

ART

# Venturing beyond nature in contemporary craft

RACINE — Open Feb. 17 through Oct. 6 at the Racine Art Museum, 441 Main St., “From Nature: Contemporary Artists and Organic Materials” features primarily objects — sculptural, functional, and wearable — that incorporate items from the natural world as a means to explore materials and a way to investigate a variety of social, personal, environmental, and cultural issues.

Particular to place and time, organic materials are — and have been — used for baskets, jewelry, architecture and other functional objects the world over. More and more in the last hundred years, they have also been made into fine art objects as artists have turned to varied sources to create works that reflect the environment.

RAM’s collection, with its emphasis on contemporary craft, offers a unique platform for this exhibition as so much of the work is built is from organically-based media, such as wood, paper and clay. The works included emphasize the natural as a found object — perhaps manipulated, but not in a way that dramatically disguises the source. Elements such as feathers, stones, shells, twigs and hair play structural, metaphorical or decorative roles in these artworks created during the last few decades.

Some of the featured artists, such as Dorothy Gill Barnes, “harvest” their materials as homage to the wonder and diversity of nature. Others like Jan Hopkins — who uses unexpected materials such as grapefruit peel and lotus seeds — look for abundant materials that can carry symbolic or metaphorical meanings. Meanwhile, Kyoung Ae Cho gathers,





“Nova Scotia Spruce” by Dorothy Gill Barnes.

collects and recycles natural materials in order to investigate how humans interact with nature as well as its cycles and internal processes.

Docent-led contemporary craft and architectural tours of the museum are available.

Racine Art Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$7 for adults, and \$5 for youth ages 12-18, full-time students and seniors 62 and older. There is no charge for children ages 11 and younger.



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<b>Tequila Tuesdays</b> -Special menu, margaritas & Mexican beers.	<b>Fridays-Fish Fry:</b> \$2 off 3pm-5pm Beer Battered Atlantic Cod.
<b>Wednesdays</b> -3 Roads Trivia w/Spencer... Prizes & new special events segments. Now featuring rib tips apps & rib tips entrees.	<b>Saturdays</b> -Slow Roasted Prime Rib
	<b>Sundays</b> -Breakfast at the Brew House, 9am-1pm, \$1 off BBQ Platters plus additional sides 4pm-8pm.

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