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**The Racine Art Museum Features
Racine-Raised Artist Karen Gunderson**

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While the history of painting is filled with portraits, still lifes, and natural world imagery, monochromatic canvases that are representational are unexpected. Open through April 14, 2013, **Karen Gunderson: Reflective** features all-black, large-scale paintings of constellations, moons, mountains, and water that seem to shimmer and change depending on the angle from which they are viewed, encouraging viewers to look at nature in a different way.

Gunderson's work requires engagement—similar to the way in which we experience the natural world with more of our senses when we are out in it. Her all-black paintings—created through the application of sure, but delicate brushstrokes and almost imperceptibly different tones of paint—are the keys to understanding an elemental nature. These paintings are part intellectual exercise, part optical illusion, and intensely crafted.

Earlier in her career, Gunderson gained fame for her large-scale paintings depicting clouds in their myriad number of forms. These representational works looked straight at their subject at "eye level" rather than from below. They are luminous depictions of ethereal, natural phenomena that she instilled with a sense of substance and personality. Her more recent black paintings have a similar interest in nature and a few of its somewhat ephemeral denizens, such as water and celestial objects, but they also display a solidity that is well-served by her dark surfaces. The sheen picked up by gallery lighting reflecting off her brushwork suggests the glint of water in starlight, the flint in the rock making up the sides of the mountains, and the ebbing of light emanating from celestial bodies far removed from us.

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Karen Gunderson has built a distinguished resume that includes degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and the University of Iowa, teaching engagements, international solo and group exhibitions, publications, and awards, such as the Second Prize in Painting from the Florence Biennale, Florence, Italy. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections.

RAM at 10 | Growing America's Craft Collection

For its tenth anniversary and in honor of the area's rich artistic legacy, RAM is pleased to bring together the work of two acclaimed artists who call Racine their hometown. Looking back on the decade-long journey and the nature of the arts in Racine, the museum is hosting a series of exhibitions exploring the themes of heritage, heirlooms, and artistic traditions.

The first shows of this series are solo exhibitions for two artists, Karen Gunderson and Barbara Sorensen, who were raised in Racine before moving on to establish careers of national importance in other parts of the country. Both artists connect to the natural environment in intensely personal ways. While one prefers to create paintings and the other sculpture, both Gunderson and Sorensen present insightful and poetic reflections of the natural world. Their responses to their chosen subjects are different but also create a vivid dialogue as their works in different media are presented intermingled in one gallery space, allowing for a "conversation" between the individual objects.

On Friday, March 22 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, the Racine Art Museum will host a gallery reception and discussion conducted by RAM Executive Director and Curator of Collections, Bruce W. Pepich. The public is invited to join these internationally known artists and learn more about *Karen Gunderson: Reflective* and *Barbara Sorensen: Elemental*. Discussion at 7:00 pm. \$10 Admission; RAM Members free.

This exhibition is made possible by: Presenting Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, The Estate of Emile H. Mathis II, in Memory of his Parents: Emil H. and Anna T. Mathis, RAM Society Members, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc., Windgate Charitable Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Racine United Arts Fund; Silver Sponsors - Mrs. Allen C. Buhler, Elwood Corporation, Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, W.T. Walker Group, Inc., Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - The A.C. Buhler Family, CNH America LLC, E.C. Styberg Foundation, Inc., Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, John Kopulos-Corner House, The Marjorie L. Christiansen Foundation, The Norbell Foundation, Real Racine, Robert W. Baird & Co., Runzheimer Foundation, Ruud Family Foundation, and Wisconsin Public Radio.

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Together, the two campuses of the Racine Art Museum, RAM in downtown Racine at



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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.