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Sugarcoated Marshmallow PEEPS are the Focus of Upcoming Racine Art Museum Exhibition

Racine, WI March 18, 2021

On Thursday, March 25, an untraditional exhibition showcasing fluffy, sugarcoated marshmallow PEEPS® will begin its twelfth year at the Racine Art Museum (RAM). Open through April 10, the *RAM 12th Annual International PEEPS Art Exhibition* features 138 creative and entertaining entries that demonstrate the talent of more than 170 artists from across the country.

Inspired by pop culture, animals, sports, and famous artists, many of the PEEPS art entries are by local artists, families, and organizations. However, several pieces arrive every year from out-of-state. Over the past twelve years, PEEPS® pieces have been sent into RAM from as far away as Tucson, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Pisgah Forest, North Carolina; and New York City.

Over the years, many entrants have become experts in marshmallow candy as a material, using methods like carving, painting, hole punching, gluing, and melting to manipulate PEEPS® into incredible shapes. While the seasonal candies are still the most common material, the 12th anniversary show also includes pieces made in a variety of other media. For the most part, anything goes, as long as it represents PEEPS®, is family friendly, and adheres to the exhibition's size requirements.

Submissions to the *RAM 11th Annual International PEEPS Art Exhibition* in 2020 were on display throughout multiple galleries in the museum to promote safe social

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distancing. This year, the show returns to its traditional exhibition space—with a limited capacity and social distancing guidelines alongside the museum's existing safety protocols.

On Wednesday, March 24 at 5:30 pm, Bruce W. Pepich, RAM Executive Director and Curator of Collections, and Lisa Englander, founder of the RAM PEEPS exhibition, will present a Virtual Awards Ceremony via the video conference app Zoom. Awards are based on clever and skilled use or representation of PEEPS® in adult, children's, and group categories. The general public is invited to register for this free event on the RAM website, ramart.org. Registrants will receive an email confirmation with the event Zoom link.

In addition, visitors throughout the run of the show will have the opportunity to vote online for their favorite creation, naming one popular artwork worthy of the coveted PEEPls Choice Award. This vote has been taken very seriously since the inception of the annual exhibition. With guests allowed only one per visit, they circle the works of PEEPS® art, taking notes about the exhibition, and then often lobbying for their eventual favorite. The award will be announced after the close of the exhibition.

Out-of-state enthusiasts and other would-be visitors are invited to view the exhibition from the comfort of home during a Live Virtual Tour of the *RAM 12th Annual International PEEPS Art Exhibition*. This intimate glimpse of the show will broadcast at 10:30 am CST on Wednesday, April 7 on the RAM Facebook page. A Facebook account is not required to watch the video, but viewers with an account will be able to ask questions during the tour and receive responses from museum staff. The tour will also be available to watch on demand on Facebook, YouTube, and the RAM website after the live broadcast has concluded.

This competition is sponsored by the Racine Art Museum Store and Guest Relations.

Exhibitions at Racine Art Museum are made possible by: Platinum Sponsors—Anonymous, Nicholas and Nancy Kurten, Windgate Foundation, Wisconsin Department of Administration; Diamond Sponsors—Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, Ruffo Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors—Anonymous, David Charak, Tom and Irene Creecy, David Flegel, Herzfeld Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Racine Community Foundation, Kathy Robins, Trio Foundation of St. Louis, W.T. Walker Group, Inc., Wisconsin Arts Board; Silver Sponsors—A.C. Buhler Family, Andis Foundation, Lucy G. Feller, Ben and Dawn Flegel, Ron and Judith Isascs, Johnson Bank, Bill Keland, Dorothy MacVicar, RDK Foundation, Inc., Real Racine; Bronze Sponsors—Anonymous, Susan Boland, Virginia Buhler, Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research, Educators Credit Union, Fredrick and Deborah Ganaway,

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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.

After temporarily closing its doors in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, RAM and RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts are currently open to the public. Both museums are operating with limited hours, open Wednesday through Saturday from Noon to 4:00 pm. Information regarding safety protocols and what to expect when visiting the museums are available on the RAM website, ramart.org.