



CONTACT

Cia Segerlind
Grand Rapids Art Museum
616-831-2917
csegerlind@artmuseumgr.org

A NEW CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AT GRAM

D. Neil Bremer Assumes Position of Chief Operating Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, June 11, 2015 – Dana Friis-Hansen, Director & CEO of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) announced the appointment today of D. Neil Bremer as Chief Operating Officer. Through the course of an extensive search—in consultation with Timothy Chester and Associates—GRAM selected Bremer, who currently serves as Executive Director of the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo. Bremer’s transition to GRAM will begin in June, and he will assume the full-time responsibilities of his position in July.

"I'm very excited to welcome Neil to GRAM's management team," said Dana Friis-Hansen, GRAM Director & CEO. "He brings with him an impressive record as an arts administrator and consultant with skills in museum operations, financial administration, facilities management, business development, strategic planning, and staff and volunteer engagement, as well as a unique depth in visitor services with major museums throughout the United States."

Bremer is a Michigan native with more than thirty years of nonprofit and for-profit arts experience. He returned to Michigan in 2010 after spending 30 years in Chicago. Bremer’s museum career began in 1981 at The Art Institute of Chicago, where over the course of fifteen years he began the country’s first Visitor Services department at a major art museum focused on the visitor experience and improving accessibility for audiences. At the Art Institute, Bremer managed operations for some of the country’s largest special exhibitions, including *Claude Monet: 1840-1926*, the most complete retrospective of the artist’s work in the world. He went on to serve as Executive Director of the Elmhurst Art Museum from 1999 through 2009, where he was responsible for all planning and operations and led board efforts to achieve a \$10 million campaign to restore McCormick House, expand museum facilities, and strengthen their endowment.

"GRAM is focused on opportunities to strategically serve our broad community as an innovative arts organization," commented Jane Boyles Meilner, GRAM Board of Trustees President. "Neil Bremer is a seasoned and enthusiastic leader who will bring great talent to GRAM. I look forward to welcoming him to our team."

As a museum and nonprofit management consultant since 1990, he has advised organizations such as the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on concept development, marketing, visitor systems, management structures, and architectural planning. He is nationally known as an expert in helping museums improve their ability to make connections with their audiences.

“GRAM’s vision and strategic plan are on the leading edge of how all arts organizations must rethink themselves for the 21st century,” Bremer noted. “This Museum’s leadership knows it hasn’t finished its job if they merely hang art on the wall and wait for people to come in the door. GRAM knows that they have a key role to play in the expanding success of Grand Rapids. I have enjoyed working with many of the cultural and civic organizations in Kalamazoo, and I look forward to playing a new role with new partners in Grand Rapids.”

Bremer’s experience in the arts goes well beyond the just the visual. He has been active as an actor and musician on many stages across the Midwest. He received his undergraduate degree from Western Michigan University in 1978 with a major in Theatre, concentrations in Performance and Directing, and a minor in Dance and completed graduate work at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago’s Master of Arts program in Arts Administration.

#

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

Focusing on art, design, and creativity, GRAM provides diverse platforms for experiences, ideas, and dialogue that enrich the human spirit and build practical learning skills. Through dynamic exhibitions, collections, learning initiatives, and community collaborations, GRAM increasingly serves as a cultural beacon and civic anchor. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED® Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,000 works on paper. Embracing the city’s legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

For GRAM's hours and admission fees, visit artmuseumgr.org or call 616-831-1000.

Current Exhibitions:

T. J. Wilcox: In the Air

May 17 through August 30, 2015

Artist T. J. Wilcox's *In the Air* is a dazzling panoramic film installation, presenting viewers with a captivating, multidirectional, bird's-eye view of the New York City skyline. The film is projected on a circular screen that is over 7 feet high and 35 feet in diameter, creating a truly mesmerizing experience for GRAM visitors that immerses them within an environment that bends time, space, history, and memory. *The New York Times* has given rave reviews for *In the Air*, saying that, "the majesty and clarity of this wraparound vista is stunning. The city looks older, almost timeless, without the details of street traffic and storefronts."

Surroundings: Yun-Fei Ji and Susanna Heller

May 17 through August 30, 2015

Both Yun-Fei Ji and Susanna Heller create distinctive two-dimensional works in panoramic formats. Ji is best known for his drawings, which he executes in Chinese watercolor ink on traditional paper. Heller has long been inspired by her walks through the metropolis in creating her paintings, which are long panels that incorporate a variety of perspectives of bridges, skyscrapers, tunnels, and scaffolding. Serving as a complement to *T. J. Wilcox: In the Air*, this two-person exhibition draws strong contrasts and comparisons between these two artists' graphic

formats and particular objectives and those of T. J. Wilcox's all-encompassing cinematic view of Manhattan.

Henri Rivière's Paris Lithographs

May 17 through August 30, 2015

Henri Rivière was a well known artist and printmaker associated with the Le Chat Noir cabaret circle of artists in Montmartre, an area of Paris where Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec also worked. This exhibition showcases GRAM's collection of lithographs by Rivière, which features a series of views in and around Paris that suggest the romantic associations of the city at the turn of the 20th century. The exhibition reflects Rivière's significant interest in Japanese prints, as his works' striking diagonal compositions and focus on similar scenes at various times of day—and in different weather—recall techniques of Japanese woodblock printmakers.

Menagerie

Spring and Summer 2015

Menagerie features many works that are inspired by the animal kingdom, by artists who have depicted fauna through the ages. This diverse, animal-themed exhibition of paintings, drawings, prints, and sculpture from GRAM's permanent collection and select loaned works will feature artists from the 18th through 21st centuries, including Mathias Alten, John James Audubon, Deborah Butterfield, Andy Warhol, and many others.

Art of the Lived Experiment

April 10 through July 31, 2015

Art of the Lived Experiment addresses the idea that art and life are in a state of continual change and uncertainty. The exhibition's starting point is the practice of alchemy, taking its magical, transformative, and experimental associations as a template for considering work by a range of international contemporary artists. GRAM is one of three Grand Rapids venues—along with Kendall College of Art and Design and the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts (UICA)—to present the exhibition, which coincides with the DisArt Festival, whose mission is to change perceptions about disability.

GRAM Selects ArtPrize 2014: Encore

Now through October 11, 2015

During ArtPrize 2014, GRAM's curatorial team explored the entries on view throughout the city and chose works with strong resonances to particular works in the Museum's collection. This year's selection features the work of 11 artists in photography, installation, print, film, drawing, and sculpture. *GRAM Selects ArtPrize 2014: Encore* showcases these works throughout the Museum beside works in GRAM's permanent collection, encouraging guests to explore connections between them. This project underscores the significance of Grand Rapids' annual ArtPrize event by presenting selected highlights from ArtPrize on a year-round basis. The chosen works will rotate on and off view with the Museum's permanent collection through ArtPrize 2015.