THERE’S NO MOUNTAIN TOO HIGH, NO VALLEY TOO WIDE,
FOR WATERCOLOR ARTIST TONY FOSTER

Tony Foster: Searching for a Bigger Subject Features Arizona’s Grand Canyon and Mount Everest, Opens July 11, 2009

PHOENIX (May 11, 2009) – Traveling on foot, by raft or canoe, climbing mountains and weathering extreme climates, English artist Tony Foster creates watercolor diaries in the world’s great wildernesses. For more than 25 years, he has been painting large-scale works on what he calls “the edge of the world”. In his most recent exhibition, Tony Foster: Searching for a Bigger Subject, opening July 11, 2009, at Phoenix Art Museum, Foster focuses his attention on two of the world’s most powerful subjects – Arizona’s Grand Canyon and Mount Everest in the Himalayas.

Foster has worked extensively at remote locations on the North and South Rims of the Grand Canyon, and at Mount Everest on the North Face, where hikers generally approach, and the even more remote East Face. He is believed to be the only artist to ever create paintings of Everest from the Nepal and Tibet sides of the mountain. The exhibition, on view through October 18, 2009, is the culmination of Foster’s travels to these breathtaking sites and includes 32 recent studies and monumental paintings.

Working in delicate watercolor, Foster blends the nineteenth-century traditions of British explorers, who made detailed notebook sketches of their travels, with a contemporary artist’s interest in working in a large-scale format. His largest watercolor paintings measure an astounding six feet wide, particularly impressive considering they were made on location. Appreciation for the difficulty of working on such a scale while on site, however, is secondary to the beauty of the paintings themselves.

“My thesis is that despite a world overloaded with imagery, certain places still retain the power to inspire awe and wonder,” commented Foster. “All of my work is based on the philosophy that our planet is a gloriously beautiful but fragile place, and that as an artist it is my role to deliver a testament to the fact that wild and pristine places still exist.”
The resulting paintings are a visual record of what Foster encounters on his journey. Included with each work are tokens or “souvenirs” from the region, such as flora, fauna, journal notes and a small geographical map locating the exact point of which he camped and worked.

About The Artist
Tony Foster was born in Lincolnshire, England, in 1946. His home is in Tywardreath in the county of Cornwall, though he travels extensively to make his work. His adventures have resulted in 10 major exhibitions and his work is represented in collections at The Autry Center of Western Art, Los Angeles, Denver Art Museum, Phoenix Art Museum, Sierra Nevada Museum of Art, Yosemite National Park, and in many private collections internationally. In 2002, the Council of the Royal Geographical Society awarded Foster the Cherry Kearton Medal and Award for artistic portrayal of the world's wilderness areas.

Foster’s work is the subject of a new book, Painting at the Edge of The World: The Watercolours of Tony Foster (University of Washington Press; September 2008; Hardcover; $75.00) This magnificent compilation contains more than 275 pages of Foster’s adventures, bringing to life some of the world’s most acclaimed sites with his alluring images; extensive travel notes documenting conditions and logistics; diagrams; and photographs.

Exhibition Details
Tony Foster: Searching for a Bigger Subject will be on view in Phoenix Art Museum’s Orme Lewis Gallery July 11 through October 18, 2009.

The exhibition is organized by Tony Foster, courtesy of the Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, with support provided by Betty Lou Summers.

Admission to the exhibition is included in general museum admission, which is $10 for adults, $8 for senior citizens (65+), $8 for full-time college students with ID, $4 for children ages 6-17 and free for children under 6 and for museum members.

EFFECTIVE MAY 26, 2009, Museum Hours are Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Thursday thru Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, Noon – 5:00 p.m. The museum will be closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and major holidays. Admission is free on Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and for everyone on First Fridays, 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

About Phoenix Art Museum
Phoenix Art Museum is the Southwest’s premier destination for world-class visual arts. Popular exhibitions featuring artists such as Rembrandt, Norman Rockwell, Annie Leibowitz and Monet are shown along side the Museum’s outstanding collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. A community epicenter for nearly fifty years, Phoenix Art Museum presents festivals, live performances, independent art films and educational programs that enlighten, entertain and stimulate. Visitors also enjoy PhxArtKids an interactive space for children, vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum’s landmark partnership with the
Center for Creative Photography, the lushly landscaped Sculpture Garden, dining at Arcadia Farms at Phoenix Art Museum, and shopping at The Museum Store.

To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit PhxArt.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

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