

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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Phoenix Art Museum announces significant investment in contemporary art through David and Dawn Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative

Acclaimed Valley collectors invest in expanding contemporary art, education, acquisitions at Phoenix Art Museum

PHOENIX (December 1, 2017) – Phoenix Art Museum announces the establishment of the David and Dawn Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative, representing a significant and comprehensive investment in the growth and visibility of contemporary art collecting, education and exhibition at the Museum. Through a significant gift, the Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative seeks to elevate the Museum’s commitment to contemporary art through multiple programs, namely the annual Lenhardt Lecture, the Lenhardt Emerging Artist Acquisition Fund, the Lenhardt Collection loan program, and a future named gallery space. The Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative is the first of its kind in the Museum’s nearly 60-year history, and represents a significant commitment to the elevation of Phoenix as a promising cultural player on a national scale.

“We are grateful to the Lenhardt family for their very generous support of contemporary art at Phoenix Art Museum,” said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO. “This investment empowers the Museum to strengthen its focus on this key collecting area and has the potential to enable us in the future to attract important contemporary art collections to Phoenix.”

“We are excited to be able to serve as a catalyst for an expanded commitment to contemporary art in Phoenix through this initiative,” said David Lenhardt. “We hope that through the enhanced exposure it provides we will raise the profile of our city as a thought leader, recognizing the work of emerging artists and enabling the Museum to leverage other opportunities in contemporary art.”

The first component of the Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative will include the annual Lenhardt Lecture, which establishes an annual artist lecture each winter at the Museum. This unique educational program will feature an internationally renowned contemporary artist who has made a lasting impact in the art field. In addition to providing the local and regional community and the Museum’s donors with unprecedented access to some of the most compelling names in contemporary art, the Lenhardt Lecture will also support arts education through an artist-led educational program for both K-12 and college students.

Additionally, the Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative will include the Lenhardt Emerging Artist Acquisition Fund, the Museum’s first fund designed specifically to collect works by next-generation contemporary artists. Working with artists selected in collaboration with Gilbert Vicario, the Selig Family Chief Curator, the Lenhardt Emerging Artist Acquisition Fund will enhance the Museum’s collection through a representation of promising new contemporary artists.

Looking ahead, the Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative will expand to include a named gallery space located within the Museum’s Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art, designated for the presentation of contemporary art, including recent acquisitions of the Lenhardt Emerging Artist Acquisition Fund and special exhibitions. The Lenhardt Gallery will also feature significant loans from national and Phoenix collectors, including a rotating series of artworks from the Lenhardt family’s own private collection, which include works by artists such as Jim Hodges, Richard Estes, and Andy Warhol. In its future phases, the Initiative will evolve to include gifts of contemporary art from the Lenhardt Collection. These works, combined with the Lenhardt Lecture, the Lenhardt Emerging Artist Acquisition fund, Lenhardt Gallery, and supplementary programming and education, will ignite interest in contemporary art

within the Museum's diverse community, advance the national and international profile of the Museum and its home city, and encourage national and international participation in contemporary art at Phoenix Art Museum.

For interviews or to request more information about the Lenhardt Contemporary Art Initiative and the Lenhardt Lecture and Emerging Artist Acquisition Fund, contact Margaree Bigler, Public Relations and Digital Communications Manager, Phoenix Art Museum, at 602.257.2105 or margaree.bigler@phxart.org.

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 18,000 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.