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***Side by Side: Mathias Alten and Norman Chamberlain* exhibition opens April 16 in the Grand Rapids Art Museum's Porter Gallery**

Opening Night Reception In Museum Lobby and East Court Begins at 5:30pm

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., April 9, 2010 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM), a leading cultural destination, presents the work of Mathias Alten and Norman Chamberlain in the Porter Gallery. In August 1910 thirty-nine year old Mathias J. Alten (1871-1938), already well established as an artist in Michigan, traveled to Europe with his family. Accompanying them was Alten's student Norman Stiles Chamberlain (1887-1961), a twenty-three year-old western Michigan painter just beginning his career. This would be the first of many occasions the two sketched and painted together over the next twenty-four years. The paintings in this small and selective exhibition, shown in pairs, provide the opportunity to compare Alten and Chamberlain's styles and techniques in paintings that depict the same or similar subjects.

Side By Side: Mathias Alten and Norman Chamberlain is on view April 16 through May 30, 2010. An opening night reception is scheduled for Friday, April 16 at 5:30 pm in the Museum Lobby and East Court and will coincide with regular programming featuring music, cash bar and dinner options. Admission to the museum after 5:00 pm is \$5.

On Sunday, May 23 at 2:00pm the film *Mathias J. Alten: A Personal Portrait* (2007, 20 min.) will be shown in the Cook Auditorium with a presentation afterward by Stephen Hoffius titled "Side By Side: Mathias Alten and Norman Chamberlain."

The Porter Gallery, located on the main level of the Art Museum, features works from regional artists in the permanent collection, and includes at least two exhibitions each year of new work.

About the artists

During their first trip together in 1910, Mathias Alten and Norman Chamberlain traveled to England, Belgium, France, Switzerland and Germany with a more lengthy stay in the Netherlands. In the latter, they visited the coastal towns of Scheveningen and Katwijk and the artists' colony in Volendam. The two artists returned to Michigan in 1911, and before the end of the year each held exhibitions in Grand Rapids, showing the canvases they had completed in Europe. Alten's paintings were displayed at the St. Cecelia Building, sponsored by the Grand Rapids Art Association, and Chamberlain's in the Grand Rapids Press building. Sixteen years younger than his mentor, Chamberlain embraced the increasingly popular new styles of painting. Alten, on the other hand, painted in a traditional style throughout his life. Alten acknowledged the value of modern artists: "I know they will eventually accomplish much for the future of art," he claimed in 1929, though he admitted, "I had rather watch them than attempt to be one of them." To his credit, Alten's successful mentoring of his student allowed Chamberlain to make his own unique contribution to American art.

Images available upon request.

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) celebrates 100 years of art, legacy and vision with its Centennial Year in 2010. 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. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the new 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 over 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.

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