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GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM TO OPEN NEW FACILITY IN OCTOBER 2007

Museum to Integrate Extensive “Green” Systems and Elements, Will Be First Stand-Alone Art Museum in the World to Receive LEED Certification

Inaugural Programming to Include Exhibition on Sustainable Design

Grand Rapids, Mich., August 6, 2007 – In October 2007, the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) will open the doors of its new \$75 million building, becoming the first and only art museum in the world whose entire facility is LEED certified. The building, designed by WHY Architecture, led by principal Kulapat Yantrasast, will open to the public on October 5, 2007. In line with its green design, the new GRAM will feature sustainable systems and inaugural programming which includes an exhibition focusing on the future of sustainable design.

Achieving the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification is a particular challenge for art museums given the exacting climate standards for art preservation and volume of visitorship that they receive. The Museum will incorporate energy-efficient lighting, heating and cooling systems and recycling systems for water and paper supplies. Natural light will be utilized throughout the public and private spaces of the building. The central urban location of the museum will allow for easy access by public transportation and bicycle. As part of the LEED certification, GRAM will also build awareness of environmentally friendly efficiencies through education programs and activities.

“With the museum opening approaching, we take pride in making this vibrant contribution to green design worldwide, as well as to the growing cultural life of the northern Great Lakes region,” said Celeste Adams, museum director. “We are about to begin a new chapter in the life of GRAM.”

Sited in the heart of the growing West Michigan community, the new museum building will be located adjacent to architect Maya Lin’s *Ecliptic* (designed in 2000), an urban, sculptural park in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. The new building comprises 125,000 square feet and will provide more than three times the gallery space of its former building for its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, as well as increase space for education and public programs. The Museum has raised its entire \$75 million capital campaign goal, which includes the new museum facility, site acquisition, and endowment. Construction of the new museum began in September 2004.

THE BUILDING

The 125,000 square-foot concrete and glass building will capitalize on the city's dramatic vistas and striking landscape, creating continuity between the art within the Grand Rapids Art Museum and the natural environment surrounding it. The building is organized around a central pavilion of glass and light-colored concrete flanked by a reflecting pool, a pocket park with a water wall and open-air sculpture and dining courtyards. As visitors move from the pavilion towards the gallery wing, natural light will give the space a sense of upward procession towards the special exhibition and permanent collection galleries, which total nearly 18,000 square feet. The three-floor gallery wing will feature glass skylight lanterns which admit natural light into the space, and which will illuminate the building at night. In addition to its galleries, the building design includes a multi-use, flexible seating auditorium, education center, art reference library, café, museum shop, and conference and study rooms.

Outside, a large portico with an expansive roof canopy cantilevered toward the park will extend the building's connection to *Ecliptic*, providing shaded comfort in warm weather and a protected area from which to view ice skaters on the *Ecliptic* rink in the winter. Among other public amenities is a warming shelter for the skating rink within Maya Lin's *Ecliptic*. The building also includes lower-level underground loading dock, central security, and staff parking.

INAUGURAL PROGRAMMING

Four Salvaged Boxes: Museum Design for Environmental Sustainability October 5, 2007 – June 5, 2008

Salvaged materials from the Grand Rapids Art Museum construction site form the framework for this innovative exhibition, which will inaugurate the new GRAM building with an exploration of the impact green design has on art, society, and modern life. Together, these "boxes" form a unique presentation focusing on the new Museum's sustainable elements and illustrating the evolution of the building's design. *Four Salvaged Boxes* will include renderings of the completed building, study models and sketches, and both reproductions and diagrams which map out the building's green systems. The show will also showcase new, environmentally-conscious materials used in GRAM's construction and in green design initiatives around the world.

Four Salvaged Boxes is organized and designed by wHY Architecture, and supported and circulated by GRAM. After its appearance at GRAM, the exhibition will travel to architectural and design schools and centers in 2008 – 2009 including IIT Chicago, Washington University St. Louis and additional venues.

Modern and Contemporary Art from the Netherlands: The ABN AMRO Collection October 5, 2007 – January 5, 2008

Beginning with a Golden Age of painting during the 17th century, The Netherlands has been an important center for the arts, and for painting in particular. In the modern era Vincent Van Gogh and Piet Mondrian defined counterpoint artistic traditions of expressionism and analytic abstraction – traditions that artists in The Netherlands today continue to reference in their work. Contemporary Dutch society embraces a wide range of social and personal perspectives and the arts reflect this diversity. Based on this tradition, but also imbedded in current international movements and trends, the art produced today in The Netherlands has a rich variety and quality.

Modern and Contemporary Art from The Netherlands includes thirty-five paintings, many of monumental scale, from the art collection of ABN AMRO based in Amsterdam. The exhibition explores important themes and contradictory issues in modern and

contemporary Dutch art, from subjects that recall the Dutch painting traditions of portraiture and landscape to works of pure abstraction, both rational and expressive. The exhibition features 27 artists including Karel Appel, Thomas Raat, Marlene Dumas, Jan Dibbets, Ger van Elk, René Daniëls, and Toon Verhoef.

**Another Place, Another Time: Chris Van Allsburg Drawings
October 5, 2007 – January 20, 2008**

The Grand Rapids Art Museum will debut *Another Place, Another Time: Chris Van Allsburg Drawings*, an exhibition of 77 drawings by renowned children's book author and illustrator Chris Van Allsburg. The show—which features drawings in pen and ink, charcoal, and watercolor—will be on view through January 20, 2008.

Van Allsburg is a Grand Rapids native and the recipient of multiple Caldecott Medals for his work, including the celebrated *Jumanji* and *The Polar Express*. In support of the new facility's capital campaign, the artist chose for the work in *Another Place, Another Time* to be reproduced as a limited-edition print, published by the museum.

ABOUT WHY ARCHITECTURE AND KULAPAT YANTRASAST

wHY Architecture, an architectural design and planning office, is based in Los Angeles. The two founding partners, Yo Hakomori and Kulapat Yantrasast, pursue design solutions to create architecture of tranquility and simplicity with keen attention and sensitivity to materials and detail.

Kulapat, the principal on this project, has particular expertise in museum design and experience working on cultural facilities around the world. A native of Thailand, he studied in Japan where he received his Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Architecture from the University of Tokyo. In Japan he worked with world-renowned Pritzker Prize laureate architect, Tadao Ando, with whom he remains closely associated. He has served as project architect on many major museums and buildings in the U.S. and abroad. In addition to the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, he has also worked on the ARMANI/TEATRO for Giorgio Armani in Milan, The Foundation Francois Pinault in Paris, and the Calder Museum in Philadelphia. He continues his professional relationship with Ando through work on Tadao Ando's US projects and association in teaching at University of California, Berkeley, where Ando was appointed Regents Professor.

Current wHY Architecture projects include the Grand Rapids Art Museum; gallery designs and reinstallations for the Art Institute of Chicago; the Social and Public Art Resource Center in Venice, California; the Cesar Chavez Memorial on the campus of San Jose State University; the Art Bridge crossing the L.A. River in North Hollywood, California; as well as several private residential and commercial projects. wHY is also collaborating with Tadao Ando on several major public and private projects including the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

ABOUT GRAND RAPIDS ART MUSEUM The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum is to provide a gathering place where people of all ages and backgrounds can enrich their lives through interaction with works of art in a thought-provoking and creative way. Founded in 1910 as the Grand Rapid Art Association, the Grand Rapids Art Museum's initial collection was assembled and relocated to a Greek Revival residence in 1924 and renamed the Grand Rapids Art Museum. In 1981 the Museum moved into its most recent location in a historic, Beaux-Arts style Federal Building. Construction of the new, LEED-certified GRAM building began in September 2004.

The \$75 million capital campaign to build the new Grand Rapids Art Museum was supported by a \$20 million lead gift from the Wege Foundation, organized by long-time cultural philanthropist and environmental advocate Peter M. Wege. Twelve additional donors made gifts of \$1 million or more, establishing a collaboration of private philanthropy unprecedented in Grand Rapids for a single cultural project. In the first year of the campaign, The Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation, Jay and Betty Van Andel Foundation, Steelcase Foundation, Fred and Lena Meijer, and Daniel and Pamella DeVos Foundation accounted for \$20 million in gifts.

GRAM's collection consists of 5,000 works of art, of which more than half are works on paper. The strength of the painting collection is modern art, which includes Richard Diebenkorn's major early work *Ingleside*, 1963. Home to Steelcase, Herman Miller, and Hayworth, Grand Rapids' legacy as a leading center for design and manufacturing is reflected in the museum's growing collection of design and modern craft. GRAM's collection also includes the work of leading artists from the Michigan and Great Lakes area.

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