



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

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Press contacts:

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

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

Stitched into an American Masterpiece

Milwaukee Art Museum celebrates folk and self-taught art in 400-piece, diverse exhibition

Milwaukee, Wis. – Look to a quilt as an unexpected art form, and the common household item shows much more than function. Uncommon resilience, artistic intuition, and resourcefulness are stitched together in vibrant patterns from the imagination. As a part of the exhibition *Uncommon Folk: Traditions*



in American Art, nine quilts, including three by the women of Gee's Bend, Alabama, will be on display at the Milwaukee Art Museum starting January 31, 2014.

Gee's Bend, which began as a cotton plantation in the early 1800s, has a long tradition of quilters. Through the Civil War, the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement and on, the women of Gee's Bend quilted, oftentimes using whatever materials were around. The results are visually stimulating, but they are also a snapshot of the creator's life at the time the quilt was made.

"The exhibition includes examples of the quilting tradition from the nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-centuries," said Margaret Andera, exhibition curator. "Throughout the years, the attention to detail in these works never waivers."

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

Including the quilts, *Uncommon Folk* has over four hundred works of folk and self-taught art in an unprecedented selection of American paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, textiles, furniture, and decorative arts.

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

The Museum’s commitment to folk and self-taught art began as early as 1951, when Wisconsin artist Anna Louisa Miller gave the museum two works. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Museum continued to expand its collection while other museums were acquiring very little non-academic art.

“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 all ages,” said Keegan.

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, 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.

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