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Racine Art Museum Explores Family Connections

Racine Art Museum investigates the creative process by presenting work of familial artists-couples, parents and children, or siblings--drawn primarily from RAM's collection. There will be a concentration of collaborative ceramic work borrowed from emerging artists, twin brothers Kelly and Kyle Phelps.

Racine, WI June 29, 2015 - The Racine Art Museum (RAM) takes a look at how shared environments might shape the creative process. Open through October 4, 2015, ***All in the Family: Featuring Kelly and Kyle Phelps*** showcases the work of families of artists--couples, parents and children, and siblings.

Whether or not artists are creating works collaboratively, it is interesting to consider how they may affect one another's working processes or sources for ideas. For instance, are children raised in creative households more or less likely to be interested in making when they are older? Do artists sharing the same environment investigate the same topics--consciously or sub-consciously? Rather than outline definitive ideas about creativity, this exhibition offers an opportunity to raise questions and to consider human behavior.

The centerpiece of *All in the Family* is a concentration of collaborative sculptural work borrowed from emerging artists Kelly and Kyle Phelps. The Phelps are African-American identical twin brothers who create mixed media work that addresses the complex role of the middle class in contemporary society. Drawing on their own blue-collar upbringing in a Midwestern factory town, they explore the "plight" of the anonymous laborer through gritty, visceral reliefs and small-scale sculptures. Often incorporating objects found on factory floors, the artists build scenes collaboratively. Their backgrounds in ceramics and sculpture offer a strong framework for constructing narratives that combine socio-political topics regarding race and class with personal memory and experience.

Further exploring a dialogue about creativity and familial relationships, the Phelps' sculptures are compared with artworks from RAM's holdings. Perhaps

surprisingly, the exhibition features over 50 collection works-sculpture, jewelry, textiles, turned wood vessels, prints, and paintings-by artists who are connected through intimate circumstances such as marriage, romantic partnerships, or bloodline.

Several artists associated with Wisconsin are represented by works in *All in the Family* including Robert Burkert, Nancy Ekholm Burkert, Warrington Colescott, Ken Loeber, Dona Look, Frances Myers, Tom Rauschke and Kaaren Wiken, J. Shimon and J. Lindeman, Anthony C. Stoeveken, and Christel-Anthony Tucholke.

All in the Family: Featuring Kelly and Kyle Phelps is made possible at Racine Art Museum by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, SC Johnson, Windgate Charitable Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, Osborne and Scekic Family Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, W.T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - Racine County, Racine United Arts Fund, Real Racine, Runzheimer Foundation, Inc., Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, The Garvey Group, In Sink Erator, Modine Manufacturing Foundation, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Polyform Products, Inc., Ruud Family Foundation, Inc., Wisconsin Public Radio.

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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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