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**Narrating the Evolution of
RAM's Wustum Museum Through Art**

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Throughout 2017, Racine Art Museum (RAM) is celebrating the 75th anniversary of its forebear, the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts—established in 1941. Open September 17 through December 30, 2017, **75 at 75: Significant Works from RAM's Collection** reflects over seven decades of building relationships. This exhibition reflects the dynamic growth of the 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.

RAM's Wustum Museum began as a community arts center that offered studio classes, exhibitions, and community and art activities. Without a permanent collection, Wustum borrowed from artists, galleries, and private lenders. The first gift of artwork—prints, watercolors, drawings, photographs, and textiles generated through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression of the 1930s—laid the groundwork for RAM's permanent collection that now holds almost 10,000 works. The WPA gift also foreshadowed what would eventually become the collecting foci—works on paper and contemporary craft. Wustum's collection became RAM's collection when Racine Art Museum opened its doors in 2003.

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 in this exhibition can also be understood as access points to larger narratives about Wustum and RAM. Their

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“significance” as individual pieces is interwoven with the story of the museum that has become their permanent home.

Masters of Craft

75 at 75 is punctuated with photographic portraits of many of the featured artists taken by Paul Smith, former curator and director of the American Craft Museum (now Museum of Arts and Design) in New York City. Also open September 17 through December 30, 2017, ***Paul Smith: Masters of Craft*** features casual portraits in various settings, including the artists’ studios, conferences, and international events.

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 other upcoming exhibitions.

This exhibition is made possible by: Platinum Sponsor - Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor: Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, W. T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - Andis Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, Real Racine, Runzheimer International Ltd., Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - CNH Industrial, EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Ruud Family Foundation, Southern Connecticut Polymer Clay Guild, United Way of Racine County; Media Sponsor - 88NINE Radio Milwaukee.

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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 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.