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Exploring Paper and Plastic as Adornment

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Frequent visitors to Racine Art Museum often see contemporary jewelry made of a wide variety of media. Open through June 5, 2016, **Paper/Plastic: Contemporary Adornment** reflects a variety of approaches to using nontraditional materials. Truly, jewelry can be made of almost any material—whatever a person would want to use for adornment, they could. Some materials may be more valuable, durable, or wearable than others, but if the intent is present, most things can be manipulated to be worn.

In the world of art jewelry, this notion was given renewed attention in the latter half of the twentieth century when many artists adopted non-precious materials—such as plastic, paper, fabric, and found objects—for use in their work. While mass-produced modern costume and fashion jewelry made with cheaper materials has become popular, the one-of-a-kind, expensive jewelry prominent in Western cultures is still associated with status and display. Interested in investigating new roles for jewelry and challenging some assumptions, artists found ways to incorporate paper and plastic—as well as other materials—into their practice as they subverted ideas of preciousness and suggested new meanings for adornment.

Paper/Plastic features a variety of examples to using these materials, from the Eugene Pijanowski’s neckpiece made of Japanese papercord (mizuhiki) to the plastic 3D printed ring by Arthur Hash. While all of these makers follow their own courses and interests, they also all seem to be in sympathy with Caroline Broadhead’s statement about her own work: “My work is mainly driven by ideas but making and materials are an integral part of the process. You can’t make things without considering the craft of it.”

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Other artists from RAM's collection who are represented in *Paper/Plastic* include – Nuala Jamison, Bussi Buhs, Robert W. Ebendorf, Adam Paxon, Martin Adams, Hiroko Sato, Wendy Ramshaw, and David Watkins.

Paper/Plastic: Contemporary Adornment is made possible at Racine Art Museum by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, SC Johnson, Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor - Osborne and Sceikic Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, Racine Community Foundation W.T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - Racine County, Real Racine Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - Burlington Graphic Systems, Inc., EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Rasmussen Diamonds, Ruud Family Foundation, Inc., Wisconsin Public Radio

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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 \$5 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.