

Glass art shows at RAM are worth a look

Humans have been using glass to make practical and decorative objects since the stone age, when obsidian — glass produced naturally by volcanos — was discovered as a medium. It wasn't until 1962, however, that the studio glass movement began to take hold in America, bringing the process of glass blowing into individual artists' studios and throwing doors wide open for new possibilities in creating with glass.

Harvey Littleton, who was originally trained as a ceramicist, is credited with starting this country's studio glass movement by offering glass-blowing workshops for university professors at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio in 1962. At those now historic

workshops, he and scientist Dominick Labino (who developed materials used on NASA spacecraft and was an amateur artist) demonstrated how the process could be done with a small, inexpensive furnace. While artists in Europe had already discovered such possibilities, most glass objects made in the United States had been mass produced in factories, prior to Littleton's and Labino's inspiration.

Littleton is also part of Wisconsin's history, having started the studio glass program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where his early students included artists such as Dale Chihuly and Fritz Dreisbach, who went on to become leaders in the movement.



SCENE & HEARD
Lee B. Roberts

This year, museums and galleries across the country are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the studio glass movement with a series of special exhibitions and programs. And the Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St., is part of that celebration, offering two shows that focus on glass artwork.

The first, which runs through Oct. 7, features 27 glass pieces recently given to the RAM for its permanent collection. Called "Handle with Care: Recent Acquisitions in Glass," it includes work created by Harvey Littleton, Dale Chihuly, Fritz Dreisbach, Paul Stankard and 15 other glass artists from the U.S. and Europe who are known for advancing public appreciation of contemporary studio glass.

The second exhibit, "Cutting Edge: RAM Explores Contemporary Glass Jewelry," will open Oct. 28 and run through Feb. 17, 2013. It will include the work of more than 20 artists from around the world who

have created jewelry using a variety of techniques from glass-blowing to casting and beadwork. The RAM is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Free admission is offered on the first Friday of every month, and otherwise is \$5 for adults, with discounts for seniors, students and children.

For more about these exhibits and the studio glass movement — including a video about Harvey Littleton's pioneering work — go to www.ramart.org. If you'd like to explore the art of glass-blowing first hand, check out the opportunities at Racine's Hot Shop Glass studio and gallery via its website, www.hotshopglass.com.

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ART

Three new exhibitions to open at UW-Parkside Wednesday

SOMERS — Prior to the arrival of the AIDS Memorial Quilt Oct. 22-Nov. 5, the art galleries at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside present three new exhibitions. Held in the galleries of the university's new Rita Tallent Picken Regional Center for Arts and Humanities, 900 Wood Road, each show begins Wednesday, Sept. 5. Opening receptions for all of the exhibits is from 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 8.

In the Fine Arts Gallery of The Rita, the "Wisconsin Visual Arts Juried Exhibition" brings some of the state's best artwork

in busy outdoor recycling centers, Kareken created drawings and paintings in muted earth tones that offer views of the urban landscape that typically remain hidden.

In the E.H. Mathis Gallery, patrons can enjoy "Steal Like an Artist," newspaper blackout poetry inspired by Austin Kleon, through Nov. 3. Taking its name from Kleon's bestselling book, the exhibition features poems by youths and adults in Kenosha and Racine. At workshops conducted by the Kenosha Art Association, the poets used permanent

Walk in the Woods Art Fair Saturday

SOMERS — The Walk in the Woods Art Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 1, at Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum, 880 Green Bay Road.

More than 60 artists will display their creations along the wooded trails and gardens of Hawthorn Hollow. Items for sale include jewelry, acrylic and water color paintings, photography, wood

sculpting, handmade baskets, clothing, glass and garden art.

There will be live music, refreshments and a silent auction.

The fee to attend is \$4 per vehicle. Proceeds benefit Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum.

For more information, call (262) 552-8196 or go to www.hawthornhollow.org.

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