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## Investigating the idea of a portrait is focus of exhibit

Jan 14, 2019

\$3 FOR 3 MONTHS



"Michael Jackson, 1983" by Bonnie Schiffman, an archival inkjet print.

RACINE — “Represent: Exploring Portraits from RAM’s Collection” will be on exhibit through Sept. 1 at Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St. It features pieces that embrace the idea of a portrait as an investigation of character and situation, tangible details and abstract elements.

In the most general and narrow terms, a portrait is understood as a two-dimensional representation that focuses on a sitter’s upper body. In an expanded context, a portrait could be an image, or object, that conveys information about a person or persons (or

animal) beyond the physical — reflecting periods of time, personalities, personal circumstances, and social and cultural dynamics.

From self-portraits to works that encapsulate the essence of a subject through metaphor or emotion, the pieces in this exhibition encourage contemplation about how human beings understand one another as well as the world around them. At a time when selfies and casual “snaps” are ever more present and popular, it is interesting to consider what it means to explore and understand the self and others through more considered two- and three-dimensional representations.

While there are many possibilities for organization, the exhibit focuses on subject type, with works broken down into loose groups of traditional portraits, self-portraits, artists, famous people, metaphors or types, and fantasy. This broad approach includes photography, paintings and prints along with stitched fiber reliefs and sculptures made of various materials. Works from the mid-20th century are shown alongside pieces created in the last 10 years.

The spectrum of artists whose works are represented features a variety from Works Projects Administration photographers of the 1930s — who operated much like photojournalists — to contemporary ceramic artists.

The Racine Art Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$7 for adults, and \$5 youth ages 12-18, full-time students and seniors age 62 and older. There is no charge for ages 11 and younger.

Docent-led contemporary craft and architectural tours of the museum are available. Go to [www.ramart.org](http://www.ramart.org).