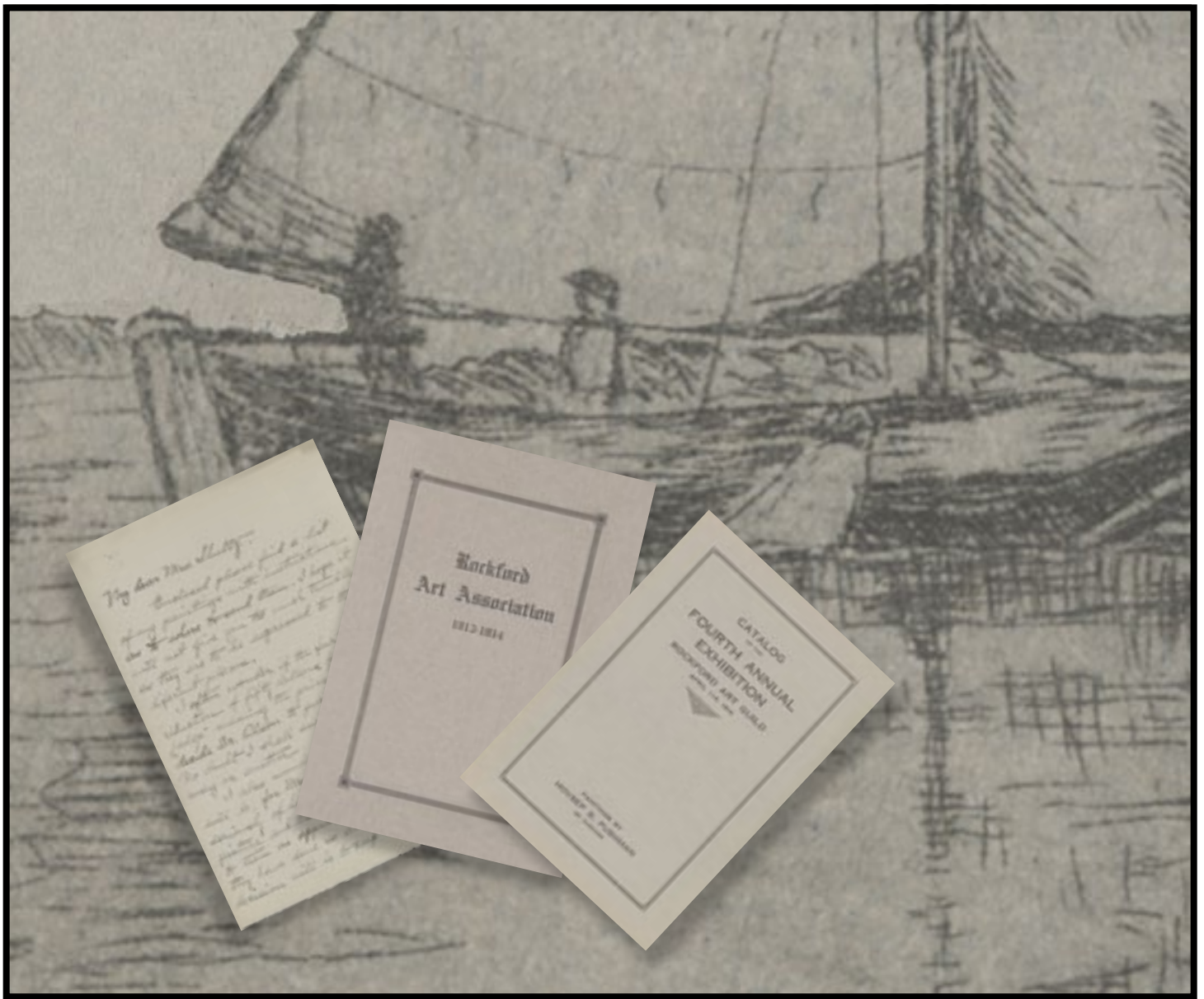


Through The Ages: 100 Years of RAM

AUG 23, 2013–JAN 26, 2014 | ROCKFORD ART MUSEUM

Sponsored by Joseph Behr & Sons Inc, The Funderburg Foundation, Dean Alan Olson Foundation, Rockford Area Arts Council and Rockford Park District

www.rockfordartmuseum.org



RAM

Exhibition Teacher Guide

THROUGH THE AGES: 100 YEARS OF RAM

INTRODUCTION

From its beginnings as the Rockford Sketch Club in 1887, to official organization as the Rockford Art Association in 1913, RAM boasts a rich history that reflects the past, present and future of the Rockford region. On view for an unprecedented length of time throughout all three galleries of the museum, *Through the Ages* celebrates the centennial of Rockford Art Museum with paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, glass, sculpture and mixed media from the RAM Permanent Collection. Also on view in this commemorative exhibition are rare displays of historic archives that tell the impressive story about the making and sustaining of this community gem.

Now comprised of more than 1,700 works of art, the RAM Permanent Collection consists of modern and contemporary American art from the 19th and 20th centuries through today, from American Impressionist paintings to Chicago Imagist works, to outsider art in new and mixed media; sculpture; photography; and contemporary glass. Regional art with an emphasis on Illinois artists remains a steadfast focus. Each focus area is represented in this landmark show – as well as each major collection of the museum, including the Francis and June Spiezer Collection of Art, Arnold Gilbert Photography Collection, Wiiken Collection of Glass, Hager Collection of Self-Taught African American Art, and more.

Curated by Carrie Johnson Breitbach, *Through the Ages: 100 Years of RAM* is sponsored by Joseph Behr & Sons Inc., The Funderburg Foundation, Dean Alan Olson Foundation, Rockford Area Arts Council and Rockford Park District. Exhibitions and related educational programming presented by Rockford Art Museum are partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. All RAM education programs are sponsored in part by Women’s Art Board.

CURATOR STATEMENT

From the research for the commemorative book, *RAM 100: Rockford Art Museum 1913–2013*, to hanging almost 200 pieces in three galleries for the commemorative exhibition, I have lived and breathed the museum’s collection for the last year. It has blissfully consumed me. Having grown up in Rockford, and worked here nearly seven years, I have always had an admiration for the RAM Permanent Collection. Throughout the last year, it has grown exponentially. We have had the opportunity to delve into the research behind the makings of our museum, its collection and mission. As we researched more about each artwork, we came to feel as if we knew each artist personally. Our goal became to bring you into this world as we have seen it throughout this centennial year.

Six separate shows make up this exhibition. Selections from our photography, glass, outsider, local and regional collections are on view in Anderson Gallery, which also houses two flat files that contain a taste of the archives we have been deeply engrossed in this year. Funderburg Gallery holds several pieces from our modern and contemporary collection – and features two works on view for the very first time. As a tribute to our foundation, step back in time in Kuller Gallery, where early pieces share the roots from where RAM has grown. From its inception through today, Rockford Art Museum has always possessed an unyielding desire to maintain a permanent art collection for the educational and cultural growth of our community. Here’s to the first 100 years.



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Through the Ages would not have been possible without the generosity of our sponsors, support of the Board of Trustees, and hard work of staff – Linda Dennis, Nancy Sauer, Stacey LaRosa, Joshua Jones, Jerry Abitz, Denise Glasenapp and Joanne Gustafson. A special thank you to my dear friend and coworker Sarah Bursley McNamara whose great devotion to this museum’s history and its collection is immeasurable. I’d also like to extend sincere thanks to our summer interns Leah Budde, Richard Gessert, Miranda Lindvall and Jason Judd who worked tirelessly on this exhibition. We are incredibly grateful for the many generations of generous donors and supporters, without whom this centennial achievement would not exist. Lastly, we dedicate *Through the Ages* to all of the talented artists in the Rockford Art Museum Permanent Collection.

Carrie Johnson Breitbach
Curator, Rockford Art Museum

EXHIBITION VOCABULARY

composition. Organization or arrangement of one or more of the elements of art – line color, form, shape, space, texture, and value.

line. A mark moving from one area to another on a surface.

pattern. A visual rhythm set up by the repeating of shape, line, and color.

perspective. The technique artists use to project an illusion of the three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional surface. Perspective helps to create a sense of depth – of receding space.

portrait. A work of art that represents a specific person, a group of people, or an animal. Portraits usually show what a person looks like as well as revealing something about the subject’s personality; can be made of any sculptural material or in any two-dimensional medium. *Portraiture* is the field of portrait-making and portraits in general.

self-taught art. A genre of art and outdoor constructions made by untrained artists who do not recognize themselves as artists.

symbol. Something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, associate, convention, or accidental resemblance.

texture. How something feels, whether real or visually implied.



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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

DALE CHIHULY BOWLS

In this lesson, students will create their own version of a bowl from Dale Chihuly's *Macchia* series.



Dale Chihuly (American, b. 1941)
Macchia, 1980, blown glass vessel
Collection of Rockford Art Museum, Illinois
Gift of Donald and Carol Wiiken

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About the Artist

Born in Tacoma, Washington, Chihuly was introduced to glass while studying interior design at the University of Washington. After graduating in 1965, Chihuly enrolled in the first glass program in the country, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he studied under Littleton. Chihuly continued his studies at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), where he later established the glass program and taught for more than a decade. In 1968, after receiving a Fulbright Fellowship, he went to work at a glass factory in Venice. There he observed the team approach to blowing glass, which is critical to his process. In 1971, he cofounded Pilchuck Glass School in Washington State.—*Chihuly Studio*

About the Artwork

RAM was one of many museums across the nation that helped commemorate the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Studio Glass Movement in 2012 by presenting a celebratory glass exhibition. A special section detailed the history of contemporary glass in America, including a few select pieces from the RAM Permanent Collection to reinforce the continuing legacy of Harvey Littleton, leader of the movement, and show the ties between him and his former graduate students Marvin Lipofsky and Dale Chihuly. Arguably two of the most recognized names in the medium, Lipofsky went on to start the glass program at University of California-Berkeley; Chihuly developed the program at Rhode Island School of Design and helped found Pilchuck Glass School in Washington State.

While proofing the exhibition label for Chihuly's *Macchia*—a routine process in most circumstances—RAM staff found a discrepancy between the date listed in museum archives for the piece and the date Chihuly Studio attributed to the first of that name. Simply attempting to verify the date, Rockford Art Museum worked with Chihuly Studio to determine that the RAM *Macchia* is one of the earliest prototypes in the series by the legendary artist. The signature and date are etched into the glass, which the studio admitted is unusual for him by his current practices. Both Chihuly and collector Don Wiiken, who bought the early work from the artist directly, relayed personal accounts to verify the etched date is indeed 1980. Until then Chihuly Studio reported that production for that series did not begin until 1981/1982. Because of the inclusion of this piece in the commemorative exhibition, Rockford Art Museum helped rewrite a small portion of the artistic record of one of the most prolific artists of the studio glass movement.—*excerpted from the commemorative centennial edition book RAM 100: Rockford Art Museum, 1913–2013*

Materials

Sharpie markers
Solo clear plastic punch cups
toaster oven and cookie sheet
oven mitts

Activity Instructions

Tell students that they will be learning about glass artist Dale Chihuly who works with a material that can be made into many different forms.

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Have students brainstorm the different ways we use glass in our everyday lives. Let them view photographs of Chihuly's artwork and encourage them to ask questions about his glass art.

Show students images or videos of blown glass, cut glass, stained glass, etching and engraving. Talk about the different ways each form is made, and discuss why teamwork is important when blowing glass, especially for artists like Dale Chihuly.

Tell students that they will be making their own "glass" sculptures, using simple materials: Solo clear plastic cups, Sharpie markers, and toaster ovens. Have them hypothesize what will happen to the cups when heated.

Give a Solo clear plastic punch cup to each child. Explain to students that macchia is an Italian word for "spotted." Using bright and bold colored Sharpies, have students decorate their cups with patterns and spots in the style of Dale Chihuly.

When students are finished, melt their final products in a toaster oven (or at home in a large oven). Allow objects to cool before handling.

ISBE Standards

4AB, 25AB, 26AB, 27AB

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PUEBLO PINCH POTS

In this lesson, students will examine *Her Daughter* by Walter Ufer and create a “pinch pot” in the style of the Pueblo people.



Walter Ufer (American, 1876–1936)

Her Daughter, 1921, oil on canvas

Collection of Rockford Art Museum, Illinois

RAM purchase with funding from Mrs. L.A. Shultz, Mrs. Walter Forbes, Mrs. George D. Roper and Mrs. Charles von Weise

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About the Artist

Walter Ufer was raised in Kentucky. He was educated at the Royal Applied Art Schools and the Royal Academy in Dresden, Germany. He also attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the J. Francis Smith Art School in Chicago. In 1911 he married Mary Fredericksen, a Danish-born artist. The couple spent two years painting in Paris, Italy and North Africa before returning to the United States. After their return Ufer and his wife were invited to join the Taos Society of Artists. They became full members in 1917. Though the couple traveled extensively throughout their lives, they considered Taos, New Mexico, their home.

Ufer was known for his bold, confident use of thickly applied paint, which was intensified by the vibrant color and sharp contrasting light of Taos. He often painted easily recognizable forms in an anecdotal manner. His work was strongly influenced by that of John Singer Sargent; this influence is most dominant in his portrayal of hands, faces and garments. By 1920 Ufer's paintings of the Pueblo people achieved great notoriety. The paintings sold well through this time, until the stock market crashed. The value did not increase again until long after his death. Today Walter Ufer is considered one of the most important Taos Society artists.

About the Artwork

Her Daughter was featured in a 1923 solo exhibition of the Rockford Art Association (now RAM) and purchased for the collection later that year. The woman on the right was identified as legendary potter María Montoya Martínez (1887–1980) of San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico. The girl facing the viewer is most likely her youngest sister, Clara Montoya, whom she had raised as her daughter since Clara's birth in 1909, the same year their mother died. The Walter Ufer Papers in the archives of the Rockford Art Museum Permanent Collection consist of typed and handwritten letters to and from painter Walter Ufer between 1923 and 1935. Organizations cited include the Art Institute of Chicago, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Taos Society of Artists, and a number of galleries and museums in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Santa Fe, N.M. Specific exhibitions are referenced, as are many nationally prominent artists and art advocates — Walter Pach, Virgil Barker, Dudley Crafts Watson, Charles Burkholder, Robert Harshe, and Ufer's wife, artist Mary Fredericksen, among them. Subjects range from governance structure for art organizations to generational and regional shifts in attitudes toward modern and contemporary art.—*excerpted from the commemorative centennial edition book RAM 100: Rockford Art Museum, 1913–2013*

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Materials

terracotta clay (either self-hardening or kiln-fired)
acrylic paint in black and white
paintbrushes
all-purpose sealer
water
water cups

Activity Instructions

Show images or samples of hand-built pottery to the students. Tell them that in this lesson, they will be exploring pottery traditions of the Pueblo people. Discuss with them the work of legendary potter María Montoya Martínez (1887–1980) of San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, depicted in Walter Ufer's painting *Her Daughter*.

Examine samples of the imagery used on Pueblo pottery, and have students sketch ideas for their pots. Emphasize that the only colors that may be used will be the natural terracotta color of the pots as well as black and white.

Give each student about one pound of terracotta clay (either self-hardening or kiln-fired).

Explain that Pueblo pots were typically formed with a *coil technique*. Have them begin to make their bowl by rolling an even coil (snake) about 10 inches long and a finger thick.

Wind the coil around itself to make a patty. Smooth the coils together on both sides. If the coils don't blend together easily, use a small amount of water or slip.

Have students continue to make coils. These will be attached to their pot base with a *score-and-slip method*. Once the coils are rolled, students should gently score around the outside of their circle base.

Demonstrate the score-and-slip method for students by scratching a texture into the clay with a fork or toothpick and then dipping a finger into the *slip* and apply it over the *scoring*. Score another coil and press to the scored edge of the base, pressing gently.

Have students score and slip their pot bases. Tell them to add additional coils to their pots by wrapping the coil around their pots and pinch off and smooth together ends when it is wrapped around slab and they meet.

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Once the students have achieved their desired pot shape and size, have them smooth their coils together, using a small amount of water or slip if necessary.

Once the pots have hardened (either by sitting out in the air or by kiln-firing), have students paint their sketched designs on the surface.

After the pots have dried, seal with an all-purpose sealer.

ISBE Standards

4AB, 25AB, 26AB, 27AB

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

Rockford Art Museum rockfordartmuseum.org

Dale Chihuly chihuly.com

Dick Blick Art Materials dickblick.com

Sax Arts & Crafts saxarts.com

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE Standards) isbe.state.il.us

