



## **21c Museum Hotels to Partner with ArtPrize to Host Pitch Nights Along with Museums Across The U.S., and to Support Prizewinner Installations in Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Louisville, KY (April 20, 2017) – As part of the ninth annual ArtPrize international art competition, 21c Museum Hotels will serve as a partner for the fourth year, hosting three pitch night events around the country, and contributing a \$15,000 sponsorship to help prizewinners realize their installations on site. ArtPrize is an art competition and public art event that invites artists from around the world to pitch and execute large-scale artworks throughout Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Beginning May 15, ArtPrize Pitch Nights will take place in six cities across the country, allowing selected artists to pitch their ideas to a panel of expert judges. In support of its mission to be a catalyst for bringing art to urban centers, 21c Museum Hotels will host Pitch Nights at 21c Louisville, 21c Durham, and 21c Bentonville, alongside events taking place at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, and the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans. Last year, 21c Durham's ArtPrize Pitch Night winner Stacey Kirby went on to win ArtPrize's \$200,000 Grand Jury Prize for her interactive performance and installation, *The Bureau of Personal Belonging*.

21c Museum Hotels has been an ArtPrize partner since 2014. Alice Gray Stites, Chief Curator and Museum Director at 21c, served on the ArtPrize jury in 2013, and in 2016 participated in the ArtPrize Critical Discourse, a televised panel of curatorial experts discussing the finalists selected by both the public and the juried votes. As an institution dedicated to expanding access to art and supporting opportunities for artists, 21c Museum's participation in ArtPrize highlights its commitment to showcasing art in a way that overturns the barriers to engaging with art found in traditional museum settings, and allowing viewers to encounter and interact with art in unexpected ways.

"The spirit of the ArtPrize competition is very much in line with our mission at 21c," said Stites. "The event draws immensely talented artists from around the country together, giving them space to create installations, and offering people unparalleled opportunities to encounter a broad range of contemporary art. Through our partnership with ArtPrize we seek to raise awareness of the catalytic value of the arts, while also providing a platform for emerging artists."

Considered the world's largest art competition, ArtPrize begins with six pitch nights around the country, where five artists selected from an open call for proposals present their concepts to a panel of five local art experts. During each Pitch Night, a \$5,000 grant is awarded to one artist to support the realization of their work in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The public will be invited to view the work as part of an ongoing celebration that will take place between September 20 and October 8, 2017.

In addition to the Pitch Night grantees, ArtPrize hosts over 1,000 artists from countries around the world for their annual competition, providing them with space to present their projects throughout the city. In 2016, more than 400,000 people visited downtown Grand

Rapids to view works in conventional artistic spaces such as galleries and museums, as well as in unconventional locations including theaters, parks, restaurants, laundromats, auto body shops, and hospitals, among other venues. On October 6, ArtPrize will announce the 2017 winners, awarding \$200,000 to two grand prizewinners and an additional \$100,000 in prizes to the top entries in each category.

### **About 21c Museum**

21c was founded by Laura Lee Brown and Steve Wilson, contemporary art collectors and preservationists who are committed to expanding access to thought-provoking contemporary art. A multi-venue museum, each 21c property features exhibition space open free of charge to the public, combined with a boutique hotel and chef-driven restaurant. 21c presents a range of arts programming curated by Chief Curator and Museum Director Alice Gray Stites, including both solo and group exhibitions that reflect the global nature of art today, as well as site-specific, commissioned installations, and a variety of cultural events. The organization collaborates on arts initiatives with artists and organizations worldwide, including North Carolina Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, The Barnes Foundation, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Creative Capital Foundation, and others. Since opening in Louisville, KY in 2006, 21c Museum has presented nearly 100 exhibitions, including *Cuba Now!*; *Alter Ego: A Decade of Work by Anthony Goicolea*; *Hybridity: The New Frontier*; *Aftermath: Witnessing War, Countenancing Compassion*; *Seeing Now*; *Wild Card: The Art of Michael Combs*; *Dis-semblance: Projecting and Perceiving Identity*; *Albano Alfonso: Self-Portrait as Light*; *Pop Stars! Popular Culture and Contemporary Art*; *Labor and Materials*; *Fallen Fruit: The Practices of Everyday Life*; and *The Future is Female*.

### **About Art Prize**

ArtPrize® is an open, independently organized international art competition and a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. ArtPrize is recognized as the most-attended public art event on the planet according to *The Art Newspaper*, and was recently highlighted in the *New York Times*' 52 Places To Go in 2016. For 19 days in the early fall, around 400,000 attendees descend upon three square miles of downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan where anyone can find a voice in the conversation about what is art and why it matters. Art from around the world pops up in every inch of downtown in over 160 venues—museums, galleries, bars, restaurants, theaters, hotels, public parks, lobbies, buildings, walls, bridges, laundromats, and auto body shops—and it's all free and open to the public.

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### **For press information contact:**

Emily Tucker  
21c Museum Hotels  
502-882-6234  
[etucker@21chotels.com](mailto:etucker@21chotels.com)

Sarah Palay / Abby Margulies  
Resnicow + Associates  
212-671-5163 / 614-827-5810  
[spalay@resnicow.com](mailto:spalay@resnicow.com) / [amargulies@resnicow.com](mailto:amargulies@resnicow.com)