

EXHIBITIONS

OBJECTS REDUX: 50 Years After OBJECTS: USA Defined American Craft

Saturday, Sep 21, 2019 – Jan 5, 2020

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In the late 1960s, as society was undergoing social upheaval, studio craft in the United States was pushing boundaries in terms of influences, subjects, and material exploration. 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.”

This collection—assembled by art dealer Lee Nordness and then Museum of Contemporary Crafts (now Museum of Arts and Design) director Paul Smith—traveled the country as *OBJECTS: USA* before being distributed, in the way of gifts, to several 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 that began in 1969. 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.

Drawing on RAM’s collection, as well as generous lenders from the Racine area, *OBJECTS REDUX* celebrates the 50th anniversary of *OBJECTS: USA* by combining works from the original touring exhibition with works by many of the same artists produced as part of the accompanying selling program. Not only is this the first time in 50 years that these particular works have been assembled, it is also the first time that these original exhibition works have been back on display in the same gallery. Artists whose works are featured include Wendell Castle, Arline Fisch, Trudy Guermonprez, Sam Maloof, Walter Nottingham, Don Reitz, and Dorian Zachai.

Image: Wendell Castle, *Desk* (Silver Leaf Desk), 1967

