

## **Mercantile Bank Remakes Vacant Downtown Building to Feature Seven Artist Creations for ArtPrize**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Aug. 29, 2011 -- Mercantile Bank Corporation (NASDAQ: MBWM) announced today that it has begun preparing a building to host seven artists and their unique creations during ArtPrize 2011, an open art competition that asks the public to vote and decide the winner of the world's largest art prize, \$250,000, using mobile devices and the Internet. The artists' work will be installed in Mercantile's pop-up art gallery located at the vacant 48 W. Fulton building in the center of downtown Grand Rapids, Mich.

The featured artists and their respective works are:

- Mary Hood's "Datum," is a five-minute video created from original prints and etchings that have been scanned into a computer and animated. The video has no sound but is compelling to watch. "Datum" is a visual reference to the origin of silence, and to allowing oneself to become engaged in the work and disengaged, momentarily, in the activities of the outside world.
- Brent Saulic, Nick Tilma and Jordan Verburg's work, "Wind out of Light", features a continuously flowing movement of colorful light forms. This is accomplished by refracting projected light through a heat-formed piece of clear plastic. When propelled by box fans, which rotate the acrylic, the effect of a moving, wind-like light form is generated.
- Hilary Harp's installation features an electromechanical sculpture that generates a continuously changing abstract video display. The machine creates an immersive psychedelic atmosphere, inviting viewers on a meandering journey through a luminous field. The sculpture exists at the juncture between the physical and the ephemeral, using technical means to produce shifting abstract phenomena of light and form.
- Filippo Tagliati's "The River Project" explores the space in-between reality, perception and illusion. He created a ten-minute video following the Grand River in Michigan. Through this video, he will present activities, places and anything linked to the river with a particular attention to the Grand Rapids area. The video will be a unique visual experience and a reconfiguration of a classic landmark in the regional landscape.
- Presented as a narrative film, Terry Chatkupt's "Transferase" is experimental in structure, juxtaposing a dynamic mix of cinematic techniques often mobilized in the thriller and dark comedy genres. This process allows Chatkupt's film to adhere to the story's surreal nature while simultaneously destabilizing the viewer, speaking to the anxiety and ecology of fear that have positioned Los Angeles historically and theoretically.
- The unique installation by Francie Hester and Lisa Hill honors the life and work of gifted writers Diane Granat Yalowitz and Brendan Ogg, both of whom lost their lives to brain cancer. The project originated in a sense of loss, but the process of creating this piece embodied and reflected the healing process. The piece consists of a year's effort of wrapping Diane's words around paperclips and knitting together panels of yarn that surround the woven words of Brendan's poetry.
- Michael McCafrey's piece features a multi-portrait photographic work on the last of the great Kodachrome Color Film. Crossing the United States, McCafrey approached strangers and recruited them for their portraits, capturing one photograph per person and one portrait per frame, resulting in 36 portraits per roll. He shot 35 rolls in this manner, gathering a total of 1,260 portraits. Viewed from afar, the film sculpture appears to be a floating modern color abstract, but when approached transforms from the whole into the

sum of the 1,260 individual portraits. The portraits will also be time lapse-projected onto a wall creating an intimate viewing experience of each portrait.

"We are excited to be part of the world's largest art competition," said Michelle Shangraw, Senior Vice President and Retail Banking Director. "Mercantile Bank has a long tradition of community involvement and supporting the arts so we are thrilled to offer our venue for the artists to exhibit their work."

In addition to the contributing artists, Mercantile Bank has partnered with the West Michigan Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure to create an exhibit that will also be featured at its venue. Visitors, who are either cancer survivors or had a family member or friend with breast cancer, will have the opportunity to put their initials on a sticker and then place it within the outline of Komen's logo. The goal will be to have a completed ribbon by the end of ArtPrize, ultimately promoting awareness of finding a cure for breast cancer and highlighting the individuals who are bravely fighting the disease.

In the Heartside district, the 48 West Fulton venue is located on Fulton in between Commerce Ave. and Ionia Ave. SW., and offers an expansive display of windows in the front of the building. For more information about 48 West Fulton and the artists, visit <http://www.artprize.org/venues/public-profile/308>.

Billed as a "radically open competition, open to any artist in the world who can find space," the third annual ArtPrize will feature the work of more than 1,500 artists in more than 150 venues throughout downtown Grand Rapids, Mich. There is no formal jury, curator or judge; instead, during the Sept. 21-Oct. 9, 2011 event, the public will vote for its favorite work — and first prize is \$250,000. Prizes will be awarded to the top 10 vote-getters, with second place worth \$100,000 and third place, \$50,000.

#### **About ArtPrize**

ArtPrize is a radically open public art competition that has no formal jury, curator or judge, and asks the public to vote and decide the winners using mobile devices and the Internet. In ArtPrize 2010, more than 1,700 artists from 44 states and 21 countries participated in a competition of unprecedented scale that awarded nearly \$500,000 to the prize winners. More than 460,000 votes were cast during the 19-day event. For more information about ArtPrize, visit [www.artprize.org](http://www.artprize.org).

#### **About Mercantile Bank Corporation**

Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Mercantile Bank Corporation is the bank holding company for Mercantile Bank of Michigan. Founded in 1997 to provide banking services to businesses, individuals, and governmental units, the Bank differentiates itself on the basis of service quality and its banking staff expertise. Mercantile has seven full-service banking offices in Grand Rapids, Holland and Lansing, Michigan. Mercantile Bank Corporation's common stock is listed on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the symbol "MBWM."