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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fitchburg Art Museum and ARTSWorcester collaborate to present *Call and Response* in the Community Gallery

Opening Reception, Sunday, June 23, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

The exhibition will be on view from June 23– September 1, 2013

Fitchburg, MA. -- The Fitchburg Art Museum, together with ARTSWorcester, is pleased to announce the June 23rd opening of ***Call and Response***, a group exhibition in FAM's Community Gallery. The title of the exhibition comes from a form of spontaneous communication in African culture between speaker, musician, or singer and the audience. All of the statements or "calls" are punctuated by expressions or "responses."

In 2012, FAM lent examples of African Art - including masks, a ceremonial axe, raffia cloth, metal currency, and small brass animals - to ARTSWorcester as a **call**. Members of the artist organization then were invited to submit contemporary artworks as a **response** to the African artworks. In December, a large exhibition of these works was displayed at ARTSWorcester's Aurora Gallery.

This summer, in FAM's Community Gallery, the best of the contemporary works will be displayed alongside the works of African Art that inspired them. Nine of these artworks were chosen by FAM Consulting Curator of African and Oceanic Art Jean Borgatti, one was selected by FAM Director Nick Capasso, and one by popular vote.

Ron Rosenstock's "response" to a Songye mask with exaggerated features and grooved stripes suggesting the power of a zebra or snake, is a photograph entitled, *Lightshed, Amboselli, Kenya, Africa*, covered with light and dark lines. The artist explains, "Monkeys playing in the shed were not captured due to long exposure...My image captures absent men, invisible

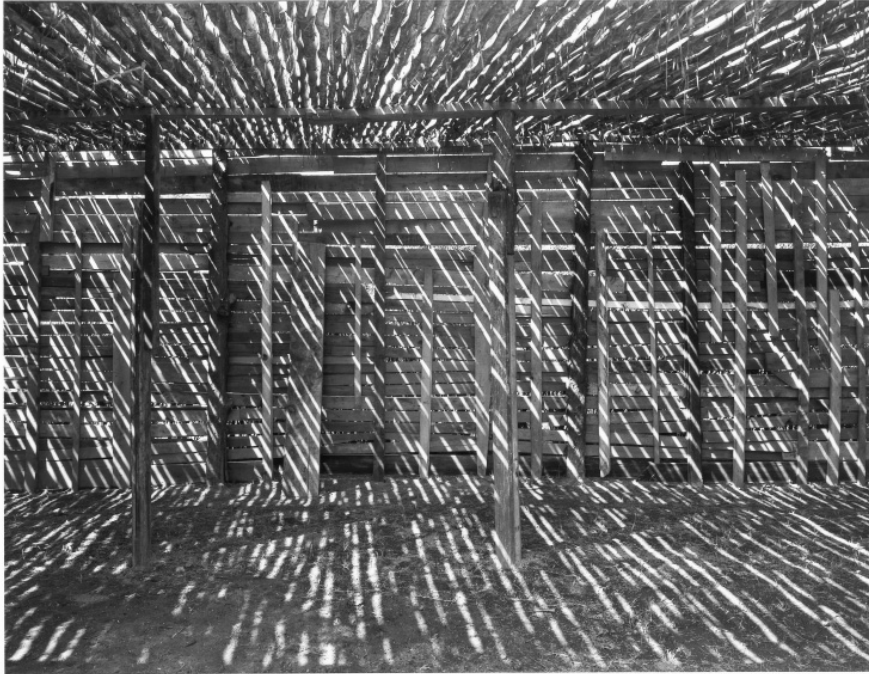
monkeys and a feeling of ancient beginnings.”

The Viewers’ Choice Award goes to *Warrior A* by Nickolas Kantarelis for an eight feet tall masked figure wrapped in fabric. The artist writes: “Masks were not meant to be seen tacked to a wall or under a case in a museum. They were as alive as the people who wore them.” In fact, trained male dancers, completely covered by mask and robe, would portray nature spirits and ancestral spirits or perform as entertainers.

The Director’s Choice Award goes to Howard Johnson, whose mixed media *Quad*, from his figurative abstraction series, reminds us of the profound impact of traditional African art on European and American artists in the early 1900s. African art was the “call” and the “response” was the development of cubist and modernist abstraction from Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso to the Harlem Renaissance in New York City.

This exhibition was organized by FAM Associate Consulting Curator of African and Oceanic Art Catherine Hunter.





Above images:

Howard Johnson, *Quad*, 2011, Courtesy of Howard Yezerski Gallery Boston MA.

Ron Rosenstock, *Lightshed*, Amboselli, 2012, Kenya, Africa, photograph.

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The Fitchburg Art Museum is one of the most treasured cultural institutions in Central New England and serves the Cities of Fitchburg and Leominster and surrounding communities in North Central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire.

Museum Hours: Wednesday – Friday, Noon – 4pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am – 5 pm.

Admission: Free for members, children 12 years and under, Fitchburg State University and Fitchburg Public School Students, Faculty & Staff, and to Fitchburg Residents of Ward 4 B.

\$9 for adults, \$5 for seniors (62 plus).

Fitchburg Art Museum is **free** from 4.00 p.m. – 7 p.m. every first Thursday of the month.

The Museum is wheelchair accessible.

Info: Call 978 345-4207 or visit www.fitchburgartmuseum.org

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