

**Racine Art Museum Association, Inc.****Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Statement**

Approved by the RAMA Board of Directors March 22, 2022

Racine Art Museum Association, Inc. (RAMA) is committed to supporting diverse artists, voices, and audiences—whether that diversity reflects race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, ability, social standing, or world perspective.

As a cultural/educational institution rooted in the humanities and using art as a catalyst, RAMA wants to encourage inquiry, exploration, and empathy about the world in which we live. RAM and RAMA's Wustum Museum strive to provide spaces and experiences that show art is powerful—it can offer new viewpoints, moments of wonder, flights of the imagination, difficult or fantastical things to ponder, an occasion to relax or reflect, and also, significantly, a means to understand or connect and interact. Additionally, because every culture has historically excelled in making functional, decorative, or religious objects by hand, craft in particular can form links between people of diverse backgrounds.

This equity statement reflects initial attempts and actions to evaluate and address institutional perspectives or paths toward a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible organization. Objectives toward these current and future goals align with—and will continue to be evaluated within the context of—RAMA's Strategic Plan. This will apply to all areas of the organization including program content, permanent collection acquisitions, partner relationships, and Board, staff, and volunteer recruitment and retention. With this in mind, and with a desire to be responsive and willing to adjust plans as needed, RAMA is moving forward with continued empathy and kindness.

In direct terms, this means that new partnerships are being built to encourage a network of support and engagement—for artists and for audiences.

In the galleries, this means spotlights are placed on voices that have been historically underrepresented in art—and by extension, society as a whole—beginning with women, artists of color, and those identifying as indigenous. RAMA identifies artists of color in this context as non-white and non-European. This simplification—arguably, a flawed starting point—does not account for the nuances and variations of society. It is a beginning—a way to direct those who want to educate themselves about what is possible when new perspectives are encountered.

In RAMA's education programs for children and families, the participation of people of color has increased from 8% in 2008 to 50.2% as a result of actions that were elements of RAMA's Strategic Plan. RAMA has had and continues to have Board members, volunteers, guests, and staff who represent our diverse communities. The percentage of their representation and participation has not reached the level we have seen in our children's education programs and we continue to work on growing these amounts as goals in the museum's Strategic Plan.

To make positive societal change and advancement possible, RAMA believes exposure to a broad range of visual art and cultural education programs expands self-expression, creative problem-solving, more open communication, spiritual nourishment, and increased empathy. RAMA, as an institution that values social justice, seeks to use creativity to inspire people at all stages in their lives. The intent is to help people from all backgrounds become lifelong learners who can develop creative solutions to the cultural and social challenges affecting them and the communities in which they live and work. The museum's two campuses are dedicated to achieve these goals in its culture and the programming it offers the communities it serves.

To learn more about steps RAMA has taken in accordance with this Statement and the institution's Strategic Plan, please see *DEIA Efforts: RAMA's Progress Report* at [\(link\)](#)

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Summary**

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As a cultural/educational institution rooted in the humanities and using art as a catalyst, RAMA wants to encourage inquiry, exploration, and empathy about the world in which we live. RAM and Wustum Musaeum strive to provide spaces and experiences that show art is powerful—it can offer new viewpoints, moments of wonder, flights of the imagination, difficult or fantastical things to ponder, an occasion to relax or reflect, and also, significantly, a means to understand or connect and interact. Additionally, because every culture has historically excelled in making functional, decorative, or religious objects by hand, craft in particular can form links between people of diverse backgrounds.

With this in mind, RAMA is moving forward with continued empathy and kindness. To make positive societal change and advancement possible, we believe exposure to a broad range of visual art and cultural education programs expands self-expression, creative problem-solving, more open communication, spiritual nourishment, and increased empathy. RAMA, as an institution that values social justice, seeks to use creativity to inspire people at all stages in their lives. The intent is to generate a more vital and employable citizenry who can develop creative solutions to cultural and social challenges. The museum's two campuses are dedicated to achieve these goals in its culture and the programming it offers the communities it serves.

**RAMA's Ongoing Progress Report of  
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Efforts**  
March 15, 2022

**Institutional Focus on Craft**

Since 1990, when RAMA'S Wustum Museum decided to focus 40-50% of its efforts on collecting and exhibiting works in craft media, the general operating principle has been one of accessibility. Theoretically, even to this day, craft is not wholeheartedly accepted as a viable framework for creative endeavors in all corners of the art world. By choosing an emphasis on craft—in a state that has shown a strong interest in the approach and in a regional area that supports craft as a mode of handwork and as reflective of diverse ethnic backgrounds—RAMA establishes itself as a space that can support people and approaches that have been historically underrepresented and undervalued. Future endeavors can and should build on this perspective—not only addressing accessibility as a metaphor but further working to create spaces that are accessible in terms of race, socio-economic status, gender, and any other factor that impacts participation in a community.

The following is a listing of actions taken in most recent years that exemplify RAMA's commitment to these efforts.

**Collections and Exhibitions:**

**2021**

- Began an ongoing review of organizational language that addresses diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Began an ongoing internal audit regarding the heritage of artists in the collection. Will establish a statement that will be published on website collection pages regarding this process.
- Introduced signage that lists artists of color (as well as artists who identify as women who make up 41% of artists represented in the collection) whose works are included in each exhibition
- Introduced portfolios (collections of images and information) on the website that highlight artists of color and artists who identify as women from the collection
- Developed exhibitions programming that showcases artists of color including a semi-permanent "showcase" space at Wustum
- Established an expanded and diverse pool of potential jurors for the RAM Artist Fellowship/Emerging Artist program and juried exhibitions
- Worked with UW-Parkside faculty on collaborative programming opportunities related to artists of color
- Began asking artists who participate in juried exhibitions to share if they identify as a person of color with the option of answering with yes, no, or prefer not to answer
- Continued a commitment made in 2010 to pay interns who work on the permanent collection to make these positions accessible to broader groups of students

### **Educational Programs and Outreach:**

#### **2020**

- Focused on diverse artists in the collection and around the world through *Outreach 5*
- Created new program content for *RAM on the Road Second Grade* program and focused on story telling specific to artists of color in the collection

#### **2021**

- Featured a diverse group of artists and created art using recycled materials for the new *Zero Waste Eighth Grade Art* program, critically highlighting how communities of color are often impacted negatively by plastic pollution and environmental hazards such as Environmental Racism
- Instituted a program to specifically work with Family & Community Engagement Centers /Family Empowerment Series (FES)
  - Provided art programs, take home art projects, and online activities, many of which focused on artists of color
  - Partnered with FES to provide programs during *Family Days* at a variety of Community Schools:
    - National Hispanic Heritage Month
    - Martin Luther King Day
    - Black History Month
    - Women’s History Month
- Partnered with the Black Arts Council of Racine to provide collaborative programming and support with the goal to build a stronger network of artists of color in the area by providing free art making activities for families
- Created and provided a variety of online, at-home family activities that are inspired by and showcase artists of color or women from the permanent collection

### **General Operations**

#### **2021**

- Developed DEIA Statement and shared it with diverse constituents for feedback and further revision
- As part of the Strategic Plan, completed the first phase of an institution-wide salary survey and analysis that resulted in pay increases for staff members whose compensation levels were significantly below median levels for the field, region, and discipline
- Provided access and encouraged staff to use working hours to participate in the *Racine County United Way Diversity Challenge-Parts One and Two*
- Provided access and encouraged Board and volunteers to participate in the *Racine County United Way Diversity Challenge-Parts One and Two*
- Offered and encouraged diversity and equity training through educational programming such as the *SPARK!* virtual conferences

- Explored and implemented new networks to reach a more diverse pool of candidates for open staff positions and volunteer and docent recruitment
- Met with local college art professors to explore people of color as possible candidates for education-oriented roles such as teachers, general museum assistants, and education assistants
- Continued *Free First Fridays* (since 2008) and provided family guest passes to be checked out from the Racine Public Library and used by anyone for free admission at any time (since 2016)
- Recruited/Invited 12 Latino or African American artists and chefs (16-total) who were featured at *SAVOUR*—RAMA's annual premiere fundraising event
- Reached out to the following potential community partners to explore new relationships and initiatives with the following:
  - ArtRoot, a committee of artists and arts advocates working to revitalize Racine through the arts
  - Nicole McDowell, Executive Director of Engagement and Equity, Racine Unified School District (RUSD)
  - Family Engagement Center staff, a support center for local people of color
  - April Harris, Black Arts Council of Racine
  - Kristina Campbell, Art for Uptown
  - United Way of Racine County/RUSD Community Schools
  - Kristina Wantanabe, Wings of Fire Consulting and Phoenix Wellness Center, Gateway Technical College
  - Scott Terry, Mahogany Gallery
  - René Amado, RAM Emerging Artist Fellowship Recipient
  - Lisa Marie Barber, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, RAM Artist Fellowship Recipient
  - Lisa Bigalke, Carthage College, RAM Artist Fellowship Recipient
  - Deontrae Mayfield, the Main Project and Café
  - Tasia White, TaejaVu's on Main
  - Angela Zimmerman, Executive Director, Racine Public Library
  - Midwest Museum Equity Group
  - Mallory Umar, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction, RUSD
- Added Martin Luther King Day to the museum calendar as a staff holiday
- Re-iterated institutional support to staff and encouraged scheduling flexibility to celebrate religious and other holidays that are meaningful to them
- Continued implementation of scholarships for studio art classes for children and adults to encourage participation regardless of the socio-economic status of the participants
- Installed and maintained content on an iPad at Wustum Museum with images of work on the second floor galleries to accommodate visitors who cannot use the stairs

### Coming Soon

- Reviewing compensation measures for artists lending works to exhibitions and engaging in outreach programming
- Investigate the feasibility and implementation of scholarship opportunities for juried exhibitions as a means to encourage participation regardless of the socio-economic status of the participants
- Increasing the range of voices involved in programming content—as organizers as well as content providers
- Seeking opportunities through acquisition fund development to increase the representation (currently 10%) of artists of color and indigenous artists in RAMA's permanent collection
- Investigating the feasibility of making portions of the collection more accessible through engagement opportunities such as presenting study materials for hands-on learning
- Developing portfolios (collections of images and information) on the website that highlight social justice topics and other issues as represented in the collection
- Contemplating the efficacy of having links on the website addressing social justice, equality, and/or diversity and how it relates to artists or artists of color
- Improving gallery accessibility through interactive outreach, gallery signage, and artwork arrangement
- Developing exhibitions programming that showcases artists of color including a semi-permanent “showcase” space at RAM
- Build on the 2021 survey of race and ethnicity of collection artists, using the results for education purposes and to ensure progress towards goals to increase diverse representation
- Expand upon gallery signage to identify indigenous artists as well as artists of color and those who identify as women