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**Racine Art Museum Showcases Local Visual Arts Community
RAM Artist Fellowship 2017:
Presented by the Osborne and Scekic Foundation**

Racine, Wisconsin August 15, 2017

Opening at RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts on August 18, the **RAM Artist Fellowship Exhibition 2017** showcases the diversity and vitality of the Racine/Kenosha visual arts community. This exhibition is a series of solo shows featuring the work of four area artists who were recipients of RAM Artist Fellowships in 2016—Tim Abel, Martin Antaramian, Kirsten Bartel, and Lisa Bigalke—representing a diverse range of styles and media. The show continues through November 25, 2017.

Sponsored by a grant from the Osborne and Scekic Family Foundation, the biennial Racine Art Museum fellowships provide support for the professional development of the community's artists. Additionally, the program distinguishes the region as a place that values the arts and enhances the area's desirability as a place for artists to work and live.

Comprised of work newly created since the fellowship period began in January 2016—as well as work already in existence—this exhibition offers a sampling of the dynamic visual arts scene in this corner of southeastern Wisconsin.

About the Artists

After receiving his MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 2008, **Tim Abel** resided in Kenosha until recently. As a father of two boys, a husband, and an art educator, Abel includes his family and career in his creative process. His work explores how obscure sewing materials —like plastic bags or paper—can be quilted and shaped into common patterns seen every day in the world.

As a lifetime resident of Kenosha and graduate from UW-Parkside, **Martin**

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Antaramian discovered his future career as a sculptor after taking a 3D design class as a general education credit. Antaramian focuses on woodcarving—creating furniture in a sculptural form to demonstrate how functional objects can also be visually stunning.

Originally from the Southern United States, **Kirsten Bartel** has traveled the country obtaining her BFA in Art Education and BA in Studio Art from the University of Texas in 2007. Her next stop was Southern Illinois University where she received her MFA in printmaking. Bartel has worked in Missouri, Colorado, and Wyoming. She now lives in Racine and is an Assistant Professor of Printmaking and Digital Photography at UW-Parkside. Bartel's travels, particularly in the American West, have inspired her to create paper-based works that investigate the definition of the American Dream while exploring the impact of consumer culture on natural resources.

Relief printmaker **Lisa Bigalke** received her BA from UW-Parkside in 1996 and her MFA from Louisiana State University in 2000. Using a variety of mediums, Bigalke explores the idea of self through macro and micro elements of landscape. Her artwork has been exhibited in 14 solos exhibitions and many important group shows, including the Leicester Print Biennial 2016 in the UK and in Global Print 2017 in Portugal.

Preview and Opening Reception

The public is invited to meet the artists during the **RAM Artist Fellowship Exhibition 2017 Preview and Opening Reception** on Thursday, August 17, 5:30 – 8:00 pm at RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts. Performing live at this event, Cellist Janet Schiff and Percussionist Victor DeLorenzo (founding drummer of Violent Femmes) will share the bold and vibrant sound of **NINETEEN THIRTEEN**. Light refreshments will be served during this free event. Wustum Museum is located at 2519 Northwestern Avenue, Racine.

Further details about this year's featured artists as well as general information about RAM Artist Fellowships, including an artist prospectus for the next application period, are available at the museum's website, ramart.org.

The RAM Artist Fellowship Exhibition 2017 is made possible by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, Windgate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsor: Osborne and Scekcic 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., United Way of Racine County, 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; 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.