



Open Storage: RAM Showcases Wood Archives

February 16 – June 7, 2020

Historically, collection-building for museums has gone on behind-the-scenes. In the last decade, more institutions have offered transparency regarding how collections are developed, stored, and conserved. **Open Storage** offers a series of exhibitions that clarify this process by drawing attention to some of RAM's particular strengths—collecting the work of artists in-depth and establishing archives that further document their working processes and careers. While RAM frequently talks about the importance of gifts from donor's estates, archive building—both by artists and institutions—is critically important for the field because it offers a more comprehensive look at creative activity.

This exhibition features the work of five artists—**Ron Kent, Michael Peterson, Tom Rauschke and Kaaren Wiken, and Bob Stocksdale**—through multiple examples of their work. This group reflects multiple approaches to wood as a creative medium—whether turning, carving, or, in the case of Rauschke and Wiken, collaborating and introducing other media. While wood is considered one of the five traditional craft media, these works show both historical approaches and new ones—as many artists of the last century have been interested in experimenting with materials, concepts, and forms.

The combination of artists in this show demonstrates how RAM acquires the work of nationally and internationally recognized artists as well as by those who have called the local area home as they built their artistic reputations.

Over the years, RAM has paid attention to noteworthy artists through **Collection Focus** shows that featured multiple works by a single maker. In 2019, the museum launched a series of archive focus exhibitions with **Treasure Trove: Establishing Jewelry and Metal Archives at RAM**. The archive series exhibitions—like those on display this spring that emphasize ceramics, fiber, glass, wood, artist books, and regional artists—exemplify RAM's status as North America's largest contemporary craft collection while also drawing attention to the institution's overall diversity of holdings.

Exhibitions such as these not only outline the work of an artist—which is shaped by personal perspective, culture, the time in which it was made, and numerous other factors—but also underscore the imperative role that RAM plays in documenting contemporary craft and works on paper.

While this series is organized according to type of material used or object created, it is worth noting that institutional collections—even if they begin with strictly defined parameters—often have to modify how they catalog the work included. For example, when archives come from an artist directly, they may also include personal photographs, studio tools, or other

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items that offer compelling insight into the creative process but do not fit into precisely defined artwork categories.

These exhibitions, drawn from RAM's holdings, also highlight noteworthy statistics—namely that, by current count, 40% of the artists in the collection are women. This number, which is consistently increasing, is already substantially greater than the percentages calculated at other organizations with permanent collections and active exhibition programs. This has been achieved at RAM by considering the work of different genders on equal playing terms. And, notably, it has been helped by open-minded donors who have been interested in collecting quality work regardless of gender.

If RAM's collection is broken into groups based on materials used, works made with clay would comprise the largest category. Significantly, it is worth noting that three of the most-collected ceramic artists at RAM are women—**Sandra Byers**, **Mara Superior**, and **Beatrice Wood**. While not featured in the galleries at this time, Mara Superior is the most-collected ceramic artist at RAM overall with 33 pieces and printmaker **Beth Van Hoesen** holds the honor of being RAM's most-collected artist regardless of media. Van Hoesen is represented to date with 307 works including prints, watercolors, drawings, and metal printing plates.

Chicago native **Ron Kent** was raised in Los Angeles but spent most of his life in Hawaii, where he was transferred while serving in the Coast Guard. He earned his BS in mechanical engineering from the University of California–Los Angeles, before returning to the islands, where he established his own investment company. Kent took up woodworking in 1975 after his wife gifted him a lathe. Yet, it wasn't until after he retired in 1997 that he took up woodturning full time. While Kent experimented with many materials, his Norfolk Pine vessels brought him the greatest acclaim. He achieved a trademark translucence through a process that involved repeated oiling and sandings. Kent's work can be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, New York; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Louvre (Musée des Arts Décoratifs), Paris, France; the Bishop Museum of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California; and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia.

Born in Texas, sculptor **Michael J. Peterson** has his Associate's of Arts and Science from Edmond's Community College, Seattle, Washington. He crafts wood sculptures and turned bowls that reflect his home environment—the Pacific Northwest—specifically Lopez Island where he and his wife Jean have lived for over 20 years. Peterson purposefully traverses the landscape to source his materials, describing the process as “walking around in a sculpture garden.” Carving, sandblasting, bleaching,

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and pigmenting the burl portion of trees (such as madrones, maples and black locust), he creates elegant sculptural works. Peterson responds directly to the materials, stating, "My work evolves out of the process of making...my approach to surface and abstract organic form has always been grounded in the natural world." Peterson's work can also be found in many public collections, including the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York; the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, among others.

Woodworker **Tom Rauschke** works collaboratively with his wife, fiber artist **Kaaren Wiken**. Though Kaaren also creates large-scale metal sculpture, these two Wisconsin artists are well-known for their lathe-turned vessels which highlight form over function and incorporate richly detailed miniature embroidery—often in the form of brooches that can be removed and worn. Their imagery evokes landscapes as well as various flora and fauna. In 2006, their work was the focus of a solo show at RAM, **Meet Rauschke and Wiken: New Additions to the RAM's Wood Collection**, which debuted the gift of an archive of 28 pieces of their work.

Born in Warren, Indiana, in 1913, self-taught wood artist **Bob Stocksdales** (1913-2003) is known for his expertly turned bowls made from exotic woods. In fact, he is credited as a major figure in the late twentieth-century revival of woodturning. Stocksdales spent WWII in a conscientious objector camp doing forestry work, and it was there that he made his first lathe-turned bowl. After the war, Stocksdales moved to Berkeley, California, where he would live and work for the rest of his life. He began exhibiting his work in the 1950s, including at the Brussel's World Fair in 1958. Stocksdales received the American Association of Wood Turners Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998 and the American Craft Council's Gold Medal in 1995. Stocksdales sometimes worked collaboratively with his wife **Kay Sekimachi**, who is also an American Craft Council Gold Medalist and whose work is collected by RAM. They were well-known for creating bowl duos in mirrored forms, hers out of fiber, his out of wood—examples of which can be found in RAM's collection.

COLLECTION FOCUS solo exhibitions organized over the last 14 years at RAM further reflect the museum's commitment to collecting and showing the work of artists in-depth.

The following artists were featured in these RAM exhibitions presented during the dates listed below:

Renie Breskin Adams – June 18 – September 24, 2017

Dorothy Gill Barnes – November 20, 2011 – January 15, 2012

Robert Burkert – October 8, 2017 – February, 4, 2018

Jack Earl – December 21, 2008 – March 8, 2009

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Robert W. Ebendorf – February 14 – May 9, 2004
Carol Eckert – October 17, 2010 – February 6, 2011
David Ellsworth – November 20, 2011 – January 15, 2012
Sergei Isupov – February 23 – June 8, 2014
Rosita Johanson – October 21, 2012 – February 3, 2013
Ken Loeber – September 15, 2013 – February 2, 2014
Michael Lucero – October 27, 2014 – January 26, 2015
John McQueen – October 17, 2010 – February 6, 2011
John Wilde – October 6, 2013 – January 12, 2014

Study guides are available in the Museum Store for the exhibitions listed above.

Other selected solo exhibitions presented at RAM:

Meet Rauschke and Wiken: New Additions to RAM's Wood Collection –
June 4 – September 3, 2006
Toshiko Takaezu: Heaven and Earth – September 6, 2005 – January 8, 2006
Beth Van Hoesen: The Observant Eye – May 20 – September 9, 2012
Ruth Grotenrath and Schomer Lichtner at RAM – January 23 – May 8, 2011
Michael Pry: The Harley Portraits – August 30 – November 30, 2013
Much of What is Seen is Not: Frank Boyden as Printmaker –
February 23 – June 8, 2014
California Dreamin': Mark Adams and Frank Lobdell – February 21 – June 5, 2016
**RAM Collects: Wood Letter Openers by Norm Sartorius from Ronald
and Kay Springwater** – October 18, 2015 – February 7, 2016
Shie and Acord: Recent Acquisitions – June 18 – September 24, 2017
It's Like Poetry: Building a Toshiko Takaezu Archive at RAM –
August 19, 2019 – July 26, 2020

Other RAM archive exhibitions:

Treasure Trove: Establishing Jewelry and Metals Archives at RAM

January 20 – September 20, 2019

Featured works by the following artists: Dan Adams, Carolyn Morris Bach, Kat Cole, Michael Croft, Ben J. Cunningham, Robert W. Ebendorf, Sandra Enterline, John J. Grant, Arline Fisch, Steven Ford, David Forlano, Else Bates Freund, Terri Gelenian-Wood, Danielle Gori-Montanelli, Tina Fung Holder, Tory Hughes, Ken Loeber, Dona Look, Eleanor Moty, Harold O'Connor, Ivy Ross, Antonia Schwed, Joyce Scott, Kiff Slemmons, Mary Tingley, Cynthia Toops, Pier Voulkos, Elise Winters, and Marci Zelmanoff.