Let’s Craft!

Did you know the Racine Art Museum has the largest contemporary craft artwork collection in North America? Let’s explore fine art craft in RAM’s collection.

Ceramics

RAM’s collection of ceramics, which focuses on mid-to late-20th century American clay, is the most comprehensive segment of its permanent collection.

Clay artwork can be figurative, sculptural, functional and non-functional.

Clay is cooked in a **kiln**, a large oven that fires ceramic materials at very hot temperatures. **Raku** is a firing method that originated in Japan and takes preheated bisque out of a redhot kiln into containers with combustible materials. This produces an intense reduction atmosphere which affects the colors in glazes and clay bodies.

**Glaze** is clay paint. Finely ground mineral are applied by brushing, pouring, dipping, or spraying on the surface of bisque-fired ceramic ware.

**Make Homemade Clay**

2 cups salt  
2/3 cups water  
Saucepan  
1 cup cornstarch  
1/2 cup cold water

**Directions**

1. Stir salt and water in a saucepan over heat 4-5 minutes.
2. Remove from heat; add cornstarch and cold water.
3. Stir until smooth; return to heat and cook until thick.
4. Allow the clay to cool, then shape as desired.
5. When dry, decorate with paint, markers, glitter, and so on.
6. If you like, finish with clear acrylic spray or clear nail polish.
7. Store unused clay in a Ziploc bag

Now try making a clay sculpture!

Clay Teapots

In 1999, collector Donna Moog offered RAM a gift of over 250 teapots. The impact of the Moog collection cannot be understated as it offered a large body of work with diverse artists and styles represented. Since this gift, RAM has added over 200 teapots from various other donors, thereby establishing one of the largest public collections of contemporary artist-made teapots in the United States.

Teapots have a body, handle, spot and lid.

Some teapots are functional and other are non-functional (sculptural). Look at the teapot on the right. Do you think it is functional?

**Draw a teapot**

Sing “I’m a Little Teapot” while drawing your design!
Combining the work of American artists with important pieces from international artists, RAM's Studio Glass collection documents worldwide developments in glass since 1964 when Harvey K. Littleton and Dominick Labino held workshops on the grounds of the Toledo Museum of Art. These workshops brought blown glass out of industry and into the artist's studio.

Several of the most common techniques for producing glass art include: blowing, kiln-casting, fusing, slumping, pâte-de-verre, flame-working, hot-sculpting, and cold-working.

How is glass made?
Glass is made from liquid sand by heating ordinary sand (mostly composed of silicon dioxide SiO$_2$) until it melts and turns into a liquid.

Watch a video on glass blowing:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgvJbq2k6gM

Visit Hot Shop Glass in Racine and watch the process in live action!

Looking at the blue glass piece above by Joel Philip Myers. The shards of glass look like a wave. Draw a blue wave:

Can you find the fish in the glass bowl above? Draw a fish in the bowl below:

Flecks of color can be seen in the Dale Chihuly artwork. What is your favorite color? Draw a small image below with this color:
RAM’s metal collection focuses on American studio jewelry, rather than holloware and architectural metal work. The pieces document the major movements of American studio jewelry ranging from a concern with semi-precious material to more sculptural forms that challenge the relationship between art and the body and finally today’s preoccupation with the narrative and the figure.

**Make a Necklace at Home**
Using supplies most commonly found in the kitchen or in the recycled can, make a necklace or piece of wearable art.

**What can you use?**
Straws, paper plates, string, packaging parts, newspaper, postcards, plastic utensils, coffee filters, odds and ends around the house.

**Need more inspiration?** Check out the necklace below by Robert W. Ebendorf. He collected objects found on the beach and upcycled them into wearable art.

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**Above:**
Ken Loeber
*White Rouge Pin, 2012*
18k-gold and pearl
1 3/4 x 9/16 x 7/16 inches
Collection of Karen Henrietta Keland
Photography: Ralph Gabriner

**Metal Sculpture**

Albert Paley
*Demilune with Torchiere*
Trained in jewelry and metalsmithing, internationally recognized ironworker Albert Paley has used metals to create adornment, furniture, large-scale sculpture, and architectural ornamentation. Because he works with metal at a high temperature, when it is most plastic, Paley can create baroque, looping forms.

Learn more about Albert Paley with this Craft in America video:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAGdVu_knLU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAGdVu_knLU)

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Arlene Fisch
*Woven Feathers Bracelet, 1970*
Sterling silver, Macaw feathers, and Egyptian faience beads
Racine Art Museum, Gift of Jane R. Gittings in Memory of Irene Purcell Johnson
Photography: Michael Tropea, Chicago

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Robert W. Ebendorf
*Off the Street, From the Beach Necklace, 1992*
Found plastic objects and base metal
2 1/8 x 14 3/4 inches diameter
Racine Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Brent Best
Photography: Tom Van Eynde

**Activity:**
Take a walk and see what you can find to make into wearable art.
Works of art in wood are a portion of RAM’s collection that has grown in recent years. RAM’s wood collection already feature remarkable examples of contemporary furniture, including sculptural pieces by artists like Wendell Castle. Recently, the museum has begun to develop a collection of turned vessels from artists such as Mark Lindquist and Edward Moulthrop that highlight the natural characteristics of wood itself.

Wendell Castle is described as the “father of the art furniture movement.” This desk is one of the first examples of artist-made furniture to come into the museum’s collection and is one of the most important works that RAM owns.

**Wendell Castle**  
*Desk, 1967*  
Cherry and mahogany laminate, plywood, and silver leaf  
Racine Art Museum, Gift of SC Johnson in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of Wustum Museum  
Photography: Jon Bolton, Racine, W

The above desk is an important work in RAM’s collection. What do you like to collect?

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Can you find an animal hidden in the wood goblet by artists Kaaren Wiken and Tom Rauschke?

Draw an image of this animal in a forest:

**Tom Rauschke and Kaaren Wiken**  
*Forest Goblet, 1998*  
Ash and dyed cotton thread  
Racine Art Museum, Gift of an Anonymous Donor  
Photography: Jon Bolton, Racine, WI

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Wood artists use a variety of woods from different trees. How many types of trees can you list:

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A tree burl is formed coming out of the side of the tree when the grain of the tree has grown in a distorted and unusual manner. Wood artists create beautiful art from burls. Find the artwork above that is made from an oak burl:

**John Cederquist**  
*Bluto’s Diner, 2005*  
Wood, epoxy resin, and ink  
Racine Art Museum, Gift of the Estate of Linda Brooks Sullivan  
Photography: Gary Searcher
One of the largest in the US, RAM’s contemporary basket collection forms a major portion of its works of fiber art. A substantial gift from Karen Johnson Boyd helped RAM establish this comprehensive body of modern baskets. It represents at least 25 major artists who work with fibers, including Lillian Elliot, John McQueen, Leon Niehues, and Kay Sekimachi. These artists used both natural and industrial with techniques such as looping, knotting, and papermaking materials, to create the works in RAM’s collection.

RAM is also documenting leading figures and techniques in the Art Fabric movement, incorporating tapestries, wall hangings, quilts, and wearable art in its collection.

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<tr>
<th>Fiber</th>
<th>Find the letters!</th>
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The artist John McQueen often uses letters and text in his art. Circle the letters that you find in the image on the left:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

The artwork in the image below is a contemporary quilt design and features images of people and animals.

Draw a quilt square design here:

Tell me a Story!

Rosita Johanson’s fiber art is full of narrative and tells a story about people at a fair.

Tell a story by looking at this image:

**Rosita Johanson**  
German, 1937 – 2007  
*Day at the Exhibition*, 1993  
Dyed cotton fabric, dyed cotton thread, metallic thread and acrylic paint  
9 x 8 inches  
Racine Art Museum  
Gift of Mobilia Gallery, Cambridge, MA  
Photography: Jon Bolton, Racine, WI

**Susan Shie and James Acord**  
The Fire Spirit: A Green Quilt, 1993  
Commercial fabrics, beads, puffy paint, leather, found objects, and dyed cotton thread  
54 1/2 x 39 x 1 inches  
Racine Art Museum, Gift of Dr. Ellen M. Poss  
Photography: Jon Bolton, Racine
The Racine Art Museum's commitment to establishing a permanent collection of polymer jewelry, beads, and sculptural objects led to a groundbreaking exhibition. In the Fall of 2011, *Terra Nova: Polymer Art at the Crossroads* opened and featured over 200 objects—both from RAM’s permanent collection and on loan—made of polymer, including adornment, vessels, and furniture. The show emphasized the development of this material as a significant medium for artwork in recent decades.

Polymer art is sculptural and often wearable. Imagine you are wearing the necklace by Elise Winters.

### Think COLOR!

Polymer clay comes in a wide range of colors. To create new colors, use two or more pieces of polymer in different colors and blend them by rolling and re-rolling and twisting multiple times.

If you mix red and yellow polymer, what color will you get?

### Make a Polymer Cane

A polymer clay cane is a log of polymer that’s made with a design that runs the entire length of the log. ... When slices of polymer canes are arranged to make a field of flowers, this can be called millefiori. Millefiori buttons and beads made from slices of polymer flower canes.

https://www.sculpey.com/create/project/simple-canes/

### Is it Plastic or Clay?

Polymer often referred to as a clay. However, clay is a natural resource that comes from the earth while polymer is a plastic material, essentially PVC (polyvinyl chloride). It can be shaped, molded, and reshaped like earth clay. Polymer is malleable until it is baked at a low temperature at 275° in a convection or regular oven, while clay from the earth is baked in a kiln at a very high temperature, approx. 1800-2400°.

*Left:*

Elise Winters
Red Ruffle Cascade Neckpiece, 2009
Polymer and acrylic paint
9 1/4 x 5 1/2 x 3 5/8 inches
Racine Art Museum
Gift of the Artist and Sherwood Rudin
Photography: Penina Meisel

### Can you guess what this object is?

**Jeffrey Lloyd Dever**

Love Bottle, 1998
Polymer
9 1/8 x 5 1/2 x 3 5/8 inches
Racine Art Museum, Gift of the Artist
Photography: Penina Meisels

**Kathleen Dustin**

Mother Purse, 2005
Polymer, bronze, glass beads, and cotton thread
6 ¾ x 3 5/8 x 2 3/8 inches
w/strap: 25 7/8 x 3 5/8 x 3 3/8 inches
Racine Art Museum, Gift of Marilyn Radke
Photography: Penina Meisel

*It’s a purse made of polymer!*