GRAM TO RECEIVE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS GRANT

Award is among 1,023 made nationally

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GRAND RAPIDS, MI, May 6, 2015 – Through its grant-making to thousands of nonprofits each year, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) promotes opportunities for people in communities across America to experience the arts and exercise their creativity.

In the second major grant announcement of fiscal year 2015, the NEA will make a $15,000 award to the Grand Rapids Art Museum to support its arts and literacy program, Language Artists: Creature Connections. The NEA will make 1,023 awards totaling $74.3 million nationwide in this funding round.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, “The NEA is committed to advancing learning, fueling creativity, and celebrating the arts in cities and towns across the United States. Funding these new projects like the one from the Grand Rapids Art Museum represents an investment in both local communities and our nation’s creative vitality.”

Language Artists is a strategic partnership with Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) and six other area school districts. This nationally recognized arts and literacy program combines the powerful role of art with a year-long unit of study that promotes student achievement and cultural citizenship through active learning and direct engagement with the Art Museum’s collections, exhibitions, docents, and staff. Through an enhanced curriculum, unique classroom activities, engaging museum experiences, relevant test preparation, and rigorous visual and language arts lessons, students develop strong writing skills, along with creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

GRAM serves 100% of GRPS third grade students, of which approximately 87% come from low-income households. Additionally, the program serves Wyoming Public Schools and Godfrey-Lee Public Schools, both of which are historically underserved populations.

"Language Artists is one of the most remarkable learning experiences inside and outside the classroom weaving together art and literacy,” shared Teresa Weatherall Neal, GRPS Superintendent. “We have actually used Language Artists as a model for how we should transform our field trip experiences to ensure more meaningful teaching and learning. Hats off and thank you to our friends at GRAM for securing the NEA grant and ensuring that this program will continue in the future.”

Language Artists makes a lasting impact on students, helping to build a foundation of the literacy skills necessary to reach graduation, and succeed in a global economy.
“Since the program’s inception in 2010, we have witnessed thousands of students becoming more engaged in their learning,” explained Jon Carfagno, GRAM Director of Learning and Audience Engagement. “Language Artists empowers students to make a strong connection to their local art museum, while building essential literacy skills. We are so grateful for the many collaborators who continue to work with us as the program grows throughout Kent County.”

The program has grown significantly over the past half-decade, since first reaching 1,300 students from a single school district in 2010. Today, GRAM partners with seven school districts, serving 2,351 during the 2014-15 school year, an increase of nearly 10% over the prior year. In light of the program’s success, GRPS has incorporated Language Artists into its language arts curriculum through 2018.

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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.

Upcoming Exhibitions

**T. J. Wilcox: In the Air**
May 17 through August 30, 2015
Artist T. J. Wilcox's *In the Air* s 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

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Grand Rapids Art Museum
101 Monroe Center NW Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616.831.1000 artmuseumgr.org
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.

**Museum Hours:**
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 10am-5pm  
Thursday: 10am-9pm  
Sunday: 12pm-5pm  
Closed Mondays

**Museum Admission:**
GRAM Members - Free  
Adults - $8.00  
Senior Adults & College Students (w/ID) - $7.00  
Youth (ages 6-17) - $5.00  
Children under 6 - Free