



**RAM Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Exhibition 2025**  
August 27 – November 22, 2025

**RAM**





## June Ambro

Ceramic artist June Ambro is a Wisconsin native and lifelong resident. She has built her knowledge and artistic skills through a lifetime of attending every art class and workshop possible—from Maine to Montana, Fez, Morocco to Istanbul, Turkey. International travel has allowed Ambro a peek into how other cultures view the ancient art of ceramics. She credits her 2022 yearlong mentorship with the artist Liz Lurie for a much deeper and fuller understanding of this beautifully complex art form. Most days, you can find the artist working quietly and steadily in her studio, Orangedoor Pottery, in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin.

### Artist Statement

I am a maker.  
from my earliest memories to the present,  
I have practiced the art of making things. two dimensional,  
three dimensional,  
functional pieces  
and sculptural objects.

Of late, I have dialed into clay as my main medium.  
I am heavily influenced by the Driftless Area of Wisconsin—  
rolling hills, farm fields and pastureland all interconnected  
to create an underlying pattern. Building with textured,  
stretched clay creates the rhythm and repetition I am  
seeking—a sense of movement, like the passing of time.

The genius of clay is that I can create a three-dimensional  
form with my hands—touching and manipulating the fresh  
raw material. By employing brushwork, drawing, sculpting,  
scratching, carving, slips, terra sigillata, and glazes I am able  
to build richly layered, nuanced surfaces. While atmospheric  
wood firing is the form of firing closest to my heart, I also  
enjoy experimenting with the results I can coax out of my  
electric kiln. Varying my methods of making results in new  
possibilities for each piece.

My intent when engaging with these various techniques is  
to imbue my objects with an inherent emotional charge—  
a sense of place and feeling—of nostalgia. I urge you to  
allow yourself to be transported from the familiar to the  
unknown on a visceral level as you explore my pots and  
uncover their many layers.

Each newly created piece informs the making of the next.  
As evidenced in this new body of work, I am forever pushing  
to explore new forms, surfaces, and firing processes.

(top)

**June Ambro**  
*train wreck*, 2025  
Glazed porcelain with  
underglazes and oxide washes,  
underglaze pencil, and wire  
10 1/2 x 8 x 3 1/2 inches



(bottom)

**June Ambro**  
*crucible*, 2024  
Woodfired ceramic  
and steel armature  
7 x 4 x 4 inches



(top left)  
**June Ambro**  
*the water is wide*, 2024  
 Woodfired iron-rich dark ceramic  
 11 x 22 x 9 1/2 inches

(top right)  
**June Ambro**  
*partridge*, 2024  
 Woodfired porcelain  
 and steel armature  
 10 x 12 x 6 inches

(bottom)  
**June Ambro**  
*strength in numbers*, 2025  
 Dark Canadian clay with  
 underglaze and borax wash  
 Dimensions vary





## Jeff Baenen

Kenosha-based wood artist, Jeff Baenen, has been honing his craft for over 25 years. Baenen grew up on the outskirts of Door County, Wisconsin, making forts, riding dirt bikes, and having just enough time on his hands to be dangerously creative. Inherently curious and introspective, he always had a desire to create. Before finding his passion for woodworking, he had a love for watercolor, scratchboard, pastels, and pointillism. Baenen's 28-year career as a mechanical designer has run parallel to his art career with each role informing the other to find solutions and push creative boundaries. Creative problem solving has been his enduring lifelong passion.

### Artist Statement

Influenced by both nature and industrial design, my sculptural boxes are constantly evolving. I am fascinated with finding ways to manipulate wood to perform in unexpected ways. My boxes are one-of-a-kind, with meticulous craftsmanship present through each piece. The concepts of my pieces are often based on memories, emotions, and stories, with nods to architectural, mechanical, and industrial design. I believe a box can be much more than just a simple vessel and I am honored to create pieces that hold our most treasured objects, our secrets, and our history.



(above left)  
**Jeff Baenen**  
*Eclipse*, 2025  
 Maple, katalox, aluminum, and copper  
 15 3/4 x 15 3/4 x 12 1/2 inches

(above right)  
**Jeff Baenen**  
*Dendriform 2*, 2025  
 Maple, redheart, and acrylic  
 10 x 10 x 10 inches



(left)  
**Jeff Baenen**  
*Mach 2*, 2024  
 Maple, rosewood, and mahogany  
 5 x 10 1/4 x 2 1/2 inches



**Jeff Baenen**  
*Farewell to the Prairie*, 2025  
 Cypress, fumed white oak, and brass  
 10 1/2 x 18 x 9 3/4 inches



**Jeff Baenen**  
*Foil*, 2024  
 Maple, ziricote, and bocote  
 22 x 9 x 5 inches



**Jeff Baenen**  
*Taproot*, 2024  
 Maple, redheart, acrylic,  
 and Gaboon ebony  
 15 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 10 inches



## Georgia Bellas

Georgia Bellas is a multidisciplinary artist working with writing, film, puppetry, music, jewelry, printmaking, textile arts, and more. Originally from Massachusetts, she graduated from Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges and worked at Harvard Public Affairs and Communications for almost two decades.

Bellas has shown mixed media artwork in 20 solo and group exhibitions from 2001 through 2011 in the Boston area. She moved to Racine in 2017, where she studies herbalism and makes music, art, and books with her partner. In recent years, Bellas has devoted attention to puppetry, both participating in live performances on Zoom and making films featuring her puppets.

Bellas is the creator and host of *Mr. Bear's Violet Hour*, a podcast featuring stories, music, interviews, puppetry, herbalism, and more. She has received awards for her work in radio, film, and writing, received a Best of the Net award for her poem *How Not to Win at Big Buck Hunter*, and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize, Best Small Fictions, and Best Microfiction.

### Artist Statement

Weaving threads of the subconscious and dream worlds into the narrative of the present, I make the familiar unfamiliar, the mundane mysterious, and shine a spotlight on the pockets of animism inherent in everything around us. Through object theater, I release the inner spirits of inanimate objects by exploring the possibilities inherent in their materials and movement. I play with shadow and transformation and the alchemizing power of story. My work crosses many disciplines, including writing, film, puppetry, music, jewelry, and textile arts. Currently I am obsessed with amulets and oracles, memory and time, grief and dreams.

(below)

#### Georgia Bellas

*They Say the Owl Was a Baker's Daughter* (detail), 2024  
Crankie puppet theatre performance of "They Say the Owl Was a Baker's Daughter," a folktale mentioned in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*  
29 x 12 1/4 x 4 1/2 inches



(right)

#### Georgia Bellas

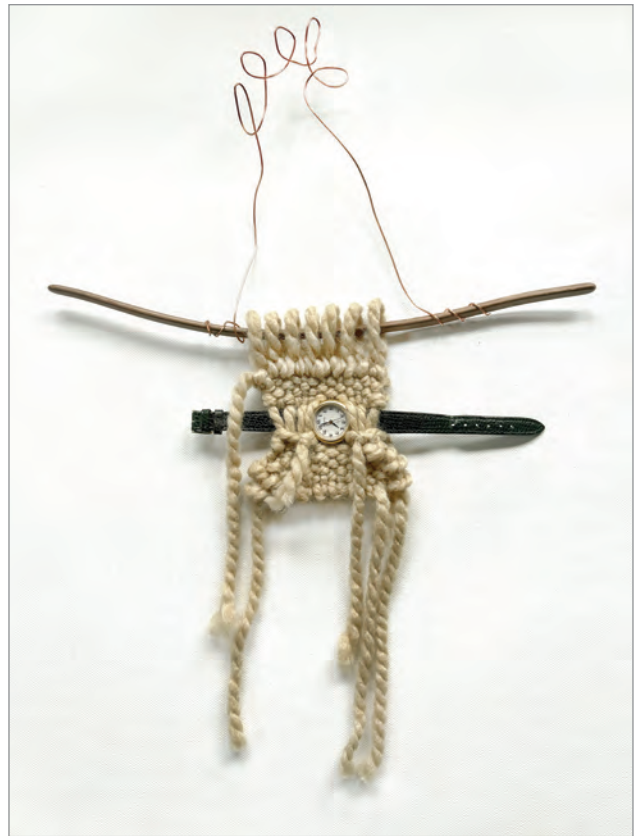
*Puppet Theater*, 2025  
Thrifty puppet theatre, paint, φυλαχτά (amulets), scarf marionette, and flower essences  
57 x 27 1/2 x 12 inches







(top left)  
**Georgia Bellas**  
*Sardinorama: My Baby*, 2025  
 Sardine can, thermal paper print,  
 glitter glue, lipstick, and  
 found wire  
 12 x 7 x 3 inches



(top right)  
**Georgia Bellas**  
*Time Piece*, 2023  
 Yarn, watch, found rubber strip,  
 and wire  
 17 1/2 x 11 1/2 x 1 inches



(bottom left)  
**Georgia Bellas**  
*Puppet*, 2022–25  
 Wet felted roving, thread, yarn,  
 washer, toilet paper tube, nylon,  
 VELCRO® Brand fastener,  
 plastic hands, and child's dress  
 27 inches tall

(bottom right)  
**Georgia Bellas**  
*Sardinorama: Prophesy*, 2025  
 Sardine can, handmade  
 dandelion paper, crayfish  
 skeleton, and book pages  
 5 x 5 x 2 inches



Photography: Courtesy of the Artist

## Richard Berns

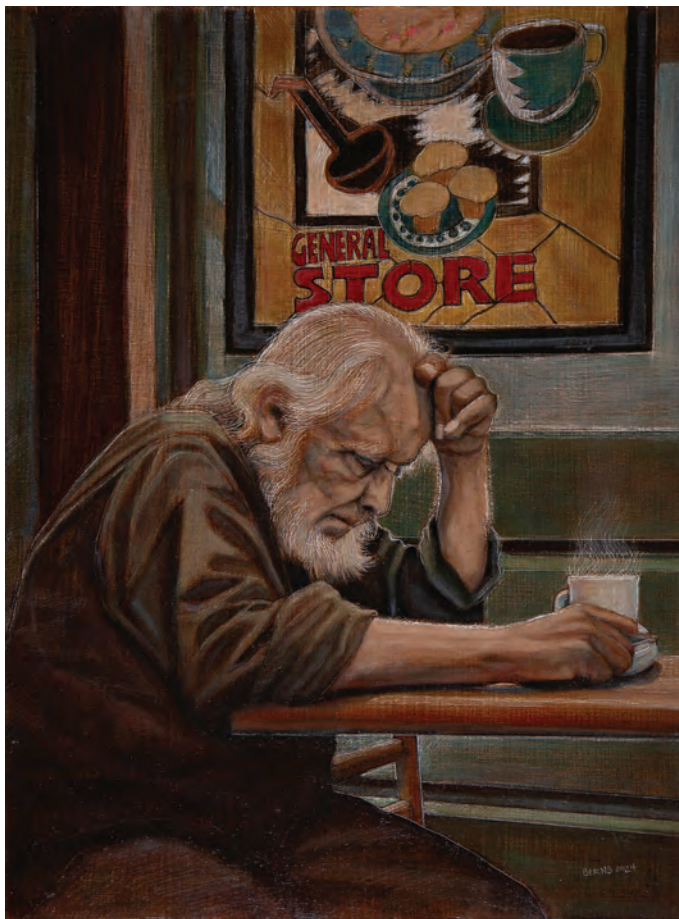
Born in 1962, Richard Berns currently resides in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin. Berns graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Parkside, Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1989 with a Bachelor of Art degree double majoring in painting and intaglio printmaking under the instruction of professors Dennis Bayuzick and Douglas DeVinny. Since the late 1980s, he has created an extensive portfolio of paintings, drawings, intaglio prints, and digital photographs.

Berns has been accepted into approximately 20 local and national juried exhibitions. His work is in public and private collections nationwide. The majority of his work features dramatic interpretations of architecture, isolated solitary figures, and wildlife under heavily contrasted,

subdued light and shadow patterns. He emphasizes the dramatic, theatrical effects of light sources and the interaction of light and dark on the subject matter. Currently, Berns is placing most of his emphasis on paintings and intaglio prints that focus on the human figure, including a few images of his work as a photographer.

### Artist Statement

The instruction I received in college has had a direct correlation to my artistic style with a great deal of emphasis placed on chiaroscuro and the interaction of light and dark with strong light sources. Masters of the Renaissance were often studied as examples by my instructors because of the emphasis that light placed on the anatomy, objects, and perspective. The dramatic and theatrical results of strong light and shadows have assisted me in creating dramatic compositions that are very suitable and compatible with intaglio printmaking as well as painting and photography.



Emotions and isolated solitary figures have made a great impact on my work. I believe in embracing those moments and figures and allowing them to become the basis of my creative process. Each artwork is personal to me and serves as a moment recorded in time of a family member or a memory from an event or place in my life. My goal is to create thought-provoking images that make people feel deeply when they see my work. I draw my inspiration from everyday life experiences that surround me. I often begin a piece of art by documenting a subject or experience with my camera and work from those photographic images.

I tend to place emphasis on my subject's eyes and face. The eyes and facial expressions of my subjects tend to be the focal point of all of my art regardless of the medium.

### Richard Berns

*Ellis of Spring Green Café*, 2024  
Oil on panel  
16 x 20 inches





(left)  
**Richard Berns**  
*Girl on Steps*, 2010–24  
 Mezzotint and drypoint  
 13 x 16 inches

(below)  
**Richard Berns**  
*Profile of a Young Girl*, 2024  
 Mezzotint and drypoint  
 13 x 11 inches

(bottom)  
**Richard Berns**  
*Jammer's Run*, 2020  
 Acrylic on canvas board  
 25 x 19 inches





## Erin Krembs—Emerging Artist

Born in 1992, Erin Krembs is a multimedia artist who was born, raised, and currently resides in Racine, Wisconsin. In 2014, she graduated from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design with a Bachelor of Fine Art majoring in sculpture. They have worked various art-based jobs such as for the Milwaukee Public Museum and COST of Wisconsin on a contract with Disney. Krembs has exhibited artwork in a handful of locations in southeast Wisconsin.

Krembs is also an educator working with middle school students to foster creativity in the classroom and inspire the next generations of creative people.

The schedule of an educator works hand in hand with her practice as an artist, allowing for summers filled with time in the studio and a school year with the rewarding experience of teaching new students. Even though Krembs works full time, they have continued to create artwork and have held a studio practice ever since 2014, working out of the attic of her home.

### Artist Statement

I am a multimedia artist who focuses on the use of craft materials in a fine art application. I am heavily inspired by nature and fantasy, choosing my subjects based on an affinity for creatures with no common language with us. I use plants and animals as a vehicle of expression for human experiences, which are showcased in many of my works. Expression of certain emotions has been hard to share at various stages in my life and being able to create artworks that embody those difficult emotions has been a way to express myself without words.

Grief, in particular, is an emotion I have been exploring in my artwork this year. The tedious process of hand sewing feels akin to the bubbling waves of grief as you mourn the loss of someone or something dear to you. There has been a lot of grief in my life this year—that grief now resides in the spots and seams of *A Lily in Bloom*. Other pieces, like *Glamour*, represent expressions of self. *Trophy Fish*, represents ancestry and skills passed down from previous generations. Each piece is in some way a reflection of myself.

Another concept I explore in my work is my use of materials. Using clay and paper to create armatures with accurate musculature feels like art from antiquity in many ways. Then the sculptures get covered in skins of felt and other fabrics, upholstery fringe, embroidery thread, and sequins. No machine stitching is ever used on my pieces. I like using these materials for how readily available and relatable they are. Almost everyone can remember creating something with these materials, whether that was a childhood activity or something done for decoration in the home. Not very often are these materials thought of from a fine art standpoint, and I like to challenge that idea. I enjoy exploring their application in fine art and expanding my audiences' views of the materials.







**Erin Krembs**

*Glamour*, 2024

Wool felt, found antlers, wool roving, foam, paper clay, wood, glass, acrylic paint, and thread  
36 x 20 x 22 inches



**Erin Krembs**

*Docile #1*, 2024

Wool felt, found antlers, sequins, paper clay, wood, doily, and thread  
24 x 18 x 18 inches

(opposite, top)

**Erin Krembs**

*A Lily in Bloom (detail)*, 2025

Wool felt, acrylic paint, paper clay, paper, cardboard, PVC pipe, and thread  
36 x 63 x 28 and 6 x 7 x 13 inches

(opposite, bottom)

**Erin Krembs**

*Lavish*, 2025

Wool felt, faux fur, upholstery fringe, paper clay, paper, and cardboard  
12 x 15 x 4 inches

# RAM Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Exhibition 2025

Presented by the  
Osborne and Scekic  
Family Foundation

This exhibition is a series of solo shows featuring the work of four area artists who were recipients of RAM Artist Fellowships and one artist who was the recipient of the Emerging Artist Award in 2024. Showcasing the diversity and vitality of the Racine/Kenosha visual arts community, the biennial fellowships support the professional development of the area's artists. Additionally, establishing this fellowship program distinguishes the region as a place that values the arts and enhances the area's desirability for artists to work and live.

Representing a range of styles and media, Fellowship Artists **June Ambro, Jeff Baenen, Georgia Bellas, and Richard Berns** and Emerging Artist **Erin Krembs** won their awards based on the quality of their artwork submitted for review. In addition to the solo exhibitions, each artist receives a stipend to assist in developing new work and advancing their artistic careers. Comprised of work newly created since the fellowship period began in March 2024 alongside existing pieces, the exhibition offers a sampling of the dynamic visual arts scene in this corner of southeastern Wisconsin.

Further information about these awards, including details about the next application period, is available at the museum's website, [ramart.org](http://ramart.org).

This exhibition is made possible in part by:

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