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CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL INTRODUCES ART ON THEMART**

*Proposed Permanent Art Projection on Chicago Riverwalk Expected to be Largest in the World*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel's initiative *Art on theMart*, a permanent large-scale lighting installation, was approved today by City Council. The art will project across nearly three acres of the southern facing façade of theMART, the building formerly known as The Merchandise Mart.

"Iconic art and cultural programming on the Riverwalk has always been inherent and integral in helping us embrace the river as the city's newest recreational frontier," Mayor Emanuel said. "*Art on theMart* will be a visionary project that brings new energy to the Riverwalk, while strengthening Chicago's legacy of public art."

The installation project, privately funded by Vornado Realty Trust, is slated for a fall 2018 completion. The City and theMART agreed on a 30-year agreement to facilitate the project today at the City Council meeting.

In 2017, theMART engaged creative studio Obscura Digital and the Chicago based architectural firm Valerio Dewalt Train to develop a feasibility study for projecting art on the south, river-facing facade of theMART. Obscura Digital ([www.obscuradigital.com](http://www.obscuradigital.com)) is the foremost design engineer of large projection installations with the technical and design skills capable of developing architectural images at this scale.

"Vornado and theMART are very pleased to have this opportunity to collaborate with the City of Chicago," said Myron Maurer, Chief Operating Officer of theMART. "As one of Chicago's most prominent buildings, theMART has been part of the city's history since the 1930s. *Art on theMART* will further cement Chicago's reputation as a dedicated champion for iconic public art."

*Art on theMART* marks the first time a projection of its size and scope will be completely dedicated to art projection with no branding, sponsorship credits, or messaging allowed. It will be a curated, ongoing series of ever-changing installations that will begin after dusk for pedestrians and residents to enjoy. The City and theMART will be working in partnership in the management and ongoing curation of the projected art work.

"We're eager to welcome *Art on theMART* into the pantheon of iconic public artworks in Chicago," said Mark Kelly, Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. "This

installation is a result of Chicago's first Public Art Plan and has the potential to be as impactful as Cloud Gate and the Picasso, two public art works which have transformed how we see and experience our city."

In 2017, the City of Chicago celebrated the "Year of Public Art" which culminated with hundreds of new works of public art throughout the city and the creation of Chicago's first Public Art Plan. The new plan is a blueprint that will help shape the future of public art in Chicago and shift how we interact, talk about and support works of art that can be viewed by all. *Art on theMART* exemplifies the city's commitment to supporting arts and culture for all residents and visitors to enjoy, and is a key driver of the rising tourism numbers and last year's record-setting 55.2 million visitors from across the globe.

*Art on theMART* will be dedicated to public digital art, providing Chicago residents and visitors with an enhanced public art experience. TheMART and the City of Chicago, through its Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, will establish a selective process for identifying local, national and international artists and their work to be included in immersive gallery shows, which will include both static and moving imagery. Additionally, partnerships with city museums and art institutions will showcase the best of Chicago and celebrate the incredible artistic culture of the city.

The **Chicago Riverwalk** is presented by the City of Chicago with programming produced by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Fleet and Facility Management, Choose Chicago, the Chicago Park District and the vendors and boat tour operators along the Riverwalk. For more information about the Chicago Riverwalk and a complete schedule of events, visit **[chicagoriverwalk.us](http://chicagoriverwalk.us)**—and join the conversation on social media using **#ChiRiverwalk**.

theMART is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in culture, art, business, fashion, media and more. theMART is the world's largest commercial building, wholesale design center and one of Chicago's premier international business locations. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, theMART spans two city blocks and rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day; in total, nearly 10 million people visit theMART each year. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and showrooms, theMART also serves as a business hub for interior designers, architects, contractors, business owners and buyers. theMART has also become a best in class innovation hub for both creative users as well as traditional office tenants, including several of the most well-known tech companies in the country alongside a large number of start-ups.

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