

# R|A|M

## ***Pieces: Collage and Assemblage from RAM's Collection***

March 12, 2025 – June 14, 2025

As art forms, collage and assemblage are most closely associated with the modern era—particularly the early twentieth century. However, as a technique, collage—with its root word *coller* meaning to stick together or glue—has been practiced for centuries. While both collage and assemblage involve piecing together materials, collage describes two-dimensional compositions while assemblage generally characterizes three-dimensional works.

Often, although not exclusively, collage and assemblage feature found or non-traditional art media. Many modern and contemporary artists even draw attention to their usage of various, often unexpected materials. Rather than disguising the multiple components of collage and assemblage, they explore ways of combining and expanding the information visually to create a unified whole made of bits and pieces of other things. Artists often engage elements that reflect modern life or larger themes—for example, found and recycled materials, or socially or politically charged images.

Focused on the breadth of two- and three-dimensional work in RAM's collection, this exhibition includes sculpture, collage, jewelry, quilts, and art to wear compiled from or appearing as a variety of individual pieces. In addition to being an exploration of artist process and material exploration, *Pieces* underscores the ability of some artists to recontextualize the marginalized or overlooked and to imbue the ordinary with something extraordinary.

With an emphasis on repurposed and found materials, this exhibition supports RAM's Zero Waste Art Initiative, an ongoing and multi-faceted project encouraging reconsideration of consumption habits and creative solutions for reuse. As outlined by RAM's Education Department, this initiative "is working to establish partnerships with local businesses and manufacturing plants to reduce their waste and keep it out of landfills by turning these materials into educational, eco-art."

### **Lisa Marie Barber**

*"My aesthetic sensibility is rooted in Mexican Folk Art and the Latin American Catholic shrines of my heritage and upbringing. For most of my childhood in Southern Arizona, this was the only artwork I knew and I always practiced making creations in similar ways. Whether it was through my naive interpretation or some forgotten informal training I received as a child, I came to believe that ornamentation and excess*

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*denoted value and importance. Materials weren't required to be "fine" and tools were expected to be simple. Evidence of "the hand" (the maker) was never something to be self-conscious of, or craftily removed. Throughout my life, I've remained loyal to this style of making."*

Wisconsin-based artist Lisa Marie Barber (1970 - ) creates work ranging from large-scale ceramic installations to mixed media quilts. Regardless of what media Barber is working in, her inspiration stays the same and she uses similar motifs such as flowers, houses, hearts, and the human figure. In her fiber work, such as the quilt in RAM's collection, she combines various printmaking and drawing techniques with embellishments, embroidery, appliqués, and hand sewing to create imagery, branching beyond traditional quilting practice and into the realm of fabric collage.

In 1992, Barber received her BS in Sociology from Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, and in 1998, she earned her MFA in Ceramics from the University of Texas at Austin. She currently teaches in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, and in 2022, received the Stella Gray Teaching Excellence Award. From 2012 to 2018, she served as department chair. Barber was a 2014-2015 recipient of the RAM Artist Fellowship Award, presenting a solo exhibition of her work at RAM's Wustum Museum. Her work is housed in both public and private collections including the South Bend Museum of Art, Indiana; the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, New York, New York; and the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, New York, New York. She is included in RAM's collection by one quilt which was acquired using the Windgate Foundation Contemporary Craft Acquisition Grant.

Explore:



[lisamariebarber.com/  
about](https://lisamariebarber.com/about)

Explore:



[ramart.org/artist-re-  
sources/fellowships/  
recipients/barber/](https://ramart.org/artist-resources/fellowships/recipients/barber/)

## **Léopold L. Foulem**

Conceptual ceramicist Leopold Foulem (1945 - 2023) was born in Caraquet, New Brunswick, Canada. Foulem studied at the New Brunswick Handicraft School and, briefly, at the Institut des Arts Appliqués, before receiving his bachelor's degree from the Montréal Alberta College of Art and Design. He went on to study at the Sheridan School of Craft and Design, Canada, before obtaining his MFA from Indiana State University, Bloomington. Interested in the history of ceramics, Foulem blends found objects and a wide variety of ceramic techniques to achieve colorful, playful works of art that combine historical styles, pop culture iconography, humor, and irony.

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In 1999, Foulem was awarded the Jean A. Chalmers National Crafts Award, and in 2001, the Saidye Bronfman Award recognizing his work in craft. In 2019, he was awarded with the Order of Canada for his lifelong contributions as an artist. Besides having his work in museum collections around the world, Foulem is also an expert on the ceramics of Pablo Picasso. In 2023, a documentary was produced about his life titled "Lettre d'amour à Léopold L. Foulem (A Love Letter to Léopold L. Foulem)." Foulem is represented in RAM's collection by nine works.

Foulem was married to fellow Canadian ceramics artist Richard Milette whose work is also included in Pieces: Collage and Assemblage from RAM's Collection. The couple's work was shown together in a 2014 Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Canada, exhibition titled "Camp Fires: the Queer Baroque of Léopold L. Foulem, Paul Mathieu and Richard Milette" which highlighted the camp aesthetics which all three artists utilize in their work.

Read:



[thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/  
article/leopold-l-foulem](https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/leopold-l-foulem)

## **Juan Erman Gonzalez**

Juan Gonzalez (1956 - ), better known by his designer name Erman, creates one-of-a-kind wearable art made from reclaimed fabrics and materials. In addition to creating garments, Erman also creates non-wearable works made from wood, ceramics, and paper. Influenced by his personal history as a Cuban refugee, his work addresses themes of migration, transculturism, exile and displacement.

Born in Cuba, Erman came to the United States in 1969 at the age of 13, and began working in garment manufacturing sweatshops in Miami, Florida. He graduated high school in 1975 and went on to earn his AS in Fashion Design and Merchandising from Miami Dade Community College, Florida. After completing his degree, he moved to New York, New York, and began his career as a fashion designer. In 1990, Erman moved back to Miami, Florida where he was an artist in residence at the Art Center South Florida, Miami. It was during this residency that Erman began using reclaimed and vintage fabrics to create garments. He is represented in RAM's collection by one of these garments--a jacket created around 1995 made from found fabric.

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Explore:



[ermanbyjuangonzalez.com/](http://ermanbyjuangonzalez.com/)

## **Sharon Kerry Harlan**

"I wanted to make quilts that spoke to and for African-Americans—with those kinds of faces on them. And that wasn't something commercially available then. So I made my own. And once I started to explore that process, I kept going."

Textile and mixed-media artist Sharon Kerry-Harlan (1951 - ) creates quilts which reflect the complexities and nuances of Black experience, drawing from both personal history and that of the broader African diaspora. The theme of identity is central to Kerry-Harlan's practice—her quilts often explore concepts of resilience and the intergenerational exchange of culture. This focus allows her to create a visual dialogue that addresses how individuals navigate their identity in a world shaped by historical and social forces such as the intersections of race, gender, and politics. To create the imagery, Kerry-Harlan uses processes such as rust dying, discharge dying, painting, and screen-printing on a large piece of fabric, tearing apart and rearranging the sections of fabric and re-sewing them into the final form.

Kerry-Harlan holds a BA from Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and has also studied at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. Her work is included in collections such as the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC, and the Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend. At RAM she is represented by one work which was recently acquired with funds from the Windgate Foundation Contemporary Craft Acquisition Grant.

## **Shie and Acord**

Wooster, Ohio native Susan Shie (1950 - ) says she hates "art rules." She considers herself an "outsider artist," someone who—in her own words—doesn't "fit in with either what we think of as the current painting tradition or with the regular art quilt part of the art world." Shie received a BA in painting from The College of Wooster, Ohio, in 1981, but has been creating quilts since 1979. It was at The College of Wooster that Shie met ground-breaking feminist artist Miriam Shapiro, who was visiting the campus. Shapiro encouraged Shie to merge her "women's work" and fine art. Shie went on to earn her MFA in painting from Kent State University, Ohio, in 1986.

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Since then, she has been working as a studio artist and teaching painting, quilting, and drawing.

Her unique aesthetic, attention to detail, whimsical inclusion of non-traditional materials and found objects, and biographical subject matter have garnered Shie national and international acclaim. Winner of Best in Show at Quilt National 1987, she was an artist-in-residence at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, Xi'an, China, in 1990, and in Dublin and Sligo, Ireland in 1994. Shie received a Visual Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, taught in New York at the PS1 Contemporary Art Center (an international contemporary art space now affiliated with the Museum of Modern Art), and was pronounced Teacher of the Year by Professional Quilter Magazine in 2008. Among her many other achievements, Shie's work also graced the cover of Quilt National's 2007 catalogue.

James Acord (1953 - ) was born in Fairfield, Illinois, but has been living in Wooster, Ohio since the age of eleven. A welder by trade, Acord was encouraged by Susan Shie to explore his creative side after the two met in 1976. He began teaching himself leather work the following year, and soon after, he opened Barnfire Leather, his own custom leather work studio. By 1984, Acord left his job as a welder to focus on Barnfire Leather full-time. Specializing in fly fishing cases, he works directly with his customers designing and creating each piece by hand, never employing machinery or stamps.

Susan Shie and James Acord have worked collaboratively since 1989, when Acord first incorporated his leather work into Shie's quilts. Shie states, "even though Jimmy [Acord] is not doing much on the quilts anymore, or teaching much with me, especially not much outside of home...we still manage to collaborate a little back and forth in both studios." While both artists contribute to their shared pieces in various ways, each does have specific interests and skills that inform their process. Shie—a sewer and painter—thinks about the quilts as diary "pages." She applies text with a marker or airbrush, and then, hand stitches the printed elements while Acord machine stitches cursive text. Shie also adds paint, hand embroidery, and beadwork as well as sewn and shaped figures. Acord focuses on further hand embellishment and the addition of other crafted narrative elements, such as tooled leather cockroaches and animals. Found objects pulled from every day circumstances—such as an old silk bedspread, eating utensils, and seashells—are attached to the surfaces.

Shie and Acord are represented in RAM's collection by five collaborative quilts. Additionally, Shie is represented by four pieces which she completed individually.

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Explore:



[turtlemoon.com/gallery/gallery-one.htm](http://turtlemoon.com/gallery/gallery-one.htm)

## Michael Velliquette

Interested in the “fantastic, esoteric, mythic, and spectacular,” Michael Velliquette (1971–) uses cut paper to create books, two-dimensional reliefs, and three-dimensional sculpture. Investigating the potential of color as a spiritual and metaphorical tool, he plays with it while also exploring pattern and design. Taking hundreds of hours to construct by hand, these works push the boundaries of what is possible with paper as a medium. He has included animals, such as the birds in one of the pieces from RAM’s collection, as both representations of themselves and as a means to address social and cultural standards. With his most recent work, Velliquette foregrounds labor, process, and materiality. Rather than planning and drawing studies, he allows works “to accrue cut-by-cut and piece-by-piece.”

Velliquette earned his BFA in 1993 from Florida State University, Tallahassee, and in 2000, he received his MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He currently teaches the University of Wisconsin-Madison as an Assistant Professor of Foundations in the Art Department. Velliquette is a member of the Guild of American Papercutters and the Paper Artist Collective. In addition to work housed in museum, corporate, private, and university collections, he has public art on display at two branches of the Madison Public Library and at PS320Q Elementary School in Queens, New York. He is represented in RAM’s collection by five works.

Explore:



[velliquette.com/](http://velliquette.com/)

Watch:



[youtu.be/wkCAR-FUsILk](https://youtu.be/wkCAR-FUsILk)

Watch:



[youtu.be/uP-FtBsWyp0Q](https://youtu.be/uP-FtBsWyp0Q)

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## **Kee-Ho Yuen**

Jewelry artist Kee-ho Yuen (1956 – ) was born in Hong Kong. He received his B.A. from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1983, before going on to receive his M.F.A. in Metalsmithing and Jewelry from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, in 1989. Yuen recently retired from his role as a professor and head of the University of Iowa’s jewelry and metal arts program.

Yuen sees his work as an ever-evolving collage of the philosophies and sensibilities of the East and West. His work is inspired by the timelessness of human emotion and interaction, while also serving as an aesthetic and technical investigation. Its tone bounces between seriousness and whimsicality, employing a wide variety of traditional and contemporary materials and techniques. Yuen has used advanced 3D computer modelling and CNC machining alongside traditional enameling and fabrication. He does not see his work as an argument or an attempt to convince, but as an anchor for himself and the attitudes that are important to him.

His work can be found in permanent collections around the world, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.; and the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York. Owing to a recent gift, Yuen is represented in RAM’s collection by seven works.

Explore:



[kee-ho-yuen.com/](http://kee-ho-yuen.com/)

Explore:



[myweb.uiowa.edu/  
kyuen/work.html](http://myweb.uiowa.edu/kyuen/work.html)

## **Artists of Color at RAM**

RAM is committed to supporting diverse voices—whether that diversity reflects race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, social standing, or world perspective. In this moment in time, it is critical that spotlights are placed on voices that have been historically underrepresented, and at RAM that begins with women and artists of color. Artists of color are identified in this context as non-white and non-European in heritage. This simplification—which is arguably a flawed starting point—does not account for the nuances and variations of society. It is a beginning—a way to direct those who want to educate themselves about what is possible when new perspectives are discovered. Modifications to this approach are expected as RAM learns and grows. Further, as an educational institution rooted in the humanities and using art as a catalyst, RAM wants to encourage inquiry and exploration about the world in which we live. RAM

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hopes spotlighting artists of color spurs further engagement with these artists and their ideas. The following is a list of artists of color whose works are included in this exhibition. This effort is not meant to single out artists to stigmatize them but to magnify and cast a spotlight on their significance. It reflects intention, goodwill, and an attempt to reckon with years of historical underrepresentation. RAM hopes this provides opportunities for audiences to learn more about these artists and their ideas. Visitors are encouraged to take note and research these artists via the internet to find out more about their biographies and larger bodies of work.

**Lisa Marie Barber, Eun-Mee Chung, Warrington Colescott, Patrick Shia Crabb, Erman, Margaret Ponce Israel, Sharon Kerry-Harlan, Georgina Treviño, and Kee-Ho Yuen**

## **Women Artists at RAM**

RAM acknowledges the efforts of self-identifying women in the art world consistently and sincerely at all times. The museum highlights how women are inextricably woven—and often the foundation—of creative endeavors and discourse. By current count, 41% of the artists in RAM's collection are women. This percentage—which is consistently increasing—is already substantially greater than the ratios calculated at other organizations with permanent collections and active exhibition programs. At RAM, work made by different genders is considered for inclusion in the museum's holdings on equal terms. And notably, because RAM relies on gifts of artwork to build the collection, this policy has been reinforced by open-minded donors who have collected, and then donated, quality work regardless of the gender of the artist. The following is a list of women whose works are included in this exhibition. This effort—similar to efforts to highlight artists of color at RAM—is not meant to single out artists to stigmatize them but to magnify and cast a spotlight on their significance. It reflects intention, goodwill, and an attempt to reckon with years of historical underrepresentation. RAM hopes this provides opportunities for audiences to learn more about these artists and their ideas. Visitors are encouraged to take note and research these artists via the internet to find out more about their biographies and larger bodies of work.

**Lori Bacigalupi, Joan Backes, Lisa Marie Barber, Hannelore Baron, Eun-Mee Chung, Lisa Cylinder, Nancy Gipple, Laurie J. Hall, Ana Lisa Hedstrom, Margaret Ponce Israel, Sharon Kerry-Harlan, Robin Kranitzky, Janice Lowry, Johanna Nitzke Marquis, Therese May, Grainne Morton, Judy Onofrio, Kim Overstreet, ROY, Marion Sak, Susan Shie, Susan Kasson Sloan, Georgina Treviño, and Roberta Williamson**