



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press contacts:

Kristin Settle
414/224-3246
Kristin.Settle@mam.org

Vicki Scharfberg
414/224-3243
Vicki.Scharfberg@mam.org



William L. Hawkins, (American, 1895–1990), Jumbo Elephant #3, 1989 Enamel, wire, tree branch, nail, and collage on Masonite, M2012.66

Museum showcases work of African-American artists

Milwaukee Art Museum showcases its treasure trove of folk, self-taught art in a colorful exhibition

Milwaukee, Wis. – Nearly six hundred objects of folk and self-taught art, from duck decoys and quilts to walking sticks and animal menageries, will be on view at the Milwaukee Art Museum in *Uncommon Folk: Traditions in American Art*. Opening January 31, 2014, the exhibition will present a whimsical installation of American paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, textiles, and decorative arts, drawn from its celebrated collection.

As a part of the exhibition nine quilts, including three by the women of Gee’s Bend, Alabama, will be on display, as well as works by nearly a dozen African-American artists.

“The exhibition includes examples of the African-American art traditions from across the country,” said Margaret Andera, exhibition curator. “These are some of the finest examples of African-American folk and self-taught art in the world.”

The Museum’s commitment to the work of folk and self-taught artists began as early as 1951 with the gift of two paintings by Wisconsin artist Anna Louisa Miller. During the 1960s and 1970s, when very few American museums were acquiring non-academic art, the Museum’s collection was appreciably expanded with the purchase of a number of important works. In 1989, acquisition of the Michael and Julie Hall Collection of American Folk Art positioned the Museum as a leader in the folk and self-taught field, a position further established with the more recent gifts of the Anthony Petullo Collection and the Lanford Wilson Collection.

“The exhibition highlights the breadth and depth of the Museum’s world-class collection of American folk and self-taught art, from paintings and photographs to walking sticks and quilts,” said Daniel Keegan, director of the Milwaukee Art Museum. “This eclectic grouping of American folk and self-taught art is a demonstration of the Museum’s long history of collecting works by untrained creators.”

Among the African-American artists represented in *Uncommon Folk* are William Edmunson, Bill Traylor, Joseph Yoakum, William Hawkins, Mr. Imagination, Rita Mae Pettway, and Elijah Pierce.



Rita Mae (“Rabbit”) Pettway (American, Gee’s Bend, Alabama, b. 1941), Four Block Housetop Quilt, 2000, Cotton and synthetic materials, 76 1/2 x 82 in. (194.31 x 208.28 cm) Milwaukee Art Museum, Gift of Angelo Buscemi, Valerie A. Childrey, MD, David and Maggi Gordon, Lucinda J. Gordon, Michele McKnight, and Barbara Brown Lee in honor of Dorothy Nelle Sanders M2003.85, Photographer credit: John R. Glembin

“Thanks to the Museum’s rich holdings, *Uncommon Folk: Traditions in American Art* is able to overview the far-reaching variety in folk and self-taught art through a lively and visually compelling installation that has something for everyone,” said Andera.

Uncommon Folk: Traditions in American Art runs January 31–May 4, 2014 at the Milwaukee Art Museum and is presented by the Caxambas Foundation and International Autos Group.

HOURS AND ADMISSION

The Museum is open Tuesday–Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on Thursdays until 8 p.m. Admission is \$17 for adults; \$14 for students, seniors, and active military; and free for Members and for children age 12 and under. The first Thursday of each month is Target Free First Thursday and admission is free for individuals (does not apply to groups).

ABOUT MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

The Milwaukee Art Museum houses a rich collection of over 30,000 works, with strengths in 19th- and 20th-century American and European art, contemporary art, and American decorative arts, and is the world's leading repository for work by untrained creators. The Museum campus is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and spans three buildings, including the Santiago Calatrava-designed Quadracci Pavilion and the Eero Saarinen-designed Milwaukee County War Memorial Center. For more information, please visit mam.org.

###