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**View Major Figures in Contemporary Craft
Through the Lens of Paul J. Smith**

Racine, WI September 13, 2017

Open September 17 through December 31, 2017, **Paul Smith: Masters of Craft** offers an intimate look at major figures in contemporary craft who are also a part of Racine Art Museum's collection. For over 30 years, Paul J. Smith, Director Emeritus of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City (formerly the American Craft Museum), took casual portraits of artists in various settings, including their studios, art conferences, and international events. Many of these artists, such as Wendell Castle, Dale Chihuly, Robert Ebendorf, Arline Fisch, and Toshiko Takaezu, have become representative figures in twentieth-century American studio craft.

Smith's informal approach—sometimes capturing people in mid-sentence, in self-reflective moments, or pausing while working—offers an intimate look at the personal side of making art. It is not a perspective readily available to most museum visitors. With the atypical twist of having the emphasis on the artist directly, and not the work itself, these photographs reflect the personalities and individuality of makers who shaped the craft field.

A book published in 2016, *Masters of Craft: 224 Artists in Fiber, Clay, Glass, Metal, and Wood, Portraits by Paul J. Smith* features 240 photographs documenting 224 artists. Working with Smith, RAM chose approximately 50 portraits to add to the museum's collection. These photos bridge the two major collecting interests at RAM—contemporary craft and works on paper, which includes photography.

For this debut presentation, several photographs by Smith are being shown alongside—or in combination with—*75 at 75: Significant Artworks from RAM's Collection*, a concurrent exhibition celebrating RAM's Wustum Museum's 75th anniversary.

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This exhibition is made possible by: Platinum Sponsor - Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor: Osborne and Sceikic Family Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, W. T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - Andis Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, Real Racine, Runzheimer International Ltd., Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - CNH Industrial, EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Ruud Family Foundation, Southern Connecticut Polymer Clay Guild, United Way of Racine County; Media Sponsor - 88NINE Radio Milwaukee.

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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.