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Racine Art Museum Explores Paper Art

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Racine Art Museum is pleased to present ***Cut, Fold, and Form Featuring Kiff Slemmons and Julie VonDerVellen***. Open January 24 – May 1, 2016, the artists whose works are featured in this exhibition transform paper—a familiar and seemingly mundane material—into vessels, sculpture, adornment, and artist’s books. Featured artists Kiff Slemmons and Julie VonDerVellen employ various techniques, such as rolling, cutting, folding, and weaving, to create jewelry and sculpture that engages larger social or personal issues.

Even in a culture that seems more and more digitally-oriented, paper is a material that is pervasive. Over the ages, artists have included paper in their practice in a variety of ways, such as a surface for an image, a component of a larger piece, in the form of a book, or a sculptural material.

While there are aspects of paper that are fragile and delicate, it can also be versatile and durable. Historically, it has been utilized in a myriad of objects such as jewelry, clothing, lampshades, and vessels. Blending creativity, design, and engineering, papercraft traditions offer a repertory of techniques that extend the possibilities of the material. These methods include the folding practice of origami, papercutting, and quilling—creating designs from curled paper. Contemporary manipulations of paper play on its physical properties and capabilities as well as its history as both a handmade material and an integral part of mass communication where it is utilized to convey news and images to a large audience.

Artists **Slemmons**, who makes ornate paper jewelry, and **VonDerVellen**, who creates complex sculptural paper watches and clocks, are represented by multiple works. In addition, **Kay Sekimachi** makes bowls by combining processes such as folding and stitching. **Mary Merkel-Hess**, influenced by the natural landscape, constructs vessels

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by combining three-dimensional collage and papier-mâché. Using cut paper and a colorful palette, **Michael Velliquette** crafts sculptures and reliefs that explore the capacity of paper as a material as well as the role of the handmade, the ornamental, and the imagination.

Cut, Fold, and Form combines 3D objects with flat, yet constructed pieces and artist made books. Some artists approach the book as a source of knowledge and information, some approach it as an object, and others do both. As two examples, **Walter Hamady** and **JoAnna Poehlmann** have played with the idea of a book while creating them—exploring multiple aspects, such as the information that is conveyed, how the letters are constructed, what the cover looks like, and what images are used.

Artists from RAM's extensive, growing collection—such as **Dominic Di Mare**, **Caren Heft**, **Jim Lee**, **Ke-Sook Lee**, and **Merle Temkin**, —expand the conversation.

Cut, Fold, and Form: Featuring Kiff Slemmons and Julie VonDerVellen is made possible at Racine Art Museum by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, SC Johnson, Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor - Osborne and Scekic Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, Racine Community Foundation, W.T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - Racine County, Real Racine, Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - Burlington Graphic Systems, Inc., EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Rasmussen Diamonds, Ruud Family Foundation, Inc., Wisconsin Public Radio.

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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 to the public 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. 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.