

Racine, WI January 4, 2012

A Chosen Path: The Ceramic Art of Karen Karnes at the Racine Art Museum



Karen Karnes, *Flower Container*, 1997
Produced in Morgan, VT
Glazed stoneware
Collection of Abel Weinrib
Photography: Anthony Cuñha

The Racine Art Museum is pleased to be one of five museums nationwide to host the first major retrospective of ceramic artist Karen Karnes. Open January 29 through May 27, 2012, ***A Chosen Path: The Ceramic Art of Karen Karnes*** features 69 masterworks from this pioneering artist.

For more than 60 years Karen Karnes (1925-) has been at the forefront of the studio pottery movement. Over her long career, she has created some of the most iconic

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pottery of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. She has worked in some of the most significant cultural settings of her generation, including North Carolina's avant-garde Black Mountain College in the 1950s.

Karnes' artistic output is recognized for its understated, quietly poetic surfaces and sublime biomorphic forms. From her dramatic salt-glazed pottery of the 1960s and 70s, to her most recent complex joined sculptural pieces, Karnes consistently has challenged herself - with the unintentional consequence of irreversibly transforming the medium. She remains one of the medium's most influential working potters and is a mentor to several generations of studio potters.

Peter Held, curator of ceramics at the Ceramics Research Center (CRC), shares his enthusiasm for this important exhibition. "Karnes career mirrors the burgeoning craft field in the United States starting after World War II. In the ensuing years she has produced work that is remarkable for its depth, personal voice, and consistent innovation," Held says.

The organization and presentation of *A Chosen Path: The Ceramic Art of Karen Karnes* was generously funded by an Artist Exhibition grant from the Windgate Charitable Foundation, with additional support from the Ceres Trust, Friends of Contemporary Ceramics, the Center for Craft, Creativity and Design and the University of North Carolina Press, who undertook the production and distribution of the handsome exhibition catalogue. The exhibition will travel to four museums nationwide after the presentation at ASU.

The presentation of this exhibition at the Racine Art Museum is made possible by: Presenting Sponsors - Karen Johnson Boyd and William B. Boyd, RAM Society Members, Jay Price Ruffo, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc., and Windgate Charitable Foundation; Gold Sponsors - Helen Bader Foundation, Inc., National Endowment for the Arts, Racine Community Foundation, Inc., and Racine United Arts Fund; Silver Sponsors - Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research, Elwood Corporation, Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, W.T. Walker Group, Inc., and Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors - Clifton Gunderson LLP, CNH America LLC, E.C. Styberg Foundation, Inc., Educators Credit Union, Friends of Fiber Art International, In Sink Erator, Real Racine and Runzheimer Foundation

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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.

Docent led contemporary craft and architectural tours of the museums are available. Both campuses of the Racine Art Museum, are open to the public 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.

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