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**Two New Shows in Racine Art Museum's
Fall Exhibition Series**

Racine, WI October 8, 2019

Beginning Sunday, October 20, Racine Art Museum (RAM) visitors will experience two new contemporary craft exhibitions: **OBJECTS REDUX: Studio Craft in Context, 1960–1985** and **OBJECTS REDUX: Small-Scale Studio Craft of the 1950s and 1960s**. These shows—both on display through February 2, 2020—are the last of the four concurrent exhibitions to open in RAM's fall exhibition series, **OBJECTS REDUX**. Drawn primarily from the museum's collection, this series showcases work made between approximately 1960 and 1985 by artists located in the United States, and offers a look at how craft was developing in the last part of the twentieth century.

In the late 1960s, as society was undergoing social upheaval, studio craft—especially as it was being practiced in the United States—slowly began to undergo changes in content and form. Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, many artists who used craft materials were pushing the boundaries of function and practical use—investigating materials and artistic concepts while beginning to overtly question social, political, environmental, and cultural issues. The public face of studio craft—as the focus of exhibitions, theoretical contemplation, and public appreciation—got a boost when SC Johnson endorsed a project to build a collection that would “promote the American object maker.”

Assembled by art dealer Lee Nordness and then Museum of Contemporary Crafts

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(now Museum of Arts and Design) director Paul Smith, this collection traveled the country as **OBJECTS: USA** before being distributed—by the way of gifts—to several participating institutions. Accompanied by a substantial book with images and artist biographies, as well as a sales catalogue titled *arts/objects: usa* and an hour-long movie, this combination of over 300 works made of so-called craft materials traveled to 20 US and 14 international venues on its multi-year tour. The exhibition introduced a broader public to the possibilities of media most often associated with function, not intellectual, aesthetic, or material investigations. *OBJECTS: USA* also offered a new way for understanding those works and their makers.

OBJECTS REDUX: Studio Craft in Context, 1960-1985 showcases craft within the larger spectrum of work being created at the time. For example, Helen Bitar, whose work is featured in the original *OBJECTS: USA* with brightly colored, stitched pillows is represented in RAM's *Studio Craft in Context* exhibition with a large quilt from the late 1960s in bold—almost neon—colors and intense pattern. Contrasted with the graphic, cartoony, psychedelic imagery in a Karl Wirsum print from five years later, a complex picture of American art and society at the time begins to form.

Rounding out the four-exhibition series, **OBJECTS REDUX: Small-Scale Studio Craft of the 1950s and 1960s**, showcases primarily functional work made in the decades just prior to *OBJECTS: USA*. While there were artists already challenging ideas about function, the public most likely thought about craft—if they did at all—in terms similar to the vessels, bowls, and “useful” items represented in this exhibition.

More information regarding the *OBJECTS REDUX* series and other current exhibitions can be found on the museum's website, ramart.org.

Exhibitions at Racine Art Museum are made possible by: Platinum Sponsors — Anonymous, Windgate Foundation; Diamond Sponsors — David Charak, National Endowment for the Arts, Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, Ruffo Family Foundation Inc.; Gold Sponsors — Anonymous, Tom and Irene Creecy, David Flegel, Herzfeld Foundation, Johnson Bank, Racine Community Foundation, Trio Foundation of St. Louis, Twin Disc, W.T. Walker Group, Inc.; Silver Sponsors — A.C. Buhler Family, Andis Foundation, Evinrude Outboard Motors, Lucy G. Feller, Dorothy MacVicar, Real Racine, We Energies Foundation, Wisconsin Arts Board; Bronze Sponsors — Andis Company, John Cram and Matt Chambers, Barbara Delaney, David and Ellen Easley, Educators Credit Union, Eye Care Center of Waterford, The Furniture Society, Fredrick and Deborah Ganaway, William A. Guenther, Kirsten and Emily Maki

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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 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 \$7 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.