



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MCFTA OFFERING BUS TOUR TO GRAND RAPIDS "ARTPRIZE"**

**A.B. Dow Museum School Faculty Members Accepted into Competition**

MIDLAND, MI – Three faculty members of the Alden B. Dow Museum School have each secured venues to display their work in the ArtPrize competition in **Grand Rapids, Michigan**: Todd Burroughs of Berkley, Michigan, Armin Mersmann of Midland, and Valerie Allen who is collaborating with retired Midland Symphony Orchestra harpist, Jackie Henninger, also of Midland.

ArtPrize, which will run from **Sept. 23 through Oct. 10** in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has invited artists 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. ArtPrize has no formal jury, curator or judge. The public will be deciding who will win the prizes by voting, using mobile devices and the web.

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 are converting lobbies and public space for displays. ArtPrize is underwritten by The Dick & Betsy DeVos Family Foundation. For more information, visit [www.artprize.org](http://www.artprize.org).

Alden B. Dow Museum is chartering a bus for an all-day trip to Grand Rapids called "**Destination: ArtPrize**" on **Monday, September 28**; departure time is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. from Midland Center for the Arts, 1801 W. St. Andrews Road, Midland. Tickets and registration cost \$40 per person for the general public and \$30 for Museum members. Registration must be received by September 12, 2009. For tickets and more information, contact the Ticket Office at 800-523-7649 or visit online at [www.mcfta.org](http://www.mcfta.org)

The Alden B. Dow Museum School at Midland Center for the Arts offers a broad range of classes at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of experience. Art classes are offered for all ages using a variety of media: ceramics, 2-D, 3-D, mixed media, photography and more; science topics are explored in a fun, camp-like environment

**The Artists:**

**Valerie Allen**, Midland, MI – Location of Grand Rapids venue: **Amway Grand Plaza Hotel** (with Jackie Henninger)

Valerie Allen received her BFA from University of Cincinnati and continued graduate studies at Central Michigan University. She has served on faculty at Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, Delta College,

and Northwood University. She is a Working Artist for NY based Golden Artist Colors. Exhibits include: American Drawing, Santa Fe, NM; 18th National Collage Society; Award winner-Greater Michigan 2007; CMU Invitational 2009 and her work is currently in the Michigan Governor's Residence in Lansing.

**Todd Burroughs**, Berkley, MI – Location of Grand Rapids venue: **Fountain Street Church**

Todd's studies have included classical painting technique at The Atelier Alternative in Chicago. In 2000, he earned a B.A. cum laude in Fine Art and Historic Preservation from Eastern Michigan University. He currently works as an art conservator to private collections in the Detroit area. He has been exhibited nationally in both juried and one-man shows. He has been an instructor at Midland Center for the Arts for seven years, teaching drawing and stained-glass.

**Jackie Henninger**, Midland, MI – Location of Grand Rapids venue: **Amway Grand Plaza Hotel** (with Valerie Allen)

Jackie began the study of the harp at age 9. She is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and Boston University. She taught harp and piano at Stephens College in Missouri and she directed the nation's largest public school harp program in Richmond, Virginia while she was principal harpist with the Richmond Symphony. Jackie was a free-lance harpist and private teacher in Toronto, Canada and Ann Arbor, Michigan before moving to Midland where she became the principal harpist with the Midland Symphony Orchestra.

**Armin Mersmann**, Midland, MI – Location of Grand Rapids venue: **West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology**

Armin has been teaching art for 25 years at a number of institutions such as The American Academy of Art in Chicago, The Evanston Art Center, Colorado Academy of Art and Midland Center for the Arts. He is currently the manager of the museum school at the Alden B. Dow Museum of Science & Art in Midland, Michigan. Armin's work has been shown extensively at the regional, national and international level. Recent 2009 events include "Crossroads"- a two-person exhibit with his wife, artist Valerie Allen, at Northwood Gallery in Midland and the 2009 Governor's Residence Collection in Lansing, Michigan.

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan incorporating six groups: Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, MATRIX:MIDLAND, Midland County Historical Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, Music Society and Theatre Guild. Activities at Midland Center for the Arts are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at [www.mcfta.org](http://www.mcfta.org).

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