

# Phoenix Art Museum

## News Release

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## Phoenix Art Museum establishes transition team, appoints interim CEO, deputy director, and transition manager

*Museum establishes continuity and strategic transition plan for Museum leadership and CEO search*

**PHOENIX (July 9, 2019)** – Phoenix Art Museum announces the appointment of an interim Sybil Harrington Director and the establishment of a transition team led by its Board of Trustees, following the announced departure of Amada Cruz, who has served as the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO since 2015. Cruz departs the Museum on July 10, 2019, following her appointment as the Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO of the Seattle Art Museum. The executive committee of the Board of Trustees has appointed Mark Koenig, the Museum’s Chief Financial Officer, to the interim role. Koenig, who brings more than 25 years of experience in senior executive leadership of non-profit organizations, including more than five years with the San Francisco Symphony, will also continue to serve as the Museum’s Chief Financial Officer.

“As the Board of Trustees seeks to ensure the Museum’s continuity of services and its continued focus on moving toward long-term financial stability, we felt confident that someone of Mark’s significant leadership experience and financial expertise was the ideal choice to guide Phoenix Art Museum during its national search for a permanent director and CEO,” said Jon Hulburd, chair of the Board of Trustees, who will complete his two-year term in September. “Mark will be supported in his work by the Museum’s senior executive team and staff, as well as each member of the Board, all of whom are committed to the success and health of the organization.”

“I look forward to working closely with the Board, our senior team, and the staff to continue building on the work the Museum has done to engage its community,” said Koenig. “We want to continue prioritizing the Museum’s long-term financial stability to ensure we can continue to fulfill our mission of enriching the lives of our community through increased access to arts and culture.”

As part of the Museum’s transition, the Board of Trustees has appointed Gilbert Vicario, the Selig Family Chief Curator, to serve in an expanded role as the Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs. In his new role, Vicario will direct all curatorial, arts, and culture content for Phoenix Art Museum. Since 2015, the Museum has expanded its focus on engaging diverse communities and integrating diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion into its decisions regarding exhibitions, acquisitions, public programs, and interpretation. Vicario will work to continue this mission, along with seeking further opportunities for the Museum to expand its scholarly publications program and its development of original exhibitions that travel nationally.

Along with the new staff appointments, the Board of Trustees has implemented actions and strategies designed to ensure continuity and additional support during the leadership transition. Following the conclusion of Hulburd’s term as board chair in September 2019, the Board will be helmed by co-chairs Carter Emerson, who previously served as vice chair, and Mark Feldman, who has served as the Museum’s treasurer since 2015. Together, Emerson and Feldman will also chair a newly established transition team, composed of Trustees with significant business and leadership experience, including Donald Opatrny, David Lenhardt, and Meredith von Arentschildt.

The transition team has also appointed Shelley Cohn to serve as the team's transition manager. Cohn, who brings more than 35 years of nonprofit and arts leadership experience, previously served as the executive director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts for more than two decades until her retirement in 2005. She inspired the Shelley Award, awarded annually at the Governor's Arts Award to an Arizona resident who demonstrates significant and strategic impact on arts and culture in the state. Cohn will serve as an advisor to the board and the senior leadership team and will work closely with Trustees and senior executives on building relationships with key community constituencies and donors to help create foundational support for the Museum's exhibition and educational programs during this period of transition. Under the direction of the Board of Trustees, Cohn will also coordinate the national search for a new CEO for the Museum. The national search will integrate the identified needs and priorities of the communities it serves as key components for consideration and evaluation.

"This is a significant moment in the Museum's history, as we contemplate next steps for this organization as it marks its 60<sup>th</sup> year," said Mark Feldman, incoming co-chair and board treasurer. "This is a chance to not only develop dynamic and innovative plans toward the Museum's long-term success, but also listen to our stakeholders so we can ensure that we are responding to who our community is today and what they most need from their Phoenix Art Museum. It's an extraordinary time to be a part of this process, and we welcome the support of civic and community leaders in helping the Museum to move forward."

For press, contact the Museum's Press Office at 602.257.2015 or [Margaree.bigler@phxart.org](mailto:Margaree.bigler@phxart.org). For more information about Phoenix Art Museum, its collections, exhibitions, and education programs, visit [www.phxart.org](http://www.phxart.org).

#### **About Phoenix Art Museum**

Since 1959, Phoenix Art Museum has provided millions of guests with access to world-class art and experiences in an effort to ignite imaginations, create meaningful connections, and serve as a brave space for all people who wish to experience the transformative power of art. Located in Phoenix's Central Corridor, the Museum is a vibrant destination for the visual arts and the largest art museum in the southwestern United States. Each year, more than 350,000 guests engage with critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions and the Museum's collection of more than 19,000 works of American and Western American, Asian, European, Latin American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents a comprehensive film program, live performances, and educational programs designed for visitors of all ages, along with vibrant photography exhibitions made possible 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 602.257.1880.

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