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***The Legacy of Armand Merizon* exhibition opens March 12 in the Grand Rapids Art Museum's Porter Gallery**

Opening Night Reception in East Court at 6:00 pm followed by a Film on the Artist at 7:00 pm in the Cook Auditorium

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., March 4, 2010 – The Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM), a leading cultural destination, presents the work of Armand Merizon. The exhibition consists of over twenty of Merizon's works of art that span his long career, from 1945 to 2010. Included are paintings and drawings from the collections of the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Calvin College, Mercury Head Gallery and local private collectors.

The Legacy of Armand Merizon is on view March 12 through April 11, 2010. An opening night reception is scheduled for Friday, March 12 at 6:00 pm in the Porter Gallery and East Court and will coincide with regular programming featuring music, cash bar and dinner options. A film will follow at 7:00 pm in the Cook Auditorium. Admission to the museum after 5:00 pm is \$5.

The film, *Armand*, was written and produced in 2005 by Jennifer Dornbush and Muriel Zandstra and tells the story of Armand Merizon. Born in Michigan in 1920, Merizon spent his entire life searching for the beautiful and trying to capture his interpretation of "beauty is truth." Merizon's story is also a story of perseverance as he has battled macular degeneration and rheumatoid arthritis for the past 25 years. In spite of that, the film shows Merizon dedicated to painting everyday and quotes him saying, "I will paint until my nose touches the canvas." The film is 56 minutes long and will have an encore viewing at 1:00 pm on Saturday, March 13 in the Cook Auditorium.

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 artist

Armand Merizon was inspired again and again by the beauty of nature. Mankind's relationship to nature has also been a recurring theme in his work. His initial inspiration was Lake Michigan, and he explored its many moods in his paintings. But he was not only a "realist" painter, for he made many abstract and semi-abstract works later in his career. With a European Fellowship granted by the Keeler Foundation in 1960, Merizon toured abroad and was thrilled by the Spanish countryside, though he considered the Michigan landscape equally beautiful. He continually absorbed the world around him, stating: "I love the sky, the earth, the water, especially the water...water is the closest thing to music." A devotee of classical music, he felt it was the perfect analogy for pure, abstract visual form because he "hears" his compositions before he paints them.

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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