

**RAM Showcase: Focus on Glass**

June 15 – May 27, 2023

Within a contemporary art context, the embrace of glass as a medium to communicate ideas is relatively new and, fun for Wisconsinites, linked to artists working in this state. Glass in and of itself is an ancient material that has long been used for decorative, mechanical, functional, and commercial purposes. But in the 1960s, very particular efforts were underway at University of Wisconsin-Madison to focus attention on artists as the makers of one-of-a-kind glass objects in a studio setting. In the years since, glass has had no shortage of interest from artists who appreciate its physical, structural, and metaphorical properties.

Recognizing the value of glass as a material for use in many capacities, 2022 has been designated the International Year of Glass by the United Nations. This exhibition spotlights glass as an art medium but, more importantly, in some ways, calls attention to the work of contemporary artists of color from RAM's collection. While neither of these two threads are unique ones at RAM, this is the first exhibition dedicated to featuring only artists of color working with this material.

It is important to point out that while there are theoretically no limitations to the materials any artist can use, there have historically been barriers to some artists of color in the United States—indirect or otherwise—to access tools, materials, or studio spaces. In this current moment, more and more efforts are being made to not just support and encourage the work of artists of color but also to draw attention to the work that has already been done.

While pleased to highlight artwork incorporating glass, RAM is especially proud to do so in 2022—the International Year of Glass—to celebrate the heritage and importance of the material in all facets of life.

**Biographies and statements from featured artists****José Chardiet**

b. Havana, Cuba, 1956 –

*Drawing from topics as diverse as Spanish still-life painting, woodwind instruments, and African art, my goal is to create sculptures imbued with a spiritual and inner life. Using the natural transparency and translucency of the material allows the viewer to look beyond the surface, to get to the core or soul of the sculpture.*

– José Chardiet

**Education**

1983 MFA Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

1980 BA Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut

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## **Select Solo Exhibitions**

(Chardiet has participated in numerous group exhibitions)

2012 Ken Saunders Gallery, Chicago, Illinois

1996 Marx-Saunders Gallery, Chicago, Illinois

1989 Heller Gallery, New York City, New York

## **Select Public Collections**

Alexander Tutsek Foundation, Munich, Germany

Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida

Museum of American Glass, Wheaton Village, Millville, New Jersey

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin

Chardiet's professional experience includes being on the faculty at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine and as a professor of glass and sculpture for 11 years at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Awards and honors include the use of his work in a 2007 National Television and Print Campaign for Infiniti Automobile and a 1985 Artists Fellowship from the Ohio Arts Council.

<https://vimeo.com/76542714>

<https://www.habatatgalleries.com/artist/jose-chardiet/>

## **Etsuko Nishi**

b. Kobe, Japan, 1955 –

## **Education**

PhD the Royal College of Art, London

1990 MA Canberra School of Art, Australia

1983 – 85, 1987 studied at Pilchuck Glass School, Seattle, Washington

1978 BA Mukogawa University, Japan

## **Select Solo Exhibitions**

(Nishi has participated in numerous group exhibitions)

1993 The Glass Art Gallery, Toronto, Canada

1992 William Traver Gallery, Seattle, Washington

1987 Gee Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

## **Select Public Collections**

Corning Museum of Glass, New York City, New York

Glass Museum, Hiroshima, Japan

Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin

The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

The Glass Museum, Ebeltoft, Denmark

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Nishi's glass works have been featured in a multitude of publications including *Art and Craft* (1993) and *Glass* (1992). Over the course of her professional career, she has taught at many institutions, including Pilchuck Glass School, Seattle, Washington; Toyama City University of Glass Art, Japan; and UrbanGlass, Brooklyn, New York.

<https://japanlivingarts.com/contemporary-glass-artist-etsuko-nishi/>

## **Acquaetta Williams**

b. Los Angeles, California, 1950 –

*I have picked the human figure as a worthy subject to carve and shape, developing a language of gesture in these figures and bestowing on them the riches of the present and of ancestors past. My Power Figures are the result of a collaboration with myself carving the glass object images, and the spirit that transforms them into objects possessing the power of healing, settling disputes, safeguarding the piece, and punishing wrongdoers. The figures are ornamented with materials that will accentuate the form. The giraffe-neck women of Burma and Africa are respected as beautiful individuals in their village. I have decorated my figures to accentuate their face, neck, chest, upper back, and lips. I have been working toward African images that are both humanistic and sculptural, with many vessels referring to African dress and decoration.*

– Acquaetta Williams

## **Select Solo Exhibitions**

(Williams has participated in numerous group exhibitions)  
2021 Harmony Hall Art Center, Fort Washington, Maryland  
2018 Publick Playhouse, Hyattsville, Maryland  
2007 New Door Creative, Baltimore, Maryland

## **Select Public Collections**

Bowie State University, Bowie, Maryland  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia  
Museum of Arts and Design, New York City, New York  
Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin  
The National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, Wilberforce, Ohio

Throughout her career, Williams has been a Guest Lecturer at Bowie State University, Maryland; traveled to Nigeria with an Arts International Travel Grant; was an Artist-in-Residence at New York Experimental Glass Workshop; and was an instructor for beginning glassblowing at New York Experimental Glass Workshop.

<https://acquaetta.com/>

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## **Brent Kee Young**

b. Los Angeles, California, 1946 –

*My work speaks of many things... of a respect for things natural; of ambiguity in space, form, volume, time, and images that are not there. It speaks of... man's marks, nature's marks, and their relation [to one another].*

– Brent Kee Young

## **Education**

1973 MFA State University of New York, College of Ceramics at Alfred University,  
New York

1971 BA San Jose State University, California

1967 AA Modesto Junior College, California

## **Select Exhibitions**

(Young has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions)

American Glass Museum, Millville, New Jersey

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin

Niijima Contemporary Glass Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

Hokaido Museum of Art, Sapporo, Japan

## **Select Public Collections**

Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois

Bergstrom Mahler Art Museum, Neenah, Wisconsin

Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, Massachusetts

Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin

Throughout his career, Young has earned numerous awards and honors—these include becoming Professor Emeritus at Cleveland Institute of Art, Ohio, and winning a Best in Glass Award from the Zanesville Museum of Art, Ohio, as well as a Jurors Award at the 41st Habatat International Invitational, Habatat Galleries, Royal Oak, Michigan.

<https://brentkeeyoung.com/home.html>

<https://mycreativecompass.org/Community/Cleveland-Artist-Spotlights/Brent-Kee-Young>

## **Women Artists at RAM**

RAM acknowledges the efforts of self-identifying women in the art world consistently and sincerely at all times. The museum highlights how women are inextricably woven—and often the foundation—of creative endeavors and discourse. By current count, 41% of the artists in RAM's collection are women. This percentage—which is consistently increasing—is already substantially greater than the ratios calculated at other organizations with

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permanent collections and active exhibition programs. At RAM, work made by different genders is considered for inclusion in the museum's holdings on equal terms. And notably, because RAM relies on gifts of artwork to build the collection, this policy has been reinforced by open-minded donors who have collected, and then donated, quality work regardless of the gender of the artist.

The following is a list of women whose works are included in this exhibition. This effort—similar to efforts to highlight artists of color at RAM—is not meant to single out artists to stigmatize them but to magnify and cast a spotlight on their significance. It reflects intention, goodwill, and an attempt to reckon with years of historical underrepresentation. RAM hopes this provides opportunities for audiences to learn more about these artists and their ideas. Visitors are encouraged to take note and research these artists via the internet to find out more about their biographies and larger bodies of work.

Etsuko Nishi  
Acquaetta Williams

## **About RAM Showcase Exhibitions**

*RAM Showcase* exhibitions highlight the work of contemporary artists of color.

In this moment in time, it is critical that RAM spotlights voices that have been historically underrepresented, such as women and artists of color. Artists of color are identified in this context as non-white and non-European. This simplification, which is 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.

While the work of artists of color has been and will continue to be shown in various contexts at both campuses, the *Showcase* series highlights conversations around equity, inclusion, and social justice. This means underscoring the presence of the work of artists of color, primarily from the collection, as well as, at times, featuring artists addressing critical social and cultural issues across a broad spectrum.

Further, as an educational institution rooted in the humanities and using art as a catalyst, the museum wants to encourage inquiry and exploration of the world we live in. RAM hopes spotlighting artists of color spurs further engagement with these artists and their ideas.

RAM is committed to supporting diverse voices—whether that diversity reflects race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, social standing, or world perspective.