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**Japanese Artists Embrace Studio Art**

Racine, WI February 5, 2018

Open February 18 – June 10, 2018 at the Racine Art Museum (RAM), **Japanese Studio Craft at RAM** is an exploration of small-scale craft—art jewelry, ceramics, baskets, fiber, glass, and wood—from artists of Japanese heritage with a focus on how tradition can impact contemporary makers.

What is Japanese studio craft? Studio craft is most simply distinguished from the traditional version by intention. Where craft has historically been used for necessity or ceremony, studio craft has emphasized artistic investigation or aesthetic contemplation. Significantly, studio craft may or may not be functional or intended for practical use.

Since the later twentieth century, Japan—steeped in strong historical traditions that include woodworking, metalworking, fibers, lacquer ware, and more—has seen a greater focus on craft-oriented studio practices that emphasize the artist’s interests rather than function. This has come in part from Japanese artists studying abroad who have been impacted by theories of making that have developed in places like the United States and Western Europe.

Contemporary artists—such as Kyohei Fujita who crafted patterned glass boxes, Keizuke Mizuno who creates ceramic sculpture, and Hisako Sekijima, a self-described basket maker—have aspects of their work that can be traced to their connections to Japan. In addition, they expand on time-honored concepts by experimenting with materials, challenging form and scale, or investigating theoretical issues.

*Japanese Studio Craft at RAM* is made possible by: Platinum Sponsor - Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor - Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors -

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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 \$7 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.