



**Gathering Voices at RAM:
20 Years of Building America's Largest Contemporary Craft Collection**
February 8–July 15, 2023

Midway through RAM's first 20 years, the museum's contemporary craft collection was identified as the largest in North America—a designation that remains true today. Add in the considerable number of works on paper also on hand and it means that RAM represents a variety of voices—be that in terms of personal backgrounds and heritage or artistic range of expression as regards media, process, and subject matter.

A collection is a layering of choices. Who decides what one looks like? RAM staff and board consider many logistical and philosophical factors beyond the artwork itself. Who benefits from an acquisition? Does a gift further a museum or community goal? Are diverse perspectives truly being represented? Can the museum reasonably care for and maintain the artwork in perpetuity?

In addition to developing historical collection strengths such as establishing multi-piece archives that reflect an artist's career, RAM continues to expand initiatives to champion historically underrepresented voices like those of women and artists of color. Notably, one recent step towards an even more robust and equitable landscape is the creation of a fund dedicated specifically to acquiring work by artists of color.

An anniversary allows looking back while also considering the future. On the surface, *Gathering Voices* is a cursory, media-specific look at 20 years of building RAM's collection. Yet, with an emphasis on works acquired in the last five to seven years, it also highlights critical and more expansive directions to be taken.

Biographies and statements from select featured artists

Although I was intimidated at first by the tools, techniques, and time-consuming hard work of metalsmithing, my discipline, my attraction to the beauty of precious metals and gems, and the joy I receive from the results of silver work, all made me continue in this field. The appeal of silver outweighs the difficulties.

Artist **Chunghi Choo** was born in 1938 in Inchon, Korea. Choo received her BFA from Ewha Woman's University in Korea and later came to the United States in 1961 to study metalsmithing, weaving, and ceramics at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, subsequently earning her MFA. She taught at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, from 1968–2015. For her, teaching is something that is open, direct, and very giving. It's not a surprise that she was the recipient of the student nominated Amoco Excellence in Teaching Award in 1987. Choo's art is included in the permanent collections of institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York; and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France.

Listen:



<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-chunghi-choo-13621>

Read:



<https://www.ganoksin.com/article/chunghi-choo-energy-qi/>

Cristina Córdova (b. 1976–) received her BA from the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez and her MFA in ceramics from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Córdova’s figures have been described as having “a compelling strain of magical realism.” Referencing her Afro-Caribbean heritage, Córdova’s work speaks from “a collective creativity.” Of her often expressionless figures, Córdova says she “tries to understand the indeterminate and ever changing aspects of humanity.” Interested in encouraging an examination of the human condition, Córdova represents the figural, but uses visual metaphor, color, line, and space, to manipulate the form of her work.

Explore:



<https://cristinacordova.com/>

Watch:



<https://www.craftinamerica.org/short/cristina-cordova-segment>

Renowned and Wisconsin-based, **Donald Friedlich** (b. 1954–), has used glass in his jewelry—as well as steel, stone, slate, diamonds, and gold—to investigate a wealth of topics including wearability, the properties of materials, the natural world, humor, food, and the idea of jewelry itself. For some time, Friedlich has focused on glass and it has become a hallmark of his practice. Often, he works with it the way a sculptor might—grinding and carving a cast form. Of his work, he has stated: “Whether I’m working in glass or gold, I try to be sensitive to the unique visual and physical qualities of each material and to exploit them to their best advantage.” Large in scale, brooches such as the three in RAM’s collection, make their own statement yet also respond to the body of the wearer. Friedlich earned his BFA in jewelry and metalsmithing from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, in 1982. Friedlich has served a term as President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths and earlier as Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee of *Metalsmith* magazine. His work is in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Massachusetts as well as others. Friedlich has accomplished much throughout his career including in 2003 he was the first jeweler to be an Artist in Residence at The Studio of the Corning Museum of Glass, New York; in 2004 he was a featured speaker at an international jewelry conference in Melbourne, Australia; and he was an Artist in Residence in both the Glass and Goldsmithing Programs at the Australian National University, Canberra.

Explore:



<https://donaldfriedlich.com>

Read:



<https://wisconsinacademy.org/magazine/donald-friedlich-life-stone-gold-and-glass>

When I cut into the glass and discovered that blowing was just the beginning of the process, it opened up a world of sculptural possibilities.

Instead of blowing glass to create his sculptures, **Kreg Kallenberger** (b. 1950–) is known for cutting hot glass. When Kallenberger makes his works, he strives to create asymmetrical tension by combining different symmetrical shapes. He earned both his BFA and MA from the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Throughout his career Kallenberger has earned numerous awards including the Artist Award of Excellence in 2000 at the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition; 1995 Silver Prize at the International Exhibition of Glass Kanazawa, Japan; and in 1984 he earned a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant. His work can be found at the Corning Museum of Glass, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; and the Detroit Institute of Art, Michigan.

Explore:



<http://www.kregkallenberger.com>

Thin pieces of stainless steel wire mass-produced in a factory are inorganic and monotonous by themselves, but when they are woven, twisted or bundled together they take on an organic appearance that serves to express various aspects of wind, air, and light. The richly expressive fabrics that result do not stand solidly, cleaving the air. They have their source in textiles, which have their own language, fluttering above the floor, breathing and melting into the air.

Japan based artist, **Kyoko Kumai** (b. 1943–), creates work of stainless steel wire that juxtaposes tradition and nature through weaving, stitching, twisting, binding, and entwining. Kumai graduated from Tokyo National University of Fine Art and Music, Japan in 1966. Her work can be found throughout the world in the permanent collections of institutions such as the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; Savaria Museum, Szombathely, Hungary; and the Museum of Decorative Arts, Montreal, Canada.

*I like to build vessels no one would know what to put in them.
I like to think of things no one has done before.*

Christine Nofchissey McHorse (b. 1948–d. 2021) was a celebrated Navajo ceramic artist. McHorse attended the prestigious Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, and later was recruited on a tennis scholarship by the College of Santa Fe and went there for a year. Initially she began creating pottery in a traditional Taos Pueblo style after she was taught by her husband's grandmother, Lena Archuleta. McHorse participated in the Santa Fe Indian Market for over 20 years, winning 38 awards. This is a great distinction as the Santa Fe Indian Market is the largest juried Native American art show in the world and features over a thousand Native artists from tribal communities throughout North America and Canada. After she stopped attending the market, McHorse began to experiment with clay, ending up with the type of works that are most often identified as her style—black, unadorned sculptural forms using micaceous clay. Micaceous clay is an incredibly strong

and tensile material flecked with mica, which creates a shimmering effect in the light—introduced to it by Archuleta, she explored how to use it to suit her maturing style. With the exception of the pieces that she editioned into bronze works, she never repeated a piece. Instead, she claimed that regimented series were boring and pointless. McHorse’s art is included in the collections of the Denver Art Museum, Colorado; the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.

Watch:



<https://youtu.be/9U9UBz5duUQ>

Read:



<https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/ceramics-monthly/ceramics-monthly-article/Christine-Nofchissey-McHorse-Tradition-and-Reinvention#>

Jaydan Moore (b. 1986–) was born into a family of fourth generation tombstone makers in northern California. Moore spent most of his childhood working for the family business which doubled as a rental storage space. He would look through people’s objects that were left behind and listen to family members make burial arrangements. From these moments, Moore developed a value for objects that are left behind—which further led to creating art with found objects. Relics that might once have been family heirlooms are then transformed. As part of his practice, Moore often “meshes” metal platters together to create a new object or uses a platter as the basis for a print. Moore earned his BA from California College of the Arts, Oakland and his MFA and MA from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Throughout his career, he has earned awards from the Virginia A. Groot Foundation; the American Craft Council’s, Emerging Voices Program; and the North Carolina Arts Fellowship. His work is included in the permanent collections at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; and the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii.

Explore:



<http://jaydanmoore.com>

Listen:



<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2k7654P9uJXOXiNDt1n9N01>

Watch:



<https://youtu.be/ThxPIQLx5Gk>

With a successful career that spans over 60 years, **Wayne Ngan** has become one of Canada's most renowned and celebrated ceramic artists. In 1967, he moved to Hornby Island in British Columbia, Canada, from Vancouver and spent the rest of his life there. Ngan built his home studio on a cliff overlooking the ocean. The studio's most prominent feature was less the landscape and more its wood fired kiln. Entirely built by Ngan, the kiln was funded by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts and was completed in 1984. He also received the Saidye Bronfman Award for Masters of the Crafts in 1983 and a British Columbia Creative Achievement Award of Distinction in 2013. His artwork can be found at the Morris and Helen Belkins Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada; the Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Canada; and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Canada.

Watch:



<https://youtu.be/0w-N0CGmRPg>

I make objects for the body, creating a place of mystery, dimension, fluidity, and intrigue.

Self-taught jewelry artist **Biba Schutz** (b. 1946–) was initially trained as a graphic designer and printmaker, but shifted her career and began creating jewelry when she found how much she enjoyed it. Now, Schutz has been making jewelry for more than 20 years. She is inspired by her surroundings, from the shapes in architecture to the weeds that grow between the cracks in the sidewalk. Schutz earned her BA in 1968 from American University, Washington D.C., and also studied at the Instituto De Allende, San Miguel, Mexico. She has earned awards and honors such as the Award of Excellence in Jewelry, 2018 Smithsonian Craft Show, Washington D.C.; in 2016, she earned Best of Jewelry, Philadelphia Museum of Art & Craft Show, Pennsylvania; and in 2012 Show Directors Award, American Craft Exposition, Evanston Illinois. Schutz's work has been collected by many private and public collectors such as the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; and the Newark Museum, New Jersey.

Explore:



<https://bibaschutz.com>



Artists of Color at RAM

RAM is committed to supporting diverse voices—whether that diversity reflects race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, social standing, or world perspective. In this moment in time, it is critical that spotlights are placed on voices that have been historically underrepresented, and at RAM that begins with women and artists of color. Artists of color are identified in this context as non-white and non-European in heritage. 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 discovered. Modifications to this approach are expected as RAM learns and grows. Further, as an educational institution rooted in the humanities and using art as a catalyst, RAM wants to encourage inquiry and exploration about the world in which we live. RAM hopes spotlighting artists of color spurs further engagement with these artists and their ideas.

The following is a list of artists of color whose works are included in this exhibition. This effort 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.

Alvin Adkins, Marvin Blackmore, Chunggi Choo, Patrick Shia Crabb, Cristina Córdova, Carlos Estevez, Kyohei Fujita, Kyoko Kumai, Christine Nofchissey McHorse, Keisuke Mizuno, Janet Ayako Neuwalder, Wayne Ngan, Gustavo Pérez, Yoko Shimizu, Kevin Snipes, Akio Takamori, and Joan Takayama-Ogawa

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 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.

Cristina Córdova, Chungi Choo, Arline Fisch, Lydia Gerbig-Fast, Katherine Gray, Kyoko Kumai, Karen LaMonte, Christine Nofchissey McHorse, Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, Janet Ayako Neuwaldner, Meghan Patrice Riley, Marion Sak, Biba Schutz, Bonnie Seeman, Yoko Shimizu, Ramona Solberg, Joan Takayama-Ogawa, Rachelle Thiewes, Cynthia Toops, Kate E. Vogel, and Pier Voulkos