



PRESS RELEASE

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**Contemporary Artists Express Concerns Through Textual Art**

Racine, WI January 2, 2018

Open January 21 - May 6, 2018 at the Racine Art Museum (RAM), **Text Message: Words and Letters in Contemporary Art** includes works that use language and script to convey meaning. Contemporary artists, recognizing the power and complexity of the written word, utilize text—individual letters or words—to explore theoretical, social, symbolic, and aesthetic concerns.

While the title of the exhibition plays on the popular digital form of communication, the pieces gathered here are tangible three-dimensional objects made of fiber, ceramic, polymer, paper, and metal as well as two-dimensional works on paper. All works featured are drawn from RAM's collection. Letters and script are used as design and pattern elements as well as conveyors of meaning. Examples include teapots decorated with narrative scenes overlaid with accompanying text, contemporary prints that highlight letters from urban signage, and baskets accented with or formed by words and script.

Written languages are just one of the many ways humans attempt to communicate with one another. Phrasing, tone, and context can offer a myriad of opportunities for reinforcement and support or misunderstanding and over-emphasis. In the twenty-first century, emailing and text messaging—often with new expressions or new forms of familiar phrases—dominate interpersonal exchanges.

*Text Message* also offers the opportunity to look at the relationship between the past and present through artist-designed posters from the 1920s. These "work incentive" posters published by Mathers Co. detail interpersonal rules for workplace behavior. These pieces, combining striking colorful imagery with moralizing text, offer a

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perspective on the past that resonates with contemporary concerns.

*Text Message: Words and Letters in Contemporary Art* 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, Runzheimer International Ltd., Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - Burlington Graphic Systems, Inc., CNH Industrial, EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Real Racine, Ruud Family Foundation, 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 \$7 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.