Phoenix Art Museum’s ‘Big Picture’ highlights scale, perspective

The Big Picture: Photographs from Phoenix Art Museum’s Collection on view October 13 – December 2

PHOENIX (September 25, 2012) – Beginning October 13, 2012, Phoenix Art Museum will present The Big Picture, a special installation of large-scale photography from Phoenix Art Museum’s collection. These 15 large-scale photographs, some measuring as big as five feet by seven-and-a-half feet, represent trends in large scale contemporary photography apparent in museums across the country, which are a relatively new phenomena made possible by advances in photographic technology.

The works in this installation, selected by Rebecca Senf, Norton Family Curator of Photography, encompass a range of styles and approaches from contemporary photographers, including James Casabere, Gus Foster, and Gregory Crewdson. Some represent compositions constructed or staged for the camera, while others are genres familiar in traditional photography, such as portraiture, landscape, and architectural shots. Usually displayed in contemporary art spaces in the Katz Wing, the special installation allows for comparisons between works of the same media, giving visitors an opportunity to see these large-scale images in relation to each other. “By grouping these works side by side,” says Senf, “we can appreciate how this medium is being used in radically different and inspiring creative ways.”

But why big pictures? Why large scale images versus smaller photographic works? “People relate to photographs printed in large scale differently than smaller prints,” explains Senf. While it is true that a small photograph promotes intimacy and allows for a measure of subtlety that is hard to achieve in a big print, the large-sized images offer something smaller works cannot. “When a photograph nears life-size and fills your field of vision, it has a power to impact and encompass you. Many artists appreciate the visceral impact of a large, wall-sized art object and use it to powerful effect.” Totaling 15 huge images, this special presentation will allow every visitor an opportunity to engage with each individual work, to truly experience the impact of the images.

The Big Picture, which opens October 13 and is on view until December 2, will be installed in Norton Family Photography Gallery, located on the upper level of the Museum’s south wing.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum’s permanent collection of more than 17,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum’s landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. 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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