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Jessica Z Schafer  
Marketing and Publications Manager  
262.638.8300  
jzschafer@ramart.org

**Racine Art Museum Debuts Growing Wearable Art Collection**

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Since 2005, Racine Art Museum (RAM) has been strengthening its holdings of wearable art clothing. The museum is excited to debut gifts of art to wear and emphasize a collecting focus that is not given much attention by other institutions despite its significance within the field of contemporary craft. Open September 22, 2016 - January 1, 2017, **RAM Collects: Contemporary Art to Wear** showcases examples of jackets, vests, shawls, and other wearable pieces by well-known makers such as Jean Williams Caciado, Deborah Cross, Randy Darwall, Tim Harding, Ana Lisa Hedstrom, and Julia Hill.

"Art to wear"—wearable clothing that is produced in unique or limited editions—is primarily handmade and reflects a particular aesthetic style. The genesis of art to wear in the 1960s and 1970s, and its trajectory to the present day, reflects the dynamics of contemporary society and culture, personal choices of the makers (and patrons), complex notions regarding aesthetics, the production of works for wear, and the body as form.

Artists associated with this type of work have come from a variety of backgrounds including painting, sculpture, fiber, and even, chemistry. This is telling as it reflects the diverse approaches they bring to making garments and accessories including dyeing, painting, appliqué, embroidery, weaving, and knitting. Many speak about a love for the materials they use, incorporating explorations of media and technique into their process.

**Sensory Overload**

As a companion exhibition to *Contemporary Art to Wear*, **Sensory Overload: Clothing and the Body** features pieces that investigate the metaphorical capacity of

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clothing and adornment while simultaneously addressing notions of wearability and the body as site. These artists create garments and large-scale accessories that tend to impede or extend the physicality of the body itself, and make the body both an armature and an integral part of the presentation of the piece.

While wearable, the work is more sculptural and concept-oriented than it is functional in a traditional sense. For example, Janice Jakielski meticulously crafts wearables with ambiguous purposes-helmets with blinders, goggles with embroidered screens instead of lenses, and single bonnets with room for two heads. About her work, she says, "By disrupting or enhancing the senses, my props make possible an exaggerated self-awareness, a break in the normalcy of daily experience. With the body dressings, I am creating a threshold space between reality and the imagination."

Artists whose works are featured include Heejin Hwang (South Korea), Janice Jakielski (Massachusetts), Kelly Nye (Ohio), Rachel Timmins (Maryland), Kathleen Nowak Tucci (Alabama), and Yulie Urano (Missouri).

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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.