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CROWD OF 32,000 GATHERED TO VIEW THE LAUNCH OF ART ON THEMART, LARGEST DIGITAL ART PROJECTION IN THE WORLD

Permanent Digital Art Projection Now on View Five Days a Week, Two Hours a Night

Chicago— On September 29, **theMART**, with the City of Chicago, welcomed the public to experience *Art on theMART*, the largest permanent digital art projection in the world, for the first time. A crowd of over 32,000 people filled Wacker Dr. to view the inaugural projection. The projection program, featuring digital artwork by contemporary artists Diana Thater, Zheng Chongbin, Jan Tichy and Jason Salavon, began shortly after dusk and ran for 34 minutes—culminating in a one-minute pyrotechnic display. This expansive permanent piece of public art continues Chicago’s legacy of providing both residents and visitors with exceptional art that is both free and accessible to all.

“Art on theMART is a visionary project that brings Chicago’s legacy of public art and iconic architecture into the future,” said **Mayor Rahm Emanuel**. “More than 32,000 people came out to witness history at tonight’s launch event, as one of Chicago’s most prominent buildings lit up with the largest curated art projection in the world. I want to thank Vornado, theMART, Terra Foundation for American Art, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and the many others who took part in helping reshape the way people interact with the Chicago River,” he added.

Wacker Dr. was closed to traffic while crowds stood shoulder-to-shoulder waiting for the inaugural projection. Food trucks from 5411 Empenadas, Anna’s Sweets, Happy Lobster, Harold’s Chicken, HotDog Fiend, La Cocinita and Piko Street Kitchen lined the street, while DJ Scottie McNiece performed live for the crowd.

“TheMART and Vornado Realty Trust are thrilled with the success of the inauguration of *Art on TheMART*, a gift to the people of Chicago, who widely embraced this monumental new platform for public art,” said *Art on theMART* Executive Director **Cynthia Noble**. “We are proud of the works by the initial risk-taking artists—Diana Thater, Zheng Chongbin, Jason Salavon and Jan Tichy—and look forward to welcoming a range of perspectives over the next thirty years.” She added, “We thank the City of Chicago, especially Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Commissioner Mark Kelly, 42nd Ward Alderman Brendan Reilly and our launch partners Obscura Digital and the Terra Foundation for American Art.”

Following the launch event, the projections will now be displayed for two hours a night, five days a week (Wednesday – Sunday), for ten months of the year (March – December). Projections will be visible to the public from Wacker Dr. and along the Chicago Riverwalk. The program content will rotate every season, and will be selected with the assistance and expertise of the Curatorial Advisory Board. The City of Chicago and theMART will work in partnership to manage and curate the projected artwork over the course of a 30-year agreement. Privately funded by Vornado Realty Trust, owner of theMart, Art on theMART marks the first time a projection of its size and scope will be completely dedicated to digital art with no branding, sponsorship credits or messaging.

Artists for the inaugural program of Art on theMART were selected by theMart in consultation with a Curatorial Advisory Board shaped by theMart and the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Two of the selections were made in partnership with the Terra Foundation for American Art as part of *Art Design Chicago*, a year-long celebration of Chicago’s art and design legacy.

About theMART

theMART (formerly The Merchandise Mart), located in the center of the sought-after River North submarket, is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in culture, art, business, fashion, media and more. As the largest privately held commercial building in the United States, it is one of the world’s leading commercial buildings, wholesale design centers and the preeminent international business location in Chicago. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, theMART spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day and nearly 10 million people annually. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and showrooms, theMART serves as a business hub for interior designers, architects, contractors, business owners and buyers, and recently has become home to Chicago’s most creative and technologically innovative companies including Motorola Mobility, 1871, Yelp, PayPal and MATTER, as well as Fortune 500 companies Conagra, Allstate, Kellogg, Beam Suntory, Grainger and Caterpillar.

About Art Design Chicago

Art Design Chicago is a spirited celebration of the unique and vital role Chicago plays as America's crossroads of creativity and commerce. Initiated by the Terra Foundation for American Art, this citywide partnership of more than 75 cultural organizations explores Chicago's art and design legacy and continued impact with more than 30 exhibitions, hundreds of events, as well as the creation of several scholarly publications and a four-part television series presented throughout 2018. Support for Art Design Chicago is provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art and Presenting Partner, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. Additional funding for the initiative is provided by Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation. The Chicago Community Trust, Leo Burnett, Polk Bros. Foundation, and EXPO CHICAGO are providing in-kind support. www.ArtDesignChicago.org

About The Chicago Riverwalk

The Chicago Riverwalk is managed by the Chicago Department of Fleet and Facility Management with programming support from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Access to the space is free and open to the public daily from 6 a.m. – 11 p.m. For more information about the Chicago Riverwalk and a complete schedule of events, visit chicagoriverwalk.us — and join the conversation on social media using #ChiRiverwalk.

About Obscura

Obscura Digital, founded in 2000, is a San Francisco-based creative studio that combines next level technology with awe-inspiring artistry to transform spaces into experiences, locations into destinations, and moments into memories. Obscura works with visionary, global change-making clients to create one-of-a-kind immersive multimedia experiences that reinvent physical space and inspire audiences. They provide both cutting edge technological development and content creation to develop light- and video-based augmented architectural integrations, large-scale projection mapping, and interactive media interfaces.