



### ***Vignettes: Concentrated Views of RAM's Collection***

February 1–August 26, 2023

Artwork cannot be experienced in a vacuum. The meaning of individual pieces can fluctuate and change—not just between what the artist intended and what the viewer sees but also within the dynamics created in the context of a gallery space. Playing with this idea, *Vignettes* comprises several smaller exhibitions of works gathered under various organizing principles or themes—emphasizing specific characteristics of the individual pieces and overall groupings. These groupings are inspired by RAM's history or collection in different ways—for example, some reference past exhibitions while some highlight time periods, favored pieces, or ideas donors explored. As a vignette is defined as a “brief, evocative description” of a larger entity, each group of this exhibition is a self-contained idea that gives a sense of RAM in a snapshot through curatorial eyes.

Celebrating RAM's 20th anniversary and featuring textiles, art to wear, art jewelry, photography, prints, ceramics, and more, this atypical presentation highlights the range of the permanent collection in its variability of artist voices and backgrounds as well as types of media. Panels next to each sub-theme contain keywords or ribbons of thought that link artworks together. While the words offer curatorial transparency, visitors are encouraged to find their own meaning and potential connections.

### **Biographies and statements from select featured artists**

**Kenojuak Ashevak** (b. 1927–d. 2013) was born on south Baffin Island, Canada, in a camp area known as Ikirisaq. Ashevak grew up moving from camp to camp, but moved to Kinngait (previously known as Cape Dorset) in 1966 so that her children could attend school. She became one of the first Inuit women to create prints professionally. Her work immediately captivated others and, from 1959 until her death, she was continually represented in the Cape Dorset print collection—a series of prints by Kinngait artists published annually. Ashevak traveled the world throughout her life as an ambassador for Inuit art. She received honors such as Companion in the Order of Canada, in 1967; Honorary Degrees from Queen's University, Ontario, Canada, and the University of Toronto, Canada in 1992; a Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Ceremony in Vancouver, Canada, 1996; and was included in Canada's Walk of Fame in 2001. Her work can be found in the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington D.C. as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Read: <https://www.dorsetfinearts.com/kenojuak-askhevak>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/pN7chUba16A>  
<https://youtu.be/o54y4S-2NHc>

*I wanted to make photographs that affirmed the lives of ordinary black people in the community that my mother and father had previously lived in... From the time I spent visiting family, friends and relatives there when I was growing up, I knew that with the exception of [Roy] DeCarava's work, the people of Harlem were often viewed through photographs in terms of social pathology. I wanted to contest the history of those kinds of black representations and also amplify through my photographs the lives of people like my family who still lived there and were making a way.*

—Dawoud Bey

Currently Professor of Art at Columbia College Chicago and named a MacArthur Fellow in 2017, **Dawoud Bey** (b. 1953–) creates photographs that encourage viewers to consider the expansive social and cultural dynamics that shape his subjects. Noting James Van Der Zee, Roy DeCarava, and Walker Evans as motivational figures, Bey was also inspired by photo albums from his family and a sense of social consciousness. Large projects have involved the participation of his sitters, such as youth from communities identified as marginalized, in constructing their own photographed representations. Community, memory, and identity become the focus of Bey's investigations, when the images are not formal portraits. Bey's vision, as well as his expansive approach to building community and opening up the artistic process and institutional parameters, have motivated others to reconsider their own working methods. His work is exhibited and published regularly, and is featured in museum collections in the United States and beyond. Bey received an MFA from Yale University School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut. He has received numerous awards including the MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellowship, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.

Listen: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5PjmCIT2ajvGVO1kxtEgsw>

Read: <https://www.artic.edu/artists/86099/dawoud-bey>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/D-dPxK9VOCg>

While she currently spends more time with collage, assemblage, and painting, **Barbara Brandel** (b. 1948–) began her artistic career working with textiles.

Sampler, the jacket by Brandel in RAM's collection, reflects her art to wear interests and echoes different twentieth-century cultural and social conversations involving women. The reference to samplers responds to the history of needlework and its associations with women—a sampler emphasized a needleworker's skills—while the text corresponds to legal and political conversations. Some of these conversations, which were bubbling in the 1990s when Brandel made the piece, have resurfaced today.

Brandel studied Fine Art at both the University of Iowa, Iowa City and the University of Arizona, Tucson; she also studied Liberal Arts at Cottey College, Nevada, Missouri. Her work can be found in collections such as the Tucson Country Club, Arizona; Tohono Chul Park, Tucson, Arizona; and the Tucson Medical Center, Arizona. Throughout her artistic career she has earned awards such as a Juror's Award in 2006 at the Tubac Center of the Arts, Tubac, Arizona; Second Place Mutterer Award in 1997 at the Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona; and in 1995 she was awarded Best of Wearable, Tucson Museum of Art, Arizona.

Explore: <https://barbarabrandelartist.com/>

Over four decades **Wendell Castle** (b. 1932–d. 2018) created unique sculptures and furniture. Castle’s work became so significant within the craft field that he was ultimately known as the father of the American Studio Furniture Movement. In 1963, he pioneered the usage of stack lamination in his works. Stack lamination is layering thin layers of wood together with adhesive to create one piece of which can be sculpted. Castle used the technique to create imaginative and complex works, many with organic qualities. During his career Castle was included in key exhibitions including the 1969 show *Objects USA* which was first shown at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. He earned his MFA and BFA at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, and later taught at the School of American Craftsmen at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. His work can be found in over 40 museums and cultural institutions worldwide, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Smithsonian’s American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

Explore: <http://www.wendellcastle.com/>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/P4mzQl1AXz0>

**Sydney Cash** (b. 1941–) has had a diverse and experimental career. In the mid-1970s he created over 2,000 sketches and portraits of people throughout New York City. However, Cash is best known for his innovative glass slumping. He creates these pieces in an electric kiln by melting flat glass over molds at a high temperature. Cash is largely self-taught, but he was mentored by painter and sculptor Ben-Zion who was a member of a group of expressionist artists called “The Ten.” Cash’s work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; and the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

Read: <https://cargocollective.com/sydneycash>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/wJRY8LvcEDw>

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1943 to 1945, **Richard Diebenkorn** (b. 1922–d. 1993) took advantage of the G.I. Bill to study art at the California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, later becoming a faculty member. Diebenkorn became internationally known for his abstract expressionist paintings that are infused with a “Californian” essence—emphasizing broad areas of color and suggesting quintessential Californian landscapes such as the coastline. He had his first solo show at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco in 1948, a special honor for a person his age. He was also a significant draftsman and printmaker who explored figurative and landscape subject matters as well as abstraction. Today, his art is found in numerous public and private collections including the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, California; and the San Jose Museum of Art, California.

Explore: <https://diebenkorn.org/>

Read: <https://www.christies.com/features/Introduction-to-Richard-Diebenkorn-9168-3.aspx>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/JO57L-InSdo>

Most famously known for his large-scale public sculpture that both drew from and challenged others perceptions of Mexican-American culture, **Luiz Jiménez** (b. 1940– d. 2006) also created numerous prints and drawings. Jiménez gained exposure to various materials and processes at a young age when he worked in his father’s neon sign-making shop. His perspective combines what he describes as his “working class roots” and familial Mexican heritage with practical experience and the study of Mexican, American, and European art traditions. Jiménez’s work is included within the permanent collections of institutions throughout including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Texas; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C. He earned awards and honors such as in 2000 “Distinguished Houstonians,” Evan Thayer Scholarship Fund, Houston, Texas; in 1999 Save America’s Treasure’s designed his work Southwest Pieta—located in Albuquerque, New Mexico—a National Historic Treasure; and in 1998 he won the Texas Artist of the Year, Houston, Texas.

Read: <https://www.notablebiographies.com/supp/Supplement-Fl-Ka/Jim-nez-Luis.html>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/f-7AKv9xqyk>

Born in Beijing, China, in 1933 **Ruth Lee Kao** came to the United States when she was 17 after her father, historian Orient Lee, accepted a teaching position at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. Kao received both her BA and MA at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. She began her art career interested in watercolor painting but soon moved to using fiber. In 1974, Kao accepted a teaching position at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as an Associate Professor of Art where she taught loom and non-loom fiber art. During her career, Kao received grants from both the National Endowment for the Arts and the Graduate School at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Kao served as a juror, conducted lectures and workshops, and participated in exhibitions at numerous galleries and universities throughout the country. In 1985, Kao passed away due to cancer at the age of 52.

The unlikely but often told origin story of **Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.** (b. 1948–)—that he left a corporate career as a computer programmer when he saw a printing demonstration in colonial Williamsburg, Virginia—hints at the passion with which the artist pursues his work. Running a letterpress poster shop, Kennedy creates posters, books, and other printed materials. He is not afraid to provoke, and often engages in discussions of identity, race, and perception—regularly referencing racially charged images or slogans. Printing texts of all types appeals to Kennedy as a way to communicate with a larger audience.

Kennedy’s *Strange Fruit*, one of the works in RAM’s collection, exemplifies his engagement with social concerns, and underscores his identification of himself as a “social printer.” *Strange Fruit* is the name of a poem written in 1937 by Abel Meeropol that served as the basis of a protest song and, ultimately, Billie Holliday’s well-known song. Meeropol, like other artists of the 1930s, felt compelled to respond to the injustice and violence against African-Americans in the United States. Inspired by the 1930 Lawrence Beitler photo of the lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith, Meeropol gave voice to major concerns of the day. Kennedy draws upon and expands the legacy.

Explore: <http://www.kennedyprints.com/posters1.html>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/AwrJWOtmgY8>

**Wendy Maruyama** (b. 1952–) is a furniture maker, artist, and educator. Maruyama’s work often explores subjects that stem from her Japanese heritage, as well as feminism and social practice. She received her MFA from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Monroe County, New York. Reflecting her technical aptitude as well as her creativity and determination. Maruyama is one of the few women to receive a degree in Furniture Design from RIT. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England; the Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; and the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Massachusetts. Throughout her career, Maruyama has received numerous awards and honors including the California Civil Liberties Public Education Grant; several national Endowment for the Arts Grants in Visual Arts; and a Fulbright Research Grant to allow her to work in the United Kingdom.

Explore: <https://wendymaruyama.com/home.html>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/jF6lJNx5NRA>

Throughout his career **Jay Musler** (b. 1949–) has influenced the development of contemporary glass as an educator and a world-renown artist. His portfolio includes meticulously constructed layers of lamp-worked, sandblasted, and painted objects. He initially began creating art as a response to the violence, crime, and alienation that he found living in modern cities. Musler has won awards such as Most Valued Glass Artist, Bay Area Glass Institute; Honorary Prize, World Glass Now, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, Sapporo, Japan, 1988; and a National Endowment of the Arts, Crafts Fellowship Grant, Washington D.C., 1982. Musler’s work is included in the collections of numerous institutions including the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Florida; and Kitano Museum, Tokyo, Japan

Explore: <http://www.jaymusler.com/>

Watch: <https://vimeo.com/317731128>  
<https://vimeo.com/6990575>

*What do I do? I put a soul into every piece I create. I don’t make objects; I create characters. If the viewers can pick up on that soul, I’ve accomplished it. Creating figurative and abstract imagery on delicately pierced wood vessels opens the doors for me to share life and interests. There was a period of time that I looked through the window and asked myself the question, “What is it like on the other side of that window?” I then just let my imagination go.*

—Binh Pho

**Binh Pho** (b. 1955–d. 2017) grew up in Vietnam; a childhood he has described as idyllic. Yet, that changed when communism took over and Pho was forced to escape the country to the United States. Woodworking began for the artist as a hobby but, it became a career as he grew more proficient. Pho combined wood with glass in 2006; attracted by glass’s fragility. These materials and his personal iconography were used to reflect on Asian culture and the natural world. His work has been collected worldwide and is in the collections of institutions such as Arrowmont School of Arts & Crafts, Gatlinburg,

Tennessee; Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Musée Art Du Bois, Breville, France.

Explore: <https://www.binhpho.com/>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/AK1JX9VWhtk>

Interested in the “fantastic, esoteric, mythic, and spectacular,” **Michael Velliquette** (b. 1971–) uses cut paper to create books, two-dimensional reliefs, and three-dimensional sculpture. Investigating the potential of color as a spiritual and metaphorical tool, he plays with it while also exploring pattern and design. He has included animals, such as the birds in one of the pieces from RAM’s collection, as both representations of themselves and as a means to address social and cultural standards. With his most recent work, Velliquette foregrounds labor, process, and materiality. Rather than planning and drawing studies, he allows works “to accrue cut-by-cut and piece-by-piece.” Velliquette has a studio in Madison. He teaches at UW-Madison, participates in numerous exhibitions and residencies, and is a member of the Guild of American Papercutters and the Paper Artist Collective.

Explore: <https://www.velliquette.com/>

Watch: <https://youtu.be/wkCARFUslLk>  
<https://youtu.be/uPFtBsWyp0Q>

### 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.

ADÁL, Kenojuak Ashevak, Dawoud Bey, Crucita Gonzales Calabaza, Peter Chang, José Chardiet, Roy DeCarava, Nora Fok, Azusa Fukawa, Erman, Keiko Hara, Tina Fung Holder, Jan Hopkins, Reika Iwami, Kiyomi Iwata, Luis Jiménez, Ruth Lee Kao, Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., Naomi Kobayashi, Chungie Lee, Truman Tennis Lowe, Wendy Maruyama, Luis Molinari-Flores, Choonsun Moon, Tomoharu Murakami, Patrick Nagatani, Madeline Naranjo, Binh Pho, Joyce J. Scott, Esther Shimazu, Therman Statom, Toshiko Takaezu, Chiu Tsang-yi, Huang Tsun-ren, and Linda Wabanimkee

## 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.

Jackie Abrams, Jeanette Ahlgren, Kenojuak Ashevak, Bonnie Jean Bishoff, Helen Bitar, Barbara Brandel, Christie Brown, Crucita Gonzales Calabaza, Clea Carlsen, Marie Zieu Chino, Sue Coe, Colette, Claire Curneen, Karen Dahl, Dorothy Dehner, Sandra Enterline, Gerda Flockinger, Nora Fok, Mary Frank, Babs Haenen, Starr Hagenbring, Keiko Hara, Barbara Heinrich, Maggie Henton, Julia Hill, Laurie Hogin, Tina Fung Holder, Jan Hopkins, Mary Lee Hu, Jan Huling, Reika Iwami, Kiyomi Iwata, Rosita Johanson, Ruth Lee Kao, Hannah Keefe, Naomi Kobayashi, Nancy Koenigsberg, Chunghie Lee, Juana Leno, Bodil Manz, Wendy Maruyama, Beverly Mayeri, Anne E. Miotke, Judy Moonelis, Madeline Naranjo, Gertrud Natzler, Amber O'Harrow, JoAnna Poehlmann, Mary Preston, Lisa Reinertson, Jane Sauer, Deidre Scherer, Joyce J. Scott, Esther Shimazu, Barbara Lee Smith, Jean Stamsta Toshiko Takaezu, Chiu Tsang-yi, Linda Wabanimkee, Jane Weintraub, Anne Wilson, Mary Alice Wimmer, Beatrice Wood, and Eva Zeisel