Phoenix Art Museum

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PHOENIX ART MUSEUM NAMES AMADA CRUZ NEW DIRECTOR
Seven-Month Search Process Completed; New Era Begins Feb. 1, 2015

Phoenix, (November 17, 2014) – The Phoenix Art Museum Board of Trustees has named Amada Cruz as The Sybil Harrington Director of the Phoenix Art Museum, succeeding James K. Ballinger, who announced his intention to retire this past April.

Cruz, currently Executive Director at San Antonio-based Artpace, one of the premier artist residency and exhibition programs in the world, will assume her new responsibilities on Feb. 1, 2015. Her selection, with counsel and guidance from one of the nation’s most respected executive leadership and search firms, Russell Reynolds Associates, concludes an intensive seven-month process conducted by the Museum’s executive committee, which served as the search committee.

"Amada has a solid track record of building programs and new initiatives at Bard College, USA Artists and, most recently, Artpace," said Phoenix Art Museum Board of Trustees Chairman Jim Patterson. "The search process was thorough, comprehensive and demanding and the search committee was unanimous in choosing Amada as the new director to build upon the remarkable foundation established by Jim Ballinger and his staff. She brings a very high-energy, creative and entrepreneurial approach to museum leadership and we are confident she can lead us to the next level of distinction."

Ballinger, who has been the Museum director for 32 years and will celebrate his 40th anniversary with the museum in December, will assist in the transition “for as long as my input, assistance and counsel is needed to ensure that the transition is smooth so Amada can hit the ground running and continue the Museum’s forward progress,” he said. “She is a highly respected arts professional whose diverse experience, extensive background, knowledge and innovative spirit will serve Phoenix Art Museum and our community well for years to come.”

Susan Berresford, former President of the Ford Foundation, lauded the choice of Cruz. “Amada Cruz is a true star, bringing sophisticated knowledge of arts and artists and a determination to build institutions that nurture artists and their work,” she said. “Phoenix Art Museum has chosen someone who is smart, imaginative and a pleasure to work with. Bravo."
As chief executive at Artpace, Cruz, who was born in Havana, Cuba, is responsible for the artistic and programmatic vision of the organization and serves as chief fundraiser. Artpace residencies, which are awarded by nomination and selected by a panel of international art professionals or a guest curator, are highly coveted. Artpace is an internationally respected public institution and a cornerstone of contemporary art.

“Phoenix Art Museum is a world-class educational and cultural institution, and reflects Jim Ballinger’s passion, vision, leadership and deep commitment to excellence,” Cruz said. “He has also built an extraordinary team of exceptionally talented, knowledgeable and devoted professionals whose contributions to the Museum’s success can not be overstated. I look forward to what we can achieve together for the people of Arizona and the entire Southwest.”

Previously, Cruz had served as Program Director for United States Artists in Los Angeles where she was responsible for all programming activities of a Ford and Rockefeller Foundations initiative. She also had been Executive Director of Artadia: The Fund for Art and Dialogue in New York City, which awarded grants to visual artists in San Francisco, Houston and Chicago. Her experience also includes positions as Director of the Center for Curatorial Studies Museum at Bard College; Acting Chief Curator and Manilow Curator of Exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago; and Associate Curator, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden at the Smithsonian Institution. She began her career as a Curatorial Intern at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Cruz has served as a juror and advisor for numerous selections panels for institutional and individual grants across the country.

The Phoenix Art Museum is planning a series of events celebrating Ballinger’s tenure and legacy. Additional information will be released in the weeks ahead.

For more information about Phoenix Art Museum, visit www.phxart.org.

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, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.