



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**PRESS CONTACT**

Jessica Zalewski
Marketing and Publications Manager
262.638.8300
jzalewski@ramart.org

**The Box Project: Uncommon Threads
at Wisconsin's Racine Art Museum**

Racine, WI February 21, 2017

Racine Art Museum (RAM) is pleased to present ***The Box Project: Uncommon Threads*** showcasing commissioned works by 36 of the world's top fiber artists. These artists, many of whom work on a large scale, were challenged to create an original piece within the confines of a small box. Organized by the Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research (CFAR) with RAM, this traveling exhibition presents works commissioned by Lloyd Cotsen between 2004 and 2013 together with 22 large-scale fiber art pieces on loan. Open May 21 – August 27, 2017, RAM is the only Midwestern venue for this show before its final stop in Washington, D.C.

The 36 commissioned works were made in response to a challenge issued by collector Lloyd Cotsen and his then textile curator Mary Hunt Kahlenberg, who stipulated that each artist's entry must be three-dimensional and sized to fit inside a relatively small, square or rectangular box of standardized dimensions. The artists were also asked to create something with fiber, broadly defined. The great variety of solutions that resulted and the wide range of materials and techniques used by artists speak to the project's successful outcome. Some the media used include plastic tubing, copper wire, paper, Manzanita wood, zippers, buttons, beads, magnets, reflective tape, rubber sponge, and spools of thread.

Virginia Davis' elegant submission conjures the vastness of the night sky, while Ai Kijima's quilted fabric collage employs the pop culture imagery of children's cartoons. Gerhardt Knodel and James Bassler both invoke game boards, but realized in ways completely their own. Some works, like Masae Bamba's delicate garden of mushrooms topped with an ethereal shibori-dyed butterfly wing, reside neatly inside their box. Others, such as Aune Taamal's delicate, translucent weaving, can be stored in their boxes but lavishly overflow their confines when unfolded for display.

(more)



PRESS RELEASE

Videos, material samples, maquettes, correspondence, and concept sketches chronicle the creative strategies of the artists and shed light on the complex relationship between artist and collector. Viewing an individual Box Project is an intimate experience, and an invitation to step inside and consider the challenge presented by its confines. To give an even greater sense of the problem solving and inventiveness involved in fulfilling the commission's challenge, 22 large-scale pieces borrowed from a variety of the participants and institutions are included to convey the often-monumental and highly variable nature of fiber art today.

The 36 artists whose work appears in this exhibition are: Masae Bamba, James Bassler, Mary Bero, Zane Berzina, N. Dash, Virginia Davis, Carson Fox, Shigeki Fukumoto, John Garrett, Ana Lisa Hedstrom, Helena Hernmarck, Agneta Hobin, Pat Hodson, Kiyomi Iwata, Gere Kavanaugh, Ai Kijima, Hideaki Kizaki, Lewis Knauss, Nancy Koenigsberg, Gerhardt Knodel, Naomi Kobayashi, Gyöngy Laky, Paola Moreno, Jun Mitsuhashi, Barbara Murak, Kyoko Nitta, Heidrun Schimmel, Cynthia Schira, Hisako Sekijima, Carol Shinn, Sherri Smith, Aune Taamal, Hadi Tabatabai, Koji Takaki, Richard Tuttle, and Peter Weber.

Exhibition Tour and Catalogue

The Box Project: Uncommon Threads is curated by Lyssa Stapleton, Curator of the Cotsen Collection and Bruce W. Pepich, Executive Director and Curator of Collections, Racine Art Museum. The exhibition debuted at the Fowler Museum in September 2016 before traveling to Racine Art Museum in Wisconsin and finally, to the Textile Museum at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. (Fall 2017).

Equally significant is the book accompanying the show, entitled **The Box Project: Works from the Lloyd Cotsen Collection** (ISBN 9780974516899, hardcover, \$95). The 336-page publication features essays by Stapleton and Pepich as well as Matilda McQuaid, Deputy Curatorial Director at Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum; independent curator Jenelle Porter; and interviews with the artists. The book will be available at the RAM Museum Store.

This exhibition is made possible by: Platinum Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research, Wingate Charitable Foundation; Diamond Sponsors: Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, SC Johnson; Gold Sponsors - Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, Racine Community Foundation, W. T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors - And is Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, Real Racine, Runzheimer International Ltd., United Way Racine County, Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - CNH Industrial, EC Styberg Foundation, Educators Credit Union, In Sink Erator, The Norbell Foundation, Orkney Springs Retreat, Ruud Family Foundation, Southern Connecticut Polymer Clay Guild; Media Sponsors - 88NINE Radio Milwaukee, Wisconsin Public Radio

(more)



PRESS RELEASE

##

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 \$5 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.