



PRESS RELEASE

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**Contemporary Approaches to Needlework  
in Racine Art Museum Exhibition**

Racine, WI September 10, 2020

Open September 23, 2020 through February 13, 2021 at the Racine Art Museum (RAM), ***In Stitches: Contemporary Approaches to Needlework*** features work primarily drawn from the museum's permanent collection that demonstrate contemporary methods of working with materials such as fabric, thread, yarn, and embroidery floss through the use of needles, hooks, or hands.

For some, needlework and other fiber-related techniques are pastimes, while for others they are used for professions. For still more, these practices are employed to depict ideas. The contemporary artists whose works are included in this exhibition prioritize these processes and use handcraft techniques like embroidery, sewing, crocheting, and quilting to explore a wide range of subjects. They investigate labor, gender, memory, and history, and popular culture as well as personal or social issues.

While there are complex and layered histories associated with various techniques, in the hands of makers styles and processes are sometimes blended. Rather than employing one technique, an artist like Renie Breskin Adams could embroider, crochet, latch hook, or knot—or utilize all of them individually or in combination. Similarly, contemporary quilt-makers such as Joan Schulze might combine stitching with painting, image-transfer, and collage. Also, some artists have chosen to break down dimensional boundaries, using techniques routinely associated with two-dimensions to create or embellish three-dimensional forms.

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Diverse examples shown next to one another offer opportunities for comparison and contrast. Large-scale quilts using found linens are shown alongside small-scale photo-realistic embroideries, crocheted earrings, and stitched baskets. Regardless of form, these works reflect how handcraft traditions can be incorporated—and expanded upon—to make creative, aesthetic, thoughtful, symbolic, or practical statements.

Works on loan from Milwaukee area artists Sharon Kerry-Harlan and Rosemary Ollison expand this conversation even further. Incorporating African influences, Kerry-Harlan uses textiles, as well as other media, to explore the potential metaphors and meanings of the human face and figure. Ollison collects glass, leather, bracelets, beads, bones, and jewelry to incorporate into all manner of works, including quilts.

Exhibitions at Racine Art Museum are made possible by: Platinum Sponsors—Anonymous, Nicholas and Nancy Kurten, and Wingate Foundation; Diamond Sponsors—National Endowment for the Arts, Osborne and Sceikic Family Foundation, Ruffo Family Foundation, Inc.; Gold Sponsors—Anonymous, Tom and Irene Creecy, David Flegel, Herzfeld Foundation, Racine Community Foundation, Twin Disc, W.T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors—A.C. Buhler Family, Andis Foundation, David Charak, Lucy G. Feller, Johnson Bank, Dorothy MacVicar, Real Racine, Trio Foundation of St. Louis, Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors—Andis Company, Virginia Buhler, Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research, Tom and Jane Devine, David and Ellen Easley, Educators Credit Union, Eye Care Center of Waterford, Ben and Dawn Flegel, Fredrick and Deborah Ganaway, William A. Guenther, Tom and Sharon Harty, Angela Jacobi, Bill Keland, Knight Barry Title Group, Eric Koopmeiners and Lena Vigna; Media Sponsor—Wisconsin Public Radio.

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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.

After temporarily closing its doors in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, RAM reopened to the public on Wednesday, August 5. RAM's Wustum Museum of Fine Arts reopened on Wednesday, September 2 with the juried exhibition, Wisconsin Photography 2020. Both museums are operating with limited hours, open Wednesday

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through Saturday from Noon to 4:00 pm. Information regarding safety protocols and what to expect when visiting the museums are available on the RAM website, [ramart.org](http://ramart.org).