Phoenix Art Museum Blends Sight and Sound in New Photography Exhibition
See, Hear, Feel on view through March 23, 2014

PHOENIX (Jan. 22, 2014) — Phoenix Art Museum’s newest photography exhibition See, Hear, Feel: The Photographs of Debra Bloomfield and Christopher Churchill is on view through March 23 in the Norton Photography Gallery. The exhibition explores the relationship between photography and sound, illustrated by the contemporary works of Debra Bloomfield and Christopher Churchill, each of whom pushes the limits of their artistic practice to discover the dimension that sounds add to visual art. Featuring more than 40 photographs with accompanying sound, See, Hear, Feel uses these senses as a way into the complex, intangible and deceptively disparate subjects of wilderness and faith.

“This is a unique approach to a photography exhibition,” says James K. Ballinger, the Museum’s Sybil Harrington Director. “The marriage of the two media invites the visitor to contemplate how what we see and hear impacts our emotional connection to a body of work. The artwork of Bloomfield and Churchill are stirring companions.”

Debra Bloomfield’s large color photographs take the viewer deep into the wooded wilderness lands, particularly of Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. “Through Bloomfield’s subdued and minimal views, this series creates the suggestion of how wilderness feels as opposed to how it appears,” explains Rebecca Senf, PhD., Phoenix Art Museum’s curator of photography through its partnership with the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson. Bloomfield and her son, musician Jake Bloomfield-Misrach created soundscapes that enable the viewer to examine the power of abstracted images of the wilderness, intensified by recordings of the call of ravens, or the crunch of settled snow. The soundscapes play on a continuous loop in the Norton Gallery.

For Christopher Churchill, the study of people as they navigate the wilderness of faith in the wake of national tragedy inspired his work. In 2004, Churchill undertook a series of road trips to explore post-9/11 America. “Churchill was concerned with the ways religion was being used to divide a country wracked with insecurity and fear,” says Senf. “He felt that faith—the unifying basis for all religions—should be a way to bring people together. And for him, the way to understand this was to photograph it.” Across the U.S., Churchill interviewed people from all walks of life, recording them as they spoke candidly about faith. He made compelling, black-and-white portraits of his subjects, who ranged from a small Huddite community to Latino Roman Catholics, Southern evangelicals and ministers of the Nation of Islam. In the gallery, the recordings play alongside their corresponding portrait.

See, Hear, Feel offers a unique experience that not only invites the viewer to find the strands of connection between the two artists’ work, but to find the threads that bind our notions of faith and connection as each of us navigates our way through the public, wild places of landscape, and the private, wild places of faith.

See, Hear, Feel: The Photographs of Debra Bloomfield and Christopher Churchill is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and on view through March 23. The exhibition is made possible through the support of The Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Endowment.

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 collection of more than 17,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. 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.