

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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Phoenix Art Museum presents first-ever virtual reality exhibition, immersing guests in the art and fashion of Andy Warhol, David Bowie, and Kenny Scharf

Moonage Virtual Reality brings virtual reality to the Museum for the first time in an exhibition of three films by artist Travis Hutchison

PHOENIX (July 19, 2018) – For the first time ever at Phoenix Art Museum, guests will have the opportunity to experience photography and video in a whole new dimension. From August 11 through September 30, 2018 in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery, *Moonage Virtual Reality* takes guests on a simulated journey through the fashion and culture of Pop Art, rock and roll, and the East Village Art Scene in New York City thanks to three virtual reality films by filmmaker Travis Hutchison. Offering an out-of-this-world perspective, the suite of films celebrates the music, fashion, and style of three legendary figures who helped define popular culture in the late 1960s, '70s, and early '80s: Andy Warhol (1928-1987), David Bowie (1947-2016), and Kenny Scharf (b. 1958). Guests will be able to explore the simulated environments of *Moonage Virtual Reality* by using ordinary smartphones and virtual reality headsets provided by the Museum. The exhibition will be accompanied by select works from the Museum's fashion collection, each drawn from the eras represented in Hutchison's videos.

"Phoenix Art Museum looks forward to featuring virtual reality films in our galleries for the first time," said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. "These dynamic, innovative works will engage and inspire guests of all ages, and we look forward to sharing them with our community."

Using special 360-degree computer programs, filmmaker Travis Hutchison layered photographs and videos in an infinite stereoscopic universe to create the exhibition's three virtual reality films. In Billy Name's *The Warhol Silver Factory*, Museum guests explore Andy Warhol's studio known as The Factory, through the visually stunning images by famed Warhol photographer Billy Name, who lived at The Factory and was responsible for "silverizing" every surface. Name's images of Warhol's filmmaking, silk screening and superstars Edie Sedgwick, Brigid Berlin, Gerard Malanga, Lou Reed and Nico are experienced here in high definition black and white.

Mick Rock's *Ziggy Stardust* is a colorful dreamlike, kaleidoscopic experience of David Bowie's legendary 1972 *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* tour, featuring the iconic photographs and videos by Bowie's personal photographer Mick Rock. Bowie was enthralled by Lou Reed's song writing and the first Velvet Underground album that came out of the Warhol Factory when Bowie was creating his alien stage persona. Just as Billy Name had been Warhol's personal photographer, Mick Rock was always on hand to capture the quintessential shots of the outrageous stage performances, colorful makeup and extraordinary costumes of the Starman's two-year existence.

In Kenny Scharf's *Cosmic Cavern*, guests are transported to an immersive Day-glo, Pop-Surrealist art installation by visual artist Kenny Scharf filmed in 360 degrees. It's an '80's dance art party, turned psychedelic virtual reality experience. The very first version of the Cosmic Cavern was in 1981 in the closet of the small New York apartment Scharf shared with artist Keith Haring in the East Village.

Although each film in *Moonage Virtual Reality* offers a separate—but equally dazzling—experience, Hutchison said he made all three with a unifying idea in mind. "What each of these artists instilled in me is the idea of living your art," he said. "They were so innovative and in the moment of everything they did, each creating such a strong visual universe all their own, that when I thought about working in virtual reality, these were the worlds I wanted to explore in 360 degrees."

Space is also a common theme across the virtual reality films and was a central topic among all three artists' work from the eras explored by Hutchison, specifically The Warhol Silver '60s, Bowie's Starman of the '70s, and Scharf's Cosmic Cavern in the early '80s. In his book "Popism: The Warhol Sixties," Andy Warhol wrote about Billy Name, "Why he loved silver so much I don't know, but it was great. It was the future, the space age, and also it was the past, the silver screen and old Hollywood. Maybe more than anything, silver was narcissism - mirrors were backed with silver."

"Hutchison's work brings the aesthetic of Pop Art and rock-and-roll music to life through immersive virtual reality experiences," said Dennita Sewell, the Museum's Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design. "These multimedia collages, melding iconic photographs with stereoscopic sound, represent the cutting edge of art- and fashion-inspired film, and provide a novel experience for lifetime Museum-goers and new guests alike."

Moonage Virtual Reality offers the Phoenix community a singular opportunity to immerse themselves in the art and fashion of Andy Warhol, David Bowie, and Kenny Scharf. But more than that, the mind-bending exhibition exposes Museum guests to the versatility of virtual reality as a new form of storytelling and asks them to consider what the transportive technology means for the future of art—beyond the white walls of a museum.

About the Exhibition

Moonage Virtual Reality will be on view from August 11 through September 30, 2018 in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery. This exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and is made possible through the generosity of donors to the Museum's annual fund. For more details about the exhibition, please visit phxart.org/exhibition/moonagevr.

Admission is free for Museum Members; veterans, active-duty, and retired military and their families; 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, pay-what-you-wish admission hours (no General Admission required), the exhibition is offered free to the general public. Pay-What-You-Wish times include Wednesdays from 3 – 9 pm, the first Fridays of every month from 6 – 10 pm, and the second Sunday of each month from noon – 5pm. For a full breakdown of general admission prices and hours, see bit.ly/VisitPhxArt.

High-resolution photography can be downloaded [here](#). To request interviews, contact Phoenix Art Museum's Marketing and Communications Office 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 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 19,000 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, or call 602.257.1880.

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