



75 at 75: Significant Artworks from RAM's Collection

September 17 – December 30, 2017

This exhibition reflects the dynamic growth of a collection over an extended period of time as told through objects. The artworks included outline the depth and richness of RAM's holdings. The sculptures, vessels, art jewelry, furniture, and two-dimensional images also highlight compelling stories about the works themselves, how they came into RAM's possession, or the people who owned or created them.

75 at 75: Significant Artworks in RAM's Collection highlights seven decades of building relationships. The connections established among artists, donors, and institutions shape the growth and direction of a permanent collection. These associations are acknowledged through the artworks themselves. In essence, while standing on their own as artist-made objects or images, the artworks included here can also be understood as access points to larger narratives about Wustum and RAM. Their "significance" as individual pieces is interwoven with the story of the museum that has become their permanent home.

Labels installed adjacent to the pieces underscore how this work tells the story of a regionally-important arts organization that expanded its profile—and physical footprint—to spread across two campuses and become the home of the largest contemporary craft collection in the United States.

These "snapshots," or highlights, that help to celebrate the 75th anniversary are a summary of what has happened at Wustum and RAM but they are by no means an exhaustive accounting of important works or people. In fact, other significant artworks have been purposely held from this show as RAM carefully plans for upcoming exhibitions.

75 at 75 refers to 75 stories on Wustum's 75th anniversary—there are 96 works on display but some are grouped together to address a donor or a collecting interest. Below is a selection of these 75 stories.

Artist Books at RAM

Artist books have been part of the permanent collection at RAM since several arrived as part of the WPA collection in the 1940s. The first large-scale acquisition of books occurred in 1988 thanks to Racine resident **Myrtle Pyle**. Pyle had left an elaborate curio cabinet to the museum in her estate. The museum could not accept the gift into its collection but could sell it and use the proceeds. Money from the sale—matched by a grant from **Printed Matter** in New York, a major center for book arts—went toward the purchase of 42 artist books.

RAM then purchased single examples from Wustum exhibitions with memorial funds that were donated. The next major addition came in 1992 from **Friends of Typography**, who donated 135 works created by students in **Walter S. Hamady's** nationally-recognized

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bookmaking program at University of Wisconsin-Madison. The gift documents an entire generation of students who passed through Hamady's program and went on to make their own contributions to the field.

Kara Walker's pop-up book was a special gift. For a period of time in the 1990s, collector **Peter Norton** commissioned contemporary artists to create a work of art in a large edition. He would send these to art museums across the country as gifts at the holiday season, which is how this pop-up book by Walker is arrived at RAM.

Jewelry from Donna Schneier at RAM

Favoring non-precious and unconventional materials, collector **Donna Schneier** acquired contemporary art jewelry by artists of note. Her acquisitions included pieces by **Jamie Bennett**, **Bruce Metcalf**, and **Christina Y. Smith**, who have all played important roles in changing the face of modern metalsmithing—using their work to explore content issues as well as formal concerns and technical considerations.

RAM welcomed a donation of 50 works from Schneier, and her husband **Leonard Goldberg** in 2008, the same year they presented 200 pieces to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. RAM's gift included the unexpected, such as three necklaces by ceramic artist **Beatrice Wood**. This was the largest one-time gift of jewelry to arrive between **Karen Johnson Boyd's** gift in 1991 and the arrival of the polymer art archive in 2009.

Photography at RAM

Currently containing 560 works by artists with regional, national, and international reputations, RAM's contemporary photography collection has been built on the base of its WPA-era works.

The two different types of portraits displayed in **75 at 75** are relatively recent important acquisitions. The Chicago-based photographer, **Dawoud Bey**, has become nationally recognized for his thoughtful portraits of primarily African-American subjects. His portrait of a young boy has an immediacy that stands in contrast to the studied portrayal of **Marilyn Monroe** by **Philippe Halsman**. While not created in a standard professional studio environment, the image of Monroe is that of a woman well on her way to creating her public persona. The image was on the cover of *Life Magazine* in 1952 just as Monroe was about to become internationally famous.

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Polymer at RAM

While she was making her own art, **Elise Winters** began building a collection of significant pieces made using polymer—commonly referred to by brand names Fimo® or Sculpey®—as a material. In 2009, a consortium of four collectors spearheaded by Winters donated over 150 examples to RAM, thus forming an archive for polymer art.

Although RAM had been collecting works in polymer since 2001, this gift established an internationally-recognized collection in this medium. The acquisition, celebrated and debuted in the exhibition ***Terra Nova: Polymer Art at the Crossroads*** in 2011, encouraged others to donate and RAM now holds almost 250 pieces made primarily of the material.

All of the artists shown in this exhibition have been identified as major figures in the development of polymer art, and have also been recognized as innovators by the larger contemporary craft community.

WPA Art at RAM

When the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts first opened in 1941, it did not have a permanent collection. At that time, the work on display in the galleries was borrowed from artists, collectors, and other museums as short term loans. This changed when Sylvester Jerry, the museum's first director, was able to obtain over 260 works produced through the Federal Art Project (FAP) of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Working with state and local governments, the WPA was a national program that provided jobs and income for many unemployed during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Some, such as **Berenice Abbott, Stuart Davis, Edmund E. Lewandowski, and Brett Weston**, became internationally well-known artists and had distinguished careers in the mid-twentieth century. RAM currently owns 265 individual works and portfolios in its WPA collection.

Artist Stories

Chris Antemann

Visually and conceptually drawing on eighteenth-century porcelain figurines about which she is "obsessed," **Chris Antemann** develops tableaux of fancy dinners and garden parties that examine male and female relationships. The large-scale ***Paradise*** (2009), gifted by **David Charak**, was the first example of Antemann's work at RAM and reflects the donor's commitment to supporting artists through acquisition and donation.

St. Louis-based David Charak, has generously gifted nearly 200 works to the collection, primarily in the ceramic medium. He assembled a substantial teapot collection with his wife, Jacqueline, and since 2004 has donated teapots and sculptures by some of the most important US artists working in craft media. The Charaks collected in-depth,

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and among other contributions, have presented RAM with seven works by Sergei Isupov and eight pieces by Michael Lucero.

Wendell Castle

Described as the “father of the art furniture movement,” and still producing work today, Wendell Castle was an early and daring innovator with a widespread influence. Castle brought new attention to stack lamination—a technique he employed regularly in his work but one that had not been favored in furniture making. Stack lamination involves gluing together stacks of wood which can then be carved. This process of construction allows for more fluid forms as the stacks can be rounded and curved as desired.

His *Desk* (1967)—a tour-de-force example of stack lamination and organic design that really only hints at function—was sent around the country on tour with the groundbreaking exhibition, *Objects: USA*, from 1969 to 1973. It was in the collection of SC Johnson and given to RAM’s forebear, the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, in 1992 for the institution’s 50th anniversary.

This is one of the first examples of artist-made furniture to come into the museum’s collection and is one of the top five most important works that RAM owns. *Desk* documents an important artist, the early years of the contemporary furniture field, and the exhibition that introduced contemporary craft to a broader American public through presentations in numerous US fine art museums.

Dale Chihuly

Early in his career, Dale Chihuly would make cylinder vessels that sometimes sold so quickly he did not have time to sign them. Racine collector, Dennis Cannaday, donated three early unsigned Chihuly cylinders to RAM. RAM contacted Chihuly Studios to see if they could be authenticated and signed. Chihuly agreed and offered to trade for one of the works that was unlike anything he had in his own archive. The large multi-part piece, *Salmon and Rose Persian Set with Cranberry Lip Wrap* (1997) is the result of that exchange.

With the donor’s approval, museums will undertake negotiations like this to create a more thorough representation of an artist’s career or to prevent duplication within the collection. This trade enriched Chihuly’s own documentation of his work and brought a more recent and much larger scale 19-piece work to RAM’s collection.

Colette (Denton)

Colette’s cloisonné and semiprecious stone necklace (ca. 1990) is an excellent example of the artist’s painterly work in enamel and a major addition to the permanent collection’s art jewelry holdings.

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People frequently inquire about how works arrive at the museum. Executive Director and Curator of Collections Bruce W. Pepich and RAM Museum Store Manager Lisa Englander were at a party in New York City when the donor shared Colette's neckpiece and inquired about RAM's interest. When they were received affirmation, the collectors told Pepich and Englander to take it home to Racine with them. Walking down the street with it and carrying it through security at New York's La Guardia Airport has left a lasting impression on the pair.

Carol Eckert

Looking to the legends and myths of many cultures, **Carol Eckert** creates compelling sculptural narratives using an ancient basketry technique known as coiling. RAM has an extensive collection of Eckert's work—operating as the largest single repository, with the number of accessioned and promised gifts, including preparatory drawings, totaling 36.

Eckert's *Oracle of the Animals* staffs (2011) were given by artist and collector **Marcia Docter** and her husband, Alan. Docter's satirical and political embroidered works have been featured in numerous exhibitions at the museum. She and her husband have been donating works in wood and fiber media since 1997. The Docters learned of our interest in these large staffs and purchased this pair for RAM, continuing their support of the museum while significantly broadening the museum's representation of Eckert's career.

Lillian Elliott

Even though her MFA degree emphasized ceramics and painting, **Lillian Elliott** became a significant name in contemporary fiber when she expanded the boundaries of basket making. Elliott not only used unexpected materials in new ways, she treated the basket as sculpture—a structure within an “inside” and an “outside” that could be explored from many different angles. Thanks to various donors including **Karen Johnson Boyd** and **Lloyd E. Cotsen**, RAM now owns 10 examples of Elliott's work and an additional four collaborative pieces she made with artist **Pat Hickman**.

After assembling a large collection of contemporary Japanese bamboo baskets that he donated to the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, **Lloyd E. Cotsen** began collecting baskets created primarily by American women artists. The Japanese basket makers, whose works toured US art museums in a nationally traveling exhibition, are primarily men and Cotsen was interested in what women artists were doing in the same medium in the West. After working with Mr. Cotsen on a number of projects, he offered his 139-piece collection to RAM in 2008. Thanks to this gift, combined with those of other donors, RAM now has the largest contemporary basket collection of any US art museum.

Arline M. Fisch

Combining precious and non-traditional materials, as well as fiber techniques, the early *Woven Feathers Bracelet* (1970) from pioneer metalsmith **Arline Fisch** in this exhibition is a landmark piece for RAM's art jewelry collection. The bracelet's path to RAM's collection makes for an interesting story.

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Longtime supporter, volunteer, and President of RAM Board of Directors, **Jane R. Gittings** received this as a gift from her aunt **Irene Purcell Johnson** in the 1970s. Because she did not wear it often but admired it, Mrs. Gittings was inclined to give it to RAM in honor of her aunt. Although it had been carefully stored, the macaw feathers had begun to deteriorate. RAM contacted the artist for help, and she was able to restore the bracelet with macaw feathers gathered by staff from the bottom of a bird enclosure at the San Diego Zoo.

Ruth Grotenrath

Beloved Wisconsin artist **Ruth Grotenrath** is well-known for creating colorful and compelling paintings and works on paper. Both Grotenrath and her husband, **Schomer Lichtner**, were also regular and important presences at RAM's Wustum Museum campus, both as exhibited artists and teachers.

Interior with Mural (1980) was part of a gift from the Schomer Lichtner Trust and the Kohler Foundation, Inc. Until this gift, RAM owned only a few examples of this husband and wife duo who were major figures in the Wisconsin art field. RAM now owns 94 examples of Lichtner's work in a variety of media and 62 works by Grotenrath. Other Wisconsin artists whose careers are better documented at RAM, thanks to the Kohler Foundation, now include **Gibson Byrd** (12 works), **Joseph Frieber** (14 works), and **Jean Stamsta** (10 works).

Laurie J. Hall

Laurie J. Hall uses her jewelry—often involving moving parts and a variety of materials—to tell stories about what she sees in the world. This large neckpiece, *Odds One in Ten* (1989), with its elaborate design resembling an armor breastplate, incorporates a Victorian era game piece, underscoring Hall's desire to create dynamic jewelry that compels "the wearer to participate in the spectacle of adventure."

This was the first example of Hall's work to come into the collection and is a major example of her large-scale jewelry. Its donors, **Judith and Martin Bloomfield**, were first introduced to Wustum on a tour in the 1990s. This piece is one of the more than 80 examples of art jewelry and artist-made clothing that the Bloomfields have presented to the museum since 2001.

David Hockney

Considered one of the most influential British artists of the twentieth century, **David Hockney** explores perception, abstraction, illusion, and realism through a variety of media including painting, printmaking, and stage design. *Reclining Figure* (1975) reflects his interest in portraiture and his inclination to use people close to him, such as family and friends, as models.

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Karen Johnson Boyd purchased *Reclining Figure* out of an exhibition at RAM's Wustum campus—something she would do on regular basis to support the artist and the museum. Out of a desire to acquaint the people of southeastern Wisconsin with what was happening in Chicago art galleries, RAM organized a special exhibition in the late 1980s that offered pieces available for purchase. A number of works Mrs. Boyd purchased from this exhibition are now in RAM's collection.

Robyn Horn

Founder and first president of the Collectors of Wood Art, **Robyn Horn** explores the possibilities of wood as an art material. While she began with lathe-turned vessel forms, Horn shifted more to creating sculpture, such as *Pierced Geode #453* (1992), where she would play with the symmetry and geometry of a form by “piercing” a surface with contrasting pieces of wood.

The museum's wood collection—especially its examples of turned wood objects—has greatly benefitted from the support of three collecting couples, including **Ronald and Anita Wornick** of California. The Wornicks made a sizable contribution to RAM's wood collection in the early 2000s with a gift of 87 works including multiple examples by **Stoney Lamar**, **Philip and Matt Moulthrop**, and **Michael Peterson**. Especially welcome were their holdings in wood pieces created by women, such as Horn and **Michelle Holzapfel**.

Judy Jensen

Employing a technique that has been documented in use since medieval times, noted artist **Judy Jensen** uses glass as a canvas. She applies paint to the “backside” of a glass surface, allowing light and reflection to impact the imagery.

Dale and Doug Anderson visited Wustum Museum as part of a tour with the American Craft Museum in 1989. Enthused by the museum's recent announcement of its commitment to the contemporary craft field, they made their first donations to the collection—including Jensen's *After Breakfast with the Cannibals* (1988). In the intervening years, more than 500 works, including glass, ceramic, metal, and fiber, have followed. Primarily interested in glass, the Andersons were the first nationally known collectors from outside the Racine community to present works to the museum.

Mark Lindquist

Mark Lindquist is identified with being instrumental in the late-twentieth-century reinvention of woodturning as an art form. His combination of the aesthetics and philosophies of other media and cultures, such as Asian ceramics, with advanced woodworking technology, led to new turning methods and new approaches to the media.

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The museum's wood collection—especially its examples of woodturned objects—has greatly benefitted from the support of three collecting couples, including **Jane and Arthur Mason** of Washington, DC. The Masons first donation to RAM came in 1998, after visiting the museum with a tour from the Smithsonian. They were the first collectors to make a substantial gift to RAM's wood collection, and have since made a total contribution of 68 works including multiple examples by **Mark and Mel Lindquist**, **Michael Peterson**, and **William Hunter**.

Ken Loeber

Wisconsin-based artist **Ken Loeber** manipulates metal—as well as other media such as coral, pearls, and shells—into compelling adornment or functional objects. With over 50 works, Loeber is one of the most well-represented artists in the collection. This 14k-gold and baroque pearl brooch, gifted by Karen Johnson Boyd, was one of the first Loebers to come to RAM.

Karen Johnson Boyd had a long and supportive relationship with this artist beginning with purchases of work from his graduate student exhibition. The 50 pieces that RAM owns cover 1970 through 2012, the majority of which came as a gift from Mrs. Boyd in celebration of RAM's 10th anniversary in 2013. A large part of this archive is Loeber's solo jewelry, but RAM also holds hollowware and metal puzzles the artist created, in collaborations and on his own.

Richard Marquis

One of the most influential figures in contemporary glass, **Richard Marquis** combines humor and a willingness to experiment with technical skills honed at glass factories in Italy. RAM owns a large selection of work by Marquis with ***Shotglass Sample Box #3 (Pettijohn's)*** (1992) being one of two sculptural works that include found objects.

Donald and Carol Wiiken became interested in RAM shortly after the museum declared its focus in craft. Dedicated collectors of contemporary studio glass, they are recognized nationally for inaugurating a number of glass collections at museums in different parts of the US. Their 54 gifts of glass to RAM included this piece by Marquis as the first examples by many European artists donated to the collection and four works by **Joel Philip Myers**.

Edward Moulthrop

Considered a pivotal figure in contemporary woodturning, **Edward Moulthrop** stepped outside of his training as an architect to teach himself how to work with wood. His two and a half foot tulipwood bowl (1986), which can be displayed either on the wall or on a table, is a good example of his groundbreaking work in the medium and his fearlessness with large scale.

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This first example of Edward Moulthrop's work to come to RAM was donated by Detroit area collectors **Janis and William Wetsman**, following a visit to the museum as part of a collectors' group tour. While RAM now owns six Ed Moulthrop works, this gift from the Wetsmans came at a time when RAM was just beginning its documentation of artists working in wood.

Frances Myers

Frances Myers was a beloved and influential printmaker who taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for over 25 years. A love for architecture was instilled in this Racine native in her early years growing up around **Frank Lloyd Wright** buildings.

In 1975, Karen Johnson Boyd presented RAM with eight Frances Myers prints depicting Art Moderne buildings. Mrs. Boyd and the artist first met at the opening that the museum hosted for the debut of this gift. Based on their ongoing conversations, Mrs. Boyd proposed Myers create a print of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed SC Johnson headquarters. This initial print eventually led to Mrs. Boyd commissioning the **Frank Lloyd Wright Portfolio** in which Myers depicted six different Wright buildings across the US.

Joel Philip Myers

Primarily self-taught, **Joel Philip Myers** made a name for himself with vibrant designs that incorporate shards of colored glass. He influenced generations of glassblowers through the program that he established at Illinois State University. Myers is the best represented glass artist in RAM's collection, with 23 works acquired to date, 11 of which have come from **Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser**.

Los Angeles collectors Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser have been dedicated supporters of contemporary studio glass with a particular interest in work from the 1980s and 1990s. The Greenbergs collect in-depth the works of artists they admire, much in the same way as RAM. Their most recent gift of 86 works includes multiple pieces by **Dan Dailey, Michael Glancy, Joel Philip Myers, and Ann Wolff**.

Harold O'Connor

I create small objects which happen to be wearable. Other influences in my art come from my travels to exotic lands, interaction with nature, and reaction to facets of society.

—Harold O'Connor

RAM has a long and fruitful working relationship with **Libby and JoAnne Cooper** of Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As RAM's interest in supporting the contemporary craft field became more widely known, the Coopers offered RAM two brooches by celebrated American studio jeweler, **Harold O'Connor**, who is known for his mastery of the gold granulation technique. Their gift brought the first example of

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O'Connor's work to RAM and that of many other artists in the following years including **Flora Book** and **Carol Eckert**, as well as bodies of work by **Rosita Johanson** (21 pieces) and **Renie Breskin Adams** (82 pieces).

Albert Paley

Trained in jewelry and metalsmithing, internationally recognized ironworker **Albert Paley** has used metals to create adornment, furniture, large-scale sculpture, and architectural ornamentation. Because he works with metal at a high temperature, when it is most plastic, Paley can create baroque, looping forms. *Demilune with Torchiera* (1992) is one of five examples of his work in RAM's collection, gifted by Racine native **Michael W. Monroe**.

Monroe is known nationally as the former Curator-in-Charge at the Smithsonian's American Art Museum and the Executive Director of the Bellevue Art Museum in suburban Seattle. However, Monroe got his start in the visual arts field by taking children's classes at RAM's Wustum campus and working there as a young adult. To honor his time at the museum, he and his family donated two major pieces of artist-made furniture—a large sculptural chair by Wendell Castle and this demilune table by Albert Paley—in memory of Monroe's parents and Sylvester and Cherry Barr Jerry, Wustum's first director and his wife.

Adrian Saxe

Inspired by grandiose and ornate **Meissen** and **Sevres** porcelain of the eighteenth century—clay objects that were status symbols of power and privilege—**Adrian Saxe** creates similar type vessels that are, however, deceptively “low-brow,” with references to popular culture. The French curve of the work in this exhibition references the plastic, metal, or wood tool used as a drawing template. Covering his career from 1979 to 1994, Saxe is represented at RAM by ten ceramic pieces and one drawing.

Ewer (French Curve) (1989) is the second example of Saxe's work to come into the collection as part of a grouping of four donated by **Donna Moog**. Moog's gift of 255 contemporary ceramic teapots inaugurated a focus on teapot forms as a means of artistic expression and led to the current total of 515 at RAM.

Joyce Scott

MacArthur Fellow **Joyce Scott** is most celebrated for her figurative jewelry and sculpture created using glass beads and fiber stitching techniques. Also known for installations and performance art, Scott uses her work to explore complex social and cultural issues.

This elaborate beaded necklace (1998) is a gift from **Laura Oskowitz**, who has recently joined the collectors supporting RAM by donating artwork. Oskowitz has presented fibers,

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ceramics, and art jewelry in recent years and this piece becomes the tenth example of Scott's work in RAM's holdings.

Toshiko Takaezu

Toshiko Takaezu treated glazes as paint, offering abstract compositions of color and drips. The large sculptural grouping known as the *Star Series* is one of the most important works in RAM's entire collection—it came to the museum because of a warm, but long-distance relationship Takaezu had with the Racine community. In the 1970s, her work was included in the groundbreaking *Objects: USA* exhibition—supported by SC Johnson—that traveled the US presenting craft to a broad audience for the first time. In addition to this public affirmation of her talent, the artist was represented for 34 years by Karen Johnson Boyd's Perimeter Gallery in Chicago. With this major gift, Takaezu wanted to honor Mrs. Boyd and her family in their hometown for their support of the craft field in general and her work in particular.

Lee Weiss

Applauded for her manipulations of watercolor, Wisconsin-based **Lee Weiss** has used the medium throughout her lengthy career to explore nature. She has also created innovative techniques, such as using a dry brush to lift out paint and painting on both sides of the paper to build up surface and texture effects. *Autumn Ridge* (1966), one of eight by Weiss in RAM's holdings, was the first watercolor to come into the collection from the *Watercolor Wisconsin* competitions, starting in 1966.

RAM's collection includes a hearty representation of watercolors created by different generations of Wisconsin painters. The original WPA Art gift contains a number of paintings created by state residents in the 1930s and 1940s. RAM's annual watercolor competition has provided many opportunities to make acquisitions of works using memorial purchase funds.

Claire Zeisler

Credited with being a major twentieth-century force in the development of contemporary fiber art, **Claire Zeisler** created large-scale sculptural works made of natural materials, including hemp, jute, straw, and raffia. A student of sculpture and weaving, Zeisler challenged expectations by abandoning the loom and utilizing techniques, such as knotting, wrapping, and stitching.

The large scale hemp and felt sculpture, *Untitled* (1981) came to RAM from a manufacturing company. Unfortunately, it had been installed underneath a skylight, and over the years, the original red wool that Zeisler wrapped within the jute had faded to salmon pink. Because it is such a significant example, RAM began to look at restoration options.

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It sat in storage for a number of years as the museum investigated how to effectively restore it to its original integrity. The staff at the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis proposed saturating the faded sections with a reversible dry pigment. They could match some of the original red wool that was inside the wrapped form where the sun could not reach. After a few months of this painstaking work, RAM could add this compelling and substantial piece by a major figure in the international fiber field to its collection.