

Chicago drawing artists and art lovers with downtown celebration

by [Susan Glaser / Plain Dealer Reporter](#)

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COURTESY ARTHUR ROGER GALLERY, NEW ORLEANS

From the serious collector in the market for a Picasso to the novice enthusiast still discovering a style, art lovers of all stripes will converge on Chicago in late April. The city will host a four-day celebration of the arts dubbed Artropolis, a collaboration of creativity that is expected to draw 50,000 downtown.

The centerpiece event, which runs April 25-28, is Art Chicago 2008, a vast exhibition featuring works from 180 top galleries throughout the world. Geared to wealthy collectors, museum curators, as well as the merely curious, the exhibit will showcase the art of more than 2,000 artists -- some famous, some up-and-coming -- displayed throughout the 200,000-square-foot 12th floor of Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

"You can see a new work by a young artist and also see a master work by Picasso," said Tony Karman, vice president of Art Chicago. And everything is for sale.

Art Chicago, an art fair with a nearly three-decade history in the Windy City, was purchased in 2006 by Merchandise Mart Properties, which last year paired the exhibition with several other arts-related events and called the entire experience Artropolis.

Also on tap in late April:

The Merchandise Mart International Antiques Fair, in its 11th year, which will showcase furniture and decorative arts (and much more) from 125-plus dealers.

NEXT, featuring cutting-edge works in contemporary art from 120 emerging dealers from throughout the world.

The Artist Project, featuring the works of more than 300 undiscovered artists.

And the **Intuit Show**, sponsored by Chicago's Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, featuring the sale of self-taught and nontraditional art.

All events take place at the Merchandise Mart, the massive trade space in downtown Chicago. Admission to all events is \$20 for one day, \$25 for multiple days. In addition to the main attractions, many of the city's cultural institutions are offering discounted admission, special tours and programming to coincide with Artropolis. For a schedule and more information, go to www.merchandisemart.com or www.artropolischicago.com