

For Immediate Release



Art Chicago and NEXT Announce NEW Combined Floor Layout

Chicago, January 25, 2011 - MMPI is excited to announce that the 2011 editions of **Art Chicago** and **NEXT** will be jointly produced on the 12th floor of the **Merchandise Mart**. While each art fair will maintain its own vibrant and unique vision, the move will allow visitors to experience the best of both - emerging and established contemporary art on one floor. "This decision will improve the exhibitor and attendee experience and will address the evolving need for a more cohesive, visitor-friendly experience," notes Paul Morris, Vice President of MMPI Art Shows and co-founder of The Armory Show.

The new layout will locate **Art Chicago** and **NEXT** on the 12th floor, giving visitors the opportunity to move freely between more established artist's work on view in **Art Chicago** booths and more emerging artists presented by **NEXT** dealers.

For the third consecutive year, **First Focus**, the Opening Preview Party hosted by the Women's Board of the **Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago**, with proceeds benefiting the Education Department at the MCA, will kick off the fairs. This fundraising event offers exclusive access to the fair as well as the opportunity to mingle with the leading dealers and artists, attend artist book signings, enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres before the official opening preview. With the concentration of **Art Chicago** and **NEXT** on the 12th Floor, **First Focus** ticket buyers will be able to navigate and experience both fairs with greater ease, allowing for improved access during this private preview.

"The focused concentration of **Art Chicago** will combine with the momentum of **NEXT** to maximize all activity and events on one floor. This move of the fairs to one floor allows our audience to see the depth of material that each fair has to offer with greater ease and immediacy" notes Morris.

The membership of the **Chicago Art Dealers Association (CADA)** welcomes this consolidation. CADA's President, **Catherine Edelman**, said "the combination of Art Chicago and NEXT on one floor will definitely improve a collector's experience of both fairs. This ease of navigation will

benefit both the dealers, artists and interested buyers, creating a more focused experience for all.”

Another advantage of showcasing both fairs on one combined floor will highlight the unique programming that both fairs have offered to attendees over the years. **NEXT’s** venue for critical discourse, the **Talk Shop**, will relocate to the south side of the 12th floor and host the third annual **CONVERGE: Contemporary Curators Forum** panel series. The Talk Shop will also serve as the venue for the discussions previously presented at the Art Chicago **Art Spot** as part of **Art Chicago Speaks**. All conference and panel programming across both fairs will now be presented in one, centralized location on the 12th floor, which will allow visitors to better plan their itineraries and maximize their exposure to the key educational components of both fairs.

The combination of both fairs on the 12th floor further supports a greater synergy of events and programming with a concentration of the special exhibitions that were formerly split between the two floors. **New Insight**, a curated exhibition of work by students from the country’s most influential MFA programs, juried by Suzanne Ghez, Director of **The Renaissance Society**, will now be presented on the 12th floor, as will **NEXT Projects**, a platform for large scale installations, performances, and sculpture by **NEXT** artists on view in an open, contemplative setting unencumbered by the traditional booth format. Other floor wide exhibitions and focus sections unique to each fair are in development for 2011. Past features have included *Salute to Realism*, *Survey America*, and *Perspective Texas* at Art Chicago and *The Spanish Edge* and *Goffo* at **NEXT**. Concentrating these programmed spaces and exhibitions on one show floor will further support the participating galleries and allow audiences to enjoy a more integrated viewing experience.

Art Chicago and NEXT 2011 will take place April 29 - May 2, with the Opening Preview on April 28. Art Chicago and NEXT are the centerpieces of Artropolis, Chicago’s Celebration of Art and Culture.

MCA First Focus Opening Preview tickets are \$150 each, and can be purchased at www.mcachicago.org/firstfocus.

ABOUT THE MMPI ART GROUP

MMPI is committed to the continued development and enhancement of its participation in the art world by bringing together some of the top minds in art fairs under one partnership. The MMPI family of art fairs includes Art Chicago, Art Toronto, VOLTA, VOLTA NY, NEXT, and Art Platform—Los Angeles, launching this September.

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