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## CHADO RALPH RUCCI EXHIBITION SHOWCASES TIMELESS DESIGNER'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

### *Museum Exhibition Explores Haute Couture Design*

**PHOENIX (April 1, 2008)** – Phoenix Art Museum presents an original exhibition featuring 25 exquisitely made ensembles that span renowned New York fashion designer Ralph Rucci's iconic career. The exhibition, Chado Ralph Rucci, draws from Rucci's own archives and selected private collections bringing together a unique display of his signature styles and techniques. From sophisticated day wear to grand evening gowns, the exhibition explores Rucci's signature clothes, which are made with the finest couture techniques, many of which Rucci originated.

Rucci is one of only two American designers that have ever been invited to be a member of the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* in Paris. To kick off the exhibition, Phoenix Art Museum hosted an exclusive ticketed runway event featuring Rucci's latest collection just unveiled at Paris Fashion Week. The runway show, which was held on March 19, was the first and only time Rucci presented his new collection in the United States.

Rucci has been designing stunning ready-to-wear and made-to-order ensembles for the past 25 years. In 1994, he established the Chado Ralph Rucci label, choosing the name of the ancient Japanese tea ceremony which symbolizes respect, tranquility, grace and integrity – the same elements he uses in the creation of his work.

"This exhibition will allow Museum visitors to witness up-close the work of one of the world's most visionary fashion designers," said Dennita Sewell, curator of fashion design. "Organizing original exhibitions of high-quality fashion design is the mission of the Museum's Fashion Design Department. The craftsmanship and handwork details evident in Rucci's clothes are unsurpassed in the history of fashion. Seeing this work firsthand allows people to experience clothes designed at the highest level. We're committed to bringing this caliber of work and programming to the Phoenix community."

Chado Ralph Rucci – add one

Founded in 1966, Phoenix Art Museum's fashion design collection is notable for its quality and comprehensiveness and is comprised of more than 5,000 objects of American and European men's, women's and children's dress and accessories dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The Museum organizes three exhibitions a year in The Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery featuring objects from the permanent collection as well as international fashion houses, collectors and museums. Phoenix Art Museum is one of only a handful of art museums in the country with a long and continuous active fashion program.

**Exhibition dates:**

*Chado Ralph Rucci*: March 21 – August 17, 2008

**Exhibition related events:**

**MOVIES AT THE MUSEUM**

***The Secret World of Haute Couture***

**Sunday, April 6, 1 p.m.**

This revealing film looks beyond the glamour and gloss to uncover the anachronistic and surprising fairytale world of *haute couture* through its players, past and present.

*Screened courtesy of BBC and Eight/KAET.*

***Seeing Light: Capturing the Details of Couture in Photographs***

**Tuesday, April 22, 7 p.m.**

Learn more about the interplay of technology, photography and fashion as photographer Ken Howie and printer Carlo Mandelaveitia give insight into the stunning photographic series included in the exhibition.

***Collecting Haute Couture***

**Tuesday, June 10, 7 p.m.**

For this special program, Tatiana Sorokko, model and contributing editor to *Harper's Bazaar*, discusses the exclusive world of *haute couture* and how her longtime friendship with Ralph Rucci grew out of collecting the artist's creations.

**TEEN SEEN**

**Tuesday, June 10, 6:30 p.m.**

Combine images and fashion using a process inspired by the exhibition currently on display in the Ellman Fashion Design Gallery.

**PHXARTKIDS DAYS**

**Saturday, June 14 and 28, Noon – 2 p.m.**

Join us in the studios for an exciting activity transferring images onto fabric inspired by our latest fashion exhibition.

***Off the Runway: Behind the Scenes at Chado Ralph Rucci***

**Tuesday, July 15, 7 p.m.**

Coco Mitchell, Rucci's fit model and muse for over a decade, gives a unique perspective on the artist and his workshop. Hear more about how a garment evolves from a flash of inspiration to a one-of-a-kind piece of *haute couture* on the runway.

Chado Ralph Rucci – add two

**Exhibition details:**

Phoenix Art Museum is located in downtown Phoenix at the corner of Central Avenue and McDowell Road.

Admission to the exhibitions is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and students with a valid school ID, \$4 for children ages 6-17 and free for children under 6 and for Museum members.

**Museum hours:**

Tuesday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Wednesday – Sunday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

First Friday Evenings: 6-10 p.m.

The Museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays

**About Phoenix Art Museum**

The classically progressive design of the 203,000 sq. ft. Phoenix Art Museum integrates art and architecture with the South-western landscape, accommodating large traveling exhibitions and a collection of over 17,000 works in American, Asian, modern & contemporary, European, Latin American and Western American art and fashion design. Visitors also can enjoy the Sculpture Garden, the Thorne Miniature Rooms of historic interiors, PhxArtKids interactive space for children, Arcadia Farms at Phoenix Art Museum and The Museum Store. Visitors can learn more about the Museum's collection through its bilingual, random access MP3 audio guide, available at the admissions desk. The Museum recently opened its \$50 million expansion project, which included the addition of a glass-enclosed lobby and entry plaza, four-level gallery wing, sculpture garden and expanded store.

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