



## **INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION OFFERS WORLD'S LARGEST ARTPRIZE**

*Public invited to use text votes, decide winners*

Grand Rapids, Mich. – April 23, 2009 – ArtPrize invites artists of all kinds from around the world to participate in an unprecedented competition that will award nearly one-half million dollars to prize winners, including \$250,000 to the artist who receives the most public votes.

Details of ArtPrize, which will run from Sept. 23 through Oct. 10, were announced today from the competition's host city of Grand Rapids, Mich. ArtPrize will have no formal jury, curator or judge. The public will decide who wins the prizes by voting, using mobile devices and the web.

"It's time to reboot the conversation between artists and the public. ArtPrize will be a celebration of art, design, and innovation that will bring artists and the public together like never before," said ArtPrize creator Rick DeVos.

The city of Grand Rapids will become art gallery. ArtPrize art works and performances, professional and amateur, will be exhibited at hundreds of venues, all within a three-square mile area in Grand Rapids' downtown riverfront district. The city has offered up parks and bridges for outdoor venue displays. Scores of businesses will convert lobbies and public space for displays.

"Our family sees ArtPrize as a new and innovative way to engage and support the arts for the future," said Betsy DeVos. The Dick & Betsy DeVos Family Foundation is underwriting ArtPrize. "Dick and I share our son's vision for encouraging everyone to explore the arts in a truly democratic way."

Grand Rapids, a city of about 200,000 amidst a metropolis of more than a million people, has an impressive cultural urban core and a rich history of supporting public art. It is home to Alexander Calder's "La Grand Vitesse," the first community sculpture project funded through the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as major works by Mark di Suvero, Robert Morris and Maya Lin.

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“It is increasingly important to find new ways to engage people, especially young people, in the arts,” said Michael Kaiser, president of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. “ArtPrize is a dynamic and creative way to use technology to engage people of all ages.”

ArtPrize is expected to draw thousands of entries, and art enthusiasts from across the globe are expected to attend. The ArtPrize team directly communicated with about 10,000 artists, design schools, art schools, museums and galleries worldwide as part of today’s launch.

“This is a bit of an art revolution,” said Jeff Speck, former director of design for the National Endowment for the Arts and author of *Suburban Nation*. “It will be exciting to see a city use its downtown area as an art gallery to share with the world.”

“I’m astounded by the potential for social networking, community involvement, and the expanded view of the role of art,” said Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell. “ArtPrize will excite the world, and the world will look at our city differently because of it.”

Grand Rapids is internationally recognized as home of Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, which showcases one of the world’s foremost collections of modern and contemporary sculptures, including pieces from well-known artists such as Moore, Oldenberg, Goldsworthy, Plensa and many more. In 2006, the city hosted a large-scale exhibit by Tom Otterness, considered one of the premier public artists attracted more than 750,000 visitors. The city recently built and opened the world’s first LEED gold certified art museum.

For more information about ArtPrize, go to [artprize.org](http://artprize.org).