

MEDIA CONTACT: Mindi Carr 602-257-2105 mindi.carr@phxart.org

PHOENIX ART MUSEUM HOSTS UNPRECEDENTED GATHERING OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

Four Powerful Exhibitions Celebrate Three Centuries of Tradition and Evolution

PHOENIX (June 10, 2008) – Phoenix Art Museum presents an unprecedented opportunity to explore and understand the ongoing link of contemporary Asian art with centuries of tradition. This summer, beginning July 8, 2008, the Museum presents *A Tradition Redefined*, four extraordinary exhibits focused of Asian art from the 19th, 20th and 21st century. Highlighting this exceptional show, is *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection*, the first exhibition to present an overall, comprehensive picture of the development of modern and contemporary Chinese ink painting.

Drawn entirely from the collection of Chu-tsing Li, the finest and most comprehensive collection of its kind in the Western world, the exhibition demonstrates the dramatic evolution of Chinese ink painting in recent times and lays a foundation for understanding the international-style work that is being created in China today. The premier survey of Chinese ink paintings produced during the second half of the 20th century, *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection* includes 63 stunning works of art, many of which have not been previously exhibited outside of Asia.

"In contemporary Chinese ink painting, one can appreciate how the artists have merged century old practices with outside influences such as abstraction and expressionism," commented Janet Baker, curator of Asian Art, Phoenix Art Museum, and co-curator of *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection*. "This reflects the fact that many of these artists have spent part of their lives living in China and part living in Europe or America."

Concurrent with *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection*, Phoenix Art Museum will host *No Snow on the Broken Bridge*, a film installation by one of China's most sought-after artists, Yang Fudong; *The Modern Spirit in Chinese Painting: Gifts from the Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott Collection*, an exhibit drawn from the museum's own collection of works by 20th century Chinese artists; and *Making Waves: Contemporary Japanese Prints from the Mary and William Way Collection*, which explores the style and media diversity found in 21st century Japanese prints.

"We are extremely proud to host this extensive gathering of contemporary and modern Chinese and Japanese art," commented James Ballinger, director of Phoenix Art Museum. "These four stimulating exhibitions provide an exceptional opportunity to experience new innovations in Chinese art, such as video, as well as appreciate the role traditional methods and styles play in contemporary pieces."

About the Exhibitions:

Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection

In the last fifty years, questions about Chinese art have become increasingly entwined with questions of cultural identity, growing international markets, changing technology, and the availability of global information access. As more artists of Chinese background have made their work internationally known, the lines between traditional ink painting and new media, between old and new aesthetic values, and between China and the rest of the world have been continually defined and redefined. *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection* explores aspects of Chinese painting in modern Chinese society during this extraordinary time period. Concurrently, the collection traces the career of Dr. Chu-tsing Li, Professor Emeritus of the University of Kansas, who is one of the pioneering scholars in the field of modern Chinese art.

Organized by Phoenix Art Museum and Harvard University Art Museum, *Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink*Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection presents more than sixty works, published in a catalogue authored by Dr.

Janet Baker, Dr. Claudia Brown and Robert Mowry, all three of whom completed their graduate studies in Chinese art under Dr. Li at the University of Kansas. The exhibition premiered at the Harvard University Art Museums in fall, 2007, and following its venue at Phoenix Art Museum, will travel to The Norton Museum of Art and the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas.

This exhibition is supported by The Blakemore Foundation, David Woods Kemper Memorial Foundation, the Carpenter Foundation, and the Museum's Asian Arts Council. Technology Sponsor for the exhibition is AVR.

No Snow on the Broken Bridge: Video Work by Yang Fudong

An artist trained as a painter, Yang Fudong's videos and photography speak of a fluctuation between the modern world and traditions that extend back for millennia. His atmospheric landscapes capture intense and powerful expressions coupled with sensual meditative impressions aimed more at feelings than intellect. In *No Snow on the Broken Bridge (2006)*, Yang creates a dream-like sequence reminiscent of a Chinese handscroll painting. Through the use of eight projectors, it unfurls slowly, allowing the viewer to engage in the nostalgic drama. The black-and-white format echoes the aesthetics of Chinese ink painting.

Major support for this exhibition is provided by the Museum's Asian Arts Council. Technology Sponsor for the exhibition is AVR.

The Modern Spirit in Chinese Painting: Gifts from the Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott Collection

Drawn from the Museum's own collection of works by 20th century Chinese artists, this selection will provide a link to the classical traditions of Chinese landscape painting as well as modern interpretations by artists who lived through the tumultuous 20th century. The exhibition includes works by several artists who are featured in *A Tradition Redefined*, allowing visitors the opportunity to see a greater range of these artists' styles and subject matter over their lifetimes. Most of these painters are alive and working in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the U.S.

Making Waves: Contemporary Japanese Prints from the Mary & William Way Collection

One of the country's most extensive and rarely seen collections of contemporary Japanese prints, *Making Waves:*Contemporary Japanese Prints from the Mary and William Way Collection explores the diversity found in 21st century Japanese prints from traditional to abstract and from Surrealism to Photo-realism, examining the techniques today's contemporary artists are using while maintaining tradition with their artistic and technical virtuosity.

This exhibition is made possible by Mary and William Way through the generous loan of the prints.

Public Events:

The Museum is offering a full schedule of programs and events relating to the exhibition, including:

- How to Read Chinese Paintings Saturday, August 2, 2pm

 Through multiple layers of meaning, Chinese artists seek to capture not only the outer appearance of a subject, but also its inner essence. Maxwell K. Hearn, Douglas Dillon Curator of Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, examines 1000 years of Chinese art and shares how to "read" a Chinese painting.
- Contemporary Impressions/Ancient Medium Saturday, September 6, 10am 12 Noon
 Explore hand scrolls with featured artist Li Junyi as he demonstrates his innovative stamping technique and discusses the tradition and modern function of the medium. Cost: \$40 Museum Members, \$60 non-members (includes Museum admission.) Class size is extremely limited; registration is required. Call (602) 307-2054.

Additional information regarding public programs can be found on the Museum's Web site, PhxArt.org.

A Tradition Redefined Details:

Modern and Contemporary Chinese Ink Painting from the Chu-tsing Li Collection and No Snow on the Broken Bridge will be on view in Phoenix Art Museum's Steele Gallery July 9 thru September 14, 2008.

The Modern Spirit in Chinese Painting will be on view in Phoenix Art Musuem's Asian Art Gallery June 17 thru December 31, 2008.

Making Waves will be on view in Phoenix Art Museum's Orme Lewis Gallery May 24 thru August 17, 2008.

Admission to all four exhibitions is included in general museum admission, which is \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens (65+), \$8 for full-time college students with ID, \$4 for children ages 6 to 17 and free for children under 6 and museum members. Admission is also free on Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and for everyone on First Fridays, 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Phoenix Art Museum is located in downtown Phoenix at the corner of Central Avenue and McDowell Road. Museum hours are Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Wednesday – Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The museum is closed on Mondays and major holidays.

A Tradition Redefined – add four

About Phoenix Art Museum:

Phoenix Art Museum is the Southwest's premier destination for world-class visual arts. Popular exhibitions featuring artists such as Rembrandt, Norman Rockwell, Annie Leibowitz and Monet are shown along side the Museum's outstanding collection of more than 17,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. A community epicenter for nearly fifty years, Phoenix Art Museum presents festivals, live performances, independent art films and educational programs that enlighten, entertain and stimulate. Visitors also enjoy PhxArtKids an interactive space for children, vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, the lushly landscaped Sculpture Garden, dining at Arcadia Farms at Phoenix Art Museum, and shopping at The Museum Store.

To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit <u>PhxArt.org</u>, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.