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**Racine Art Museum Celebrates Ceramic Artist and Noted Collectors in New Event**

Racine, WI October 11, 2023

Racine Art Museum (RAM) is excited to invite the public to a one-of-a-kind event on Friday, October 27, that highlights much-admired American ceramic artist Don (Donald) Reitz and those who gifted the pieces that make up one of RAM's newest exhibitions—*Collection Focus: Don Reitz*.

This exhibition—which debuts just over 55 pieces from 1961–2008—is firmly anchored by a recent large gift of almost 50 examples from noted collectors Leatrice S. and Melvin B. Eagle. Their gift established an archive for Reitz and pushed him into the top three most-collected artists working primarily in clay in RAM's collection.

To further highlight *Collection Focus*—and celebrate the museum's milestone anniversary of twenty years in Downtown Racine—RAM Executive Director and Curator of Collections Bruce W. Pepich will host a conversation with the Eagles about their collection process and long-term supportive relationship with Reitz. The talk begins at 6:00 pm on Friday, October 27, but the galleries will be open for individual viewing prior to the conversation, beginning at 5:00 pm.

Reitz holds a special place in contemporary craft, particularly in ceramics, due to his reinvigoration of salt- and wood-firing techniques. *Collection Focus* underscores RAM's commitment to chronicling the career of Reitz, who spent 1962–88 living and working in Wisconsin while actively teaching as faculty at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.



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Following the talk with the Eagles, Bruce W. Pepich will lead a brief gallery tour through *Wisconsin Artists: 1960-90* at 6:45 pm. Presented concurrently with *Collection Focus*, this exhibition presents work in a range of media by artists living and working in Wisconsin during the years Reitz taught in the state. The exhibition both contextualizes Reitz's work and celebrates those involved in building the legacy of art in Wisconsin, especially in the years leading up to the establishment of RAM and its 2003 opening.

This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

*Exhibitions at Racine Art Museum are made possible by:* **Platinum Sponsors**—The Estate of Karen Johnson Boyd, David Charak, Judith and David Flegel Fund, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Ron and Judith Isaacs, Nicholas and Nancy Kurten, Racine Community Foundation, Windgate Foundation; **Diamond Sponsors**—City of Racine's Grow Racine Grant, Osborne and Scekcic Family Foundation, Ruffo Family Foundation, Ruth Arts Foundation; **Gold Sponsors**—Anonymous, Tom and Irene Creecy, Richard and Patricia Ehlert, Herzfeld Foundation, Reliance Controls, Trio Foundation of St. Louis, W.T. Walker Group, Inc., Wisconsin Arts Board; **Silver Sponsors**—Anonymous, Art Bridges, Baird, A.C. Buhler Family, Lucy G. Feller, Ben and Dawn Flegel, Jim Harris, Sharon and Tom Harty, Lise Iwon, J. Jeffers & Co., Johnson Bank, Dorothy MacVicar, Jan Serr and John Shannon, Visit Racine County; **Bronze Sponsors**—Ellen and Joseph Albrecht, Andis Foundation, Susan Boland, Virginia Buhler, Butcher & Barrel/Amos Los Tacos, Educators Credit Union, Express Employment Professionals, Tony and Andrea Hauser, Bill and Debbie Keland, Susan Manalli, Jean and Alex Mandli, Jr., The Prairie School, Cathy Stanghellini, Georgiana Treivush, Twin Disc, Inc.; **Media Sponsors**—88Nine Radio Milwaukee, Wisconsin Public Radio.

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This year marks the Racine Art Museum's Twentieth Anniversary in Downtown Racine. Throughout 2023, visitors are invited to discover inspiring exhibitions and programs that highlight the ways RAM has served its audiences over the last two decades while promising a brighter future.

The two campuses of the Racine Art Museum—RAM in downtown Racine at 441 Main Street and RAM's Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts (Wustum) at 2519 Northwestern Avenue—are located in Racine, Wisconsin, a historic community on the shores of Lake Michigan. RAM is home to the largest contemporary craft collection in North America and has a reputation for its



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award-winning architecture and nationally recognized exhibition program. Wustum is home to the organization's diverse, award-winning art education programs and has presented significant art exhibitions since the 1940s.

Both campuses of the Racine Art Museum are currently operating with limited hours, open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm. RAM admission is \$10 for adults; \$8 for students and seniors (62 or older); and free for RAM members, children under 12, and active military. Wustum admission is always free. Both museums encourage all visitors and staff who are not fully vaccinated, and those who feel more comfortable wearing a mask, to continue doing so in public areas at RAM and Wustum. Some in-person art classes and workshops at Wustum still require masks, determined on a case-by-case basis.