

# Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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## Phoenix Art Museum presents photographs and video chronicling the experience of being a teen in the United States

*To Be Thirteen: Photographs and Videos* by Betsy Schneider will showcase the Guggenheim-grant recipient's photographic portraits and video created in 2012 when the artist met 250 13-year-olds across the country



Left to right: *Jack*, Sharon, MA, 2012; *Christopher*, Glendale, Arizona, 2012. *Jasper*, Phoenix, AZ, 2012. All photographs by Betsy Schneider. Images courtesy of Tilt Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ.

**PHOENIX (April 9, 2018)** – From May 4 through October 14, 2018 in the Norton Family Photography Gallery, Phoenix Art Museum will present *To Be Thirteen: Photographs and Videos* by Betsy Schneider, a rich and nuanced portrait of a group of Americans whose lives began at the turn of the millennium and who are now coming of age in a tumultuous social and political climate. This timely exhibition, premiering at a moment in history when teenagers are igniting discourse and commanding the national spotlight with their political activism, showcases photographer Betsy Schneider's project exploring the experience of being 13 in the United States. In 2012, the Guggenheim-grant recipient traveled across the country to chronicle the lives of 250 13-year-olds through photography and video, and the resulting exhibition includes approximately 20 large photographic prints, a 60-minute film running continuously, and an archive where visitors can view pictures of each of the 13-year-olds, along with some of their statements. The portraits illustrate a heightened tension between the commonalities and differences among the teenagers, demonstrating how distinctly the age of 13 can appear on different people, while highlighting the similarities that every young person experiences as they transition from childhood to adolescence.

"We are delighted to present this unique portrait of 13-year-olds across the United States," said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. "*To Be Thirteen* will resonate with so many of our visitors, from children to adults of all ages, reminding us that no matter our differences, we all have shared experiences. We look forward to sharing this poignant portrait of early adolescence with our community."

Schneider says her inspiration for the project came from her children and her own memories of being 13 years old. "When my daughter started to get close to adolescence, I realized I was kind of terrified of being a parent of a teenager . . . so that started me thinking about how I could make art out of this," she explained. "Sixth grade and seventh grade were [also] the hardest years of my life. I was awkward and uncomfortable, and I found out through this project that I wasn't alone."



Left to right: *Destin*, Tempe, AZ, 2012; *Hailey*, Mesa, AZ, 2012; *Adele*, Tempe, Arizona, 2011. All photographs by Betsy Schneider. Images courtesy of Tilt Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ.

Schneider was awarded a Guggenheim grant for her project proposal and spent 2012 traveling around the United States to capture 250 portrait subjects in photographs and on film. The resulting work illustrates how differently the age of 13 can appear. Some subjects exude confidence, while others practically shrink from the camera. Some look mature enough to be mistaken for young college students, while others dwell in childlike bodies. Some convey a self-possessed clarity as if motivated for the future, while others appear comfortably ensconced in the current moment. The subjects' words heighten these disparities and further suggest that the 250 portraits represent 250 distinctly unique people, a group about whom it would be hard to generalize or make assumptions. And yet, Schneider says, "Every kid seemed to feel like they were an outsider. I remember [that] so vividly at that age, where you just realize you're singular and [your parents] can't protect you from things anymore. For me, that feeling of rawness and vulnerability and difference is still in there."

"With this work, Schneider questions the simple dichotomies to which adolescence has often been reduced. The photographs and videos in this exhibition instead embody the intensity, complexity, and beauty of early adolescence, reflecting our current moment in which teenagers are taking on a more publicly visible role in our society," said Rebecca Senf, chief curator at the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson and the Museum's Norton Family Photography curator. "This exhibition asks us to consider not only the experience of early adolescence but also how we as adults retain that experience and how it shapes us for the rest of our lives."

#### **About the Exhibition**

*To Be Thirteen: Photographs and Videos* by Betsy Schneider will be on view from May 4 through October 14, 2018 in the Norton Family Photography Gallery. This exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum; **INFOCUS**, the photography support group of Phoenix Art Museum; and the Center for Creative Photography. It is made possible through the generosity of donors to the Museum's annual fund. The accompanying exhibition catalog, co-published by Phoenix Art Museum and Radius Books and available at [The Museum Store](#), features all 250 photographic portraits, an essay about the project, and a booklet of the transcribed words of many of the 13-year-olds. For more details about the exhibition, please visit [phxart.org/exhibition/to-be-13](http://phxart.org/exhibition/to-be-13).

Admission is free for Museum Members; veterans, active-duty, and retired military; Maricopa Community College students, staff, and faculty (with ID); and youth aged 5 and under. Entrance to the exhibition is included in general admission for the general public. During voluntary-donation, free-access times, the exhibition is offered free to the general public. Free-access times include Wednesdays from 3–9 pm, the first Fridays of every month from 6–10 pm, and the second weekend of each month (Saturday from 10am–5pm and Sunday from noon–5pm). For a full breakdown of general admission prices and hours, see [bit.ly/VisitPhxArt](http://bit.ly/VisitPhxArt).

To request interviews and high-resolution photography, contact Phoenix Art Museum's Marketing and Communications Office, at 602.257.2105 or email [margaree.bigler@phxart.org](mailto:margaree.bigler@phxart.org). Media images are available [bit.ly/TbTPressImages](http://bit.ly/TbTPressImages).

#### **Related Programs**

##### **[First Friday: The Whole Story](#)**

**May 4 | 7:30 pm**

[The Whole Story](#) at Phoenix Art Museum returns on Friday, May 4, and will feature its first teen storyteller in celebration of the opening of [To Be Thirteen](#). This live show seeks to bring greater depth and breadth to our understanding of the human experience from the Black perspective. Tickets are \$5 for [Members](#) and \$10 for the general public. Purchase tickets [here](#).

### **Opening Reception**

**May 16 | 6:30 pm**

An opening celebration of the exhibition will take place in the Norton Gallery, beginning with a short talk by Betsy Schneider and followed by time to view the film, prints, and complete archive. This event is **free and open to the public!** Event details will be available soon at [phxart.org](http://phxart.org).

### **Free Family Art Activity with artist Kari Wehrs**

**May 13 | Times TBD**

Artist Kari Wehrs will collaborate with Museum staff to design a hands-on portraiture experience inspired by Betsy Schneider's work in the [To Be Thirteen](#) exhibition. This event is **free and open to the public!** Event details will be available soon at [phxart.org](http://phxart.org).

### **Teen Night**

**May 18 | 6 – 9:30 pm**

For teens, by teens, [Teen Night](#) is a celebration of art, creativity, and community. Artist Betsy Schneider will be in attendance, and there will be special [To Be Thirteen](#)-themed activities. Free and open to all high school students (ages 14-18). See more details [here](#).

### **National Theatre Live\*: Peter Pan**

**June 13 | 2 pm**

In celebration of the rich, often painful, process of growing up, see a special performance of [Peter Pan](#) recorded live at the National Theatre. When Peter Pan, leader of the Lost Boys, loses his shadow, headstrong Wendy helps him to reattach it. In return, she is invited to Neverland, where Tinker Bell, Tiger Lily, and the vengeful Captain Hook await. A riot of magic, music, and make-believe ensues. Tickets are \$15 for [Members](#) and students with ID, and \$18 for non-Members. Prices do not include general admission. Purchase tickets [here](#).

**\*Please note: National Theatre Live is a simulcast/telecast and not a live performance at the Museum.**

### **About Phoenix Art Museum**

[Phoenix Art Museum](#) has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for nearly 60 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, 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](http://phxart.org), or call the 24-hour recorded information line at 602.257.1222.

### **About the Center for Creative Photography**

The [Center for Creative Photography](#), University of Arizona, is recognized as one of the world's finest academic art museums and study centers for the history of photography. The Center opened in 1975, following a meeting between University President John Schaefer and Ansel Adams. Beginning with the archives of five living master photographers—Ansel Adams, Wynn Bullock, Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Frederick Sommer—the collection has grown to include 239 archival collections. Among these are some of the most recognizable names in 20<sup>th</sup>-century North American photography, including W. Eugene Smith, Lola Alvarez Bravo, Edward Weston, and Garry Winogrand. Altogether there are more than five million archival objects in the Center's collection, including negatives, work prints, contact sheets, albums, scrapbooks, correspondence, writings, audiovisual materials, and memorabilia.

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