

RAM exhibit features jewelry, small objects

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"Jackie's Nut" by Jan Huling.

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RACINE — The Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St., is opening a new exhibit called "Get a Bead On: Jewelry and Small Objects" featuring contemporary crafts using beads from July 21 to Jan. 22.

One of the primary definitions of a bead emphasizes its use in adornment or an ornamental capacity. Contemporary artists who work with beads sometimes adhere to these parameters and sometimes challenge them. Get a Bead On reveals the expansive potential of beads for

both structure and decoration in contemporary art jewelry and small-scale objects.

As shifting Native American beadwork practices have made clear, the materials used to form beads can change depending on geography, use, cultural, and personal preference and availability.

Contemporary artists — many with multiple options available to them — make choices based on aesthetic, conceptual, practical, personal and symbolic intent. For example, silversmith Jasper Nelson draws on generational Navajo family knowledge and interest to create beaded neck pieces with a minimalist aesthetic.

Interested in highlighting the “foodstuffs of our communal desire,” Linda Dolack covers candy boxes, food containers and grocery carts with glass beads as she ironically highlights mass consumption and production.

Jeweler Holly Anne Mitchell uses recycled newspaper to create beaded bracelets, brooches, necklaces and earrings that speak to eco-friendly practices as well as challenge assumptions about which materials can be used for jewelry.

Drawn together by a common form, the works included reflect a variety of perspectives on materials, techniques and wearability. In addition to addressing these formal qualities, the artists whose work is featured also explore a range of social and cultural themes — as noted above — including perceptions of race, material consumption and excess.

The Racine Art Museum is open from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is \$7, or \$5 for seniors 62 and older and students.