RAM. Kearney has four sculptures in Chicago's Oz Park:

The Tin Man(1995), *Cowardly Lion* (2001), *Scarecrow*(2005) and *Dorothy and Toto*(2007), celebrating L. Frank Baum (1856-1919), author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, who at one time lived a few miles east of the park's location.

Located in the northwest section of the city, RAM's Wustum Museum is just two miles away from the Racine Art Museum in downtown Racine. The grounds are open for public touring and enjoyment whenever the museum is open.

This exhibition is made possible in part by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd; SC Johnson; Windgate Charitable Foundation.

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Together, the two campuses of the Racine Art Museum, RAM in downtown Racine at 441 Main Street and the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts at 2519 Northwestern Avenue, seek to elevate the stature of contemporary crafts to that of fine art by exhibiting significant works in craft media with painting, sculpture and photography, while providing outstanding educational art programming.

Docent led contemporary craft and architectural tours of the museums are available. Both campuses of the Racine Art Museum, are open to the public Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and are closed Mondays, Federal holidays and Easter. RAM is open Sunday Noon - 5:00 pm, while Wustum is closed Sundays. An admission fee of \$5 for adults, with reduced fees for students and seniors, applies at RAM. Admission to Wustum is free. Members are always admitted without charge to either campus.

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