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ART ON *theMART* ANNOUNCES ARTISTS FOR FIRST ITERATION OF THE LARGEST PERMANENT DIGITAL ART PROJECTION IN THE WORLD

Artists Diana Thater, Zheng Chongbin, Jason Salavon and Jan Tichy Selected for Inaugural Projection

Chicago—theMART, with the City of Chicago, today announced the selected artists for *Art on theMART*, which debuts on September 29, 2018. The first-of-its-kind for Chicago, this curated series of digital artworks will project the work of renowned artists **Diana Thater**, **Zheng Chongbin**, **Jason Salavon** and **Jan Tichy** across 2.5 acres of theMART's exterior river-façade, creating the largest permanent digital art projection in the world.

"theMART's gift to the city is a transformative public art platform distinguished by its unparalleled scale and long-term potential," said *Art on theMART* Executive Director **Cynthia Noble**. "The inaugural set of projections, with the high caliber of artists, range of subjects and technological innovation, signals limitless opportunities for artists and cultural organizations to engage audiences from Chicago and around the world."

Art on theMART selected and commissioned the work by Thater and Chongbin, while Salavon and Tichy were commissioned by the **Terra Foundation for American Art** and confirmed by an esteemed Curatorial Advisory Board comprised of several of the city's most distinguished arts and culture leaders. In addition to *Art on theMART* Executive Director **Cynthia Noble**, Curatorial Advisory Board members include Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Associate Curator **José Esparza Chong Chuy**, Art Institute of Chicago Assistant Curator **Robyn Farrell**, EXPO CHICAGO President/Director **Tony Karman**, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Film Office Director **Rich Moskal**, artist **Edra Soto** and artist **Amanda Williams**.

"The powerful selection of locally and internationally-known artists in the first iteration of *Art on theMART* continues the tradition of celebrating iconic art on the Riverwalk," said **Mayor Emanuel**. "Chicago has long been known for its innovative art, architecture and design, and we are proud to celebrate these inaugural artists as they are interwoven into the fabric of our iconic landscape."

Pioneering new media artist **Diana Thater** presents a program of digital artworks, entitled *True Life Adventures*, which explore the plight of animals living in imminent danger of poaching in Kenya. In scaling images of flora and fauna to the size of theMART's façade, Thater explores the intersection between the time-based and spatial dimensions of the moving image. Thater manipulates video projections, light, color and architecture to transport viewers around the world.

"For the *Art on theMART* opening program I've made a short art-adventure film that mixes together live footage of wild animals living in the Chyulu hills near Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya," said Thater. "The work is not narrative and linear - it is simultaneous - with multiple images inhabiting the screen

at once, all moving in different directions at the same time. The accompanying soundtrack was all recorded live in Kenya, to further the exotic but peaceful story of elephants, zebras and giraffe in their native habitat.”

International artist **Zheng Chongbin** centers his artistic practice around the pre-modern Daoist concept that the natural, inorganic world of energy and matter is living and always changing. *Chimeric Landscape* reflects this view as an expanding blot, transforming 2.5 acres of theMART simultaneously into an aperture and a void. There is a rhythm to the movement of the work, and a mysterious yet logical mode in its transformation.

As part of the Terra Foundation’s year-long initiative **Art Design Chicago**, the first iteration of *Art on theMART* will speak to the unique art and design history and legacy that is deeply rooted in the city of Chicago. **Jason Salavon’s** *Homage in Between (Chicago Art, 20th Century)* speaks to Chicago’s grand art and design histories as fluid streams of smaller events. Image archives will be used to create poetic complexes of flowing visual history. Dense, organic matrices of images will flow over the surface of theMART. Reproductions of paintings, illustrations, photographs and other visual ephemera will serve as source particulate in an evocative visual symphony of forms. Also commissioned by the Terra Foundation, **Jan Tichy’s** *Artes in Horto – Seven Gardens for Chicago* considers the work of seven local, historically consecutive artists who considered nature to be a significant influence on their practice. The natural elements from their artworks, animated and mapped on theMART’s facade, will grow into projected gardens of local art.

"On the occasion of *Art Design Chicago*, a citywide celebration of Chicago’s art and design legacy, we are thrilled to partner with *Art on theMART*," said Executive Vice President of the Terra Foundation for American Art **Amy Zinck**. "Taking inspiration from the city’s art and design history, the works of Jason Salavon and Jan Tichy will surely spur viewers to further investigate the breadth of Chicago’s artistic talent, past and present."

Obscura Digital, renowned for its large-scale architectural projection mapping on iconic buildings around the world, has partnered with theMART owner **Vornado Realty Trust** and architecture firm **Valerio Dewalt Train Associates, Inc.** to design and implement the permanent projection system to illuminate theMART with large-scale visual artistry. With 34 projectors totaling almost one million lumens projected on the building façade, this will be the largest permanent projection system in the world and will feature a new software-driven platform that allows theMART to curate an ongoing exhibition of imagery from celebrated artists, keeping the illuminations fresh, timely and engaging.

During interstitial moments between the projections by Thater, Chongbin, Salavon and Tichy, original content from Obscura’s award-winning media team and curated artists will be projected. Following the launch event, the projections will be displayed up to 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 City of Chicago and theMART will work in partnership to manage and curate the projected artwork over a 30-year agreement. Privately funded by Vornado Realty Trust, *Art on theMART* marks the first time a projection of this size and scope will be completely dedicated to art with no branding, sponsorship credits or messaging.

The launch of *Art on theMART* aligns with **EXPO ART WEEK**. In conjunction with Choose Chicago and Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, EXPO ART WEEK highlights the vast cultural opportunities that Chicago offers to collectors, dealers, art enthusiasts and visitors. For more information about EXPO ART WEEK, click [here](#).

About the Artists

About Diana Thater

Since the early 1990s, Diana Thater has created pioneering film, video and installation-based works. Her primary emphasis is on the tension between the natural environment and mediated reality, and by extension, between tamed and wild, and science and magic. Drawing on a wide variety of sources, including literature, animal behavior, mathematics, chess and sociology, her evocative and sometimes near-abstract works interact with their surroundings to create an intricate relationship between time-based and spatial dimensions. She frequently transforms the exhibition venue into a hybrid space between sculpture and architecture, using color and light alongside her installations. Born in 1962 in San Francisco, Thater studied Art History at New York University, before receiving her M.F.A. from ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena, California. Thater has been a professor in the Graduate Art Program at ArtCenter since 2004. A large solo exhibition of Thater's work is currently on view (July 4 – October 4, 2018) at the ICA Boston Watershed. In 2015, a comprehensive mid-career survey of her work, *The Sympathetic Imagination*, was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Over the past decade, Thater's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions including the The Mistake Room, Los Angeles; Aspen Art Museum; San Jose Museum of Art; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Santa Monica Museum of Art; Kunsthaus Graz, Austria; Natural History Museum, London; Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany; Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen, Germany; Dia Center for the Arts, New York; and the Secession, Vienna.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art awarded Thater an Art & Technology grant in 2018. In 2014, Thater was awarded a California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists. Other notable awards and fellowships include a 2011 Award for Artistic Innovation from the Center for Cultural Innovation, Los Angeles, as well as a James D. Phelan Award in Film and Video, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.

Work by the artist is represented in museum collections worldwide, including The Art Institute of Chicago; Carnegie Museum of Art; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art; and the Friedrich Christian Flick Collection at Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart. Also a prolific writer, educator and curator, Thater lives and works in Los Angeles.

About Zheng Chongbin

Throughout his career of three decades, Zheng Chongbin (b. 1961, Shanghai) has held the classical Chinese ink tradition and Western pictorial abstraction in productive mutual tension. Systematically exploring and deconstructing their conventions and constituents—figure, texture, space, geometry, gesture, materiality—he has developed a distinctive body of work that makes the vitality of matter directly perceptible. Central to Zheng's art is the notion of the world as always in flux, consisting of flows of matter and energy that repeatedly cohere and dissipate. Inherent in pre-modern Chinese and especially Daoist thought, this worldview enables contemporary inquiries into complex systems like climate and social behavior, artificial intelligence and quantum physics. In his video installations, Zheng represents processes of nature—from molecular and cellular to topographical and climatic—in the scale of human perception through microscopic and macroscopic imagery and accompanying soundscapes, unfolding these processes spatially and temporally.

In recent years, Zheng Chongbin has been recognized by a growing number of international curators and institutions. In 2015, Zero Movement scholar Renate Wiehager exhibited Zheng's *White Reflection* (2012) with a work by senior German artist Max Uhlig at Daimler

Contemporary in Berlin. Zheng debuted his environmental video installation, *Chimeric Landscape* (2015), at the European Cultural Centre's exhibition *Personal Structures* during the 2015 Venice Biennale. For *Wall of Skies*, Zheng was selected to be one of eleven highlighted artists by curators Raqs Media Collective at the 2016 Shanghai Biennale *Why Not Ask Again?* Zheng's work can be found in the collections including the British Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Orange County Museum of Art in California, M+ in Hong Kong, the Daimler Art Collection in Stuttgart, Germany, the DSL Collection in France and the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, among others.

About Jason Salavon

Since the mid-1990s, Jason Salavon has used custom software to create artworks that ruminate on the nature of individual uniqueness when embedded in massive populations. Using processes of his own design, he has sought to unearth unexpected pattern as the relationship between the part and the whole - the individual and the group - is explored. Reflecting an attraction to popular culture and the day-to-day, his work regularly incorporates the use of common references and source material.

Salavon has exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. Reviews of his exhibitions and feature articles have been included in such publications as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times* and *WIRED*. Examples of his artwork are included in prominent public and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago among many others.

Born in Indiana, raised in Texas and based in Chicago, Salavon earned his MFA at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and his BA from The University of Texas at Austin. In earlier years, he was employed for as an artist and programmer in the video game industry and is currently associate professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago.

About Jan Tichy

Jan Tichy is a contemporary artist and educator. Working at the intersection of video, sculpture, architecture and photography, his conceptual work is socially and politically engaged. Born in Prague in 1974, Tichy studied art in Israel before earning his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he is now Associate Professor at the Department of Photography and the Department of Art & Technology Studies. Tichy has had solo exhibitions at the MCA Chicago; Tel Aviv Museum of Art; CCA Tel Aviv; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Santa Barbara Museum of Art and Chicago Cultural Center among others. His works are included in public collections of MoMA in New York and Israel Museum in Jerusalem among others. In 2011, he created *Project Cabrini Green*, a community-based art project that illuminated with spoken word the last high rise building of the Cabrini Green housing projects in Chicago during its month-long demolition. *Beyond Streaming: a sound mural for Flint* at the Broad Museum in Michigan in 2017 brought teens from Flint and Lansing to share their experience of the ongoing water crisis. In 2014 Tichy started to work on a long-term, NEA supported, community project in Gary, IN – the *Heat Light Water* cultural platform.

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 cultural organizations explores Chicago's art and design legacy with more than 30 exhibitions and hundreds of events in 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. 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.

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