

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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Fashion exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum presents more than 100 illustrations, photographs by Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos

Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration features artistic, editorial, and commercial work by the renowned fashion illustrator and his creative partner, including 12 drawings on view for the first time to the general public.

PHOENIX (August, 19 2019) – From September 21, 2019 through January 5, 2020, Phoenix Art Museum will present *Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration*, a three-decade survey of works by renowned fashion illustrator Antonio Lopez and art director Juan Ramos. Spanning the 1960s through the 1980s, the exhibition showcases more than 100 original drawings, photographs, and magazines featuring work that Lopez and Ramos created under ANTONIO, the signature representing the Puerto Rican duo’s collaborative creations. *Antonio* explores how Lopez and Ramos brought a fresh perspective to an industry that was quickly prioritizing photography over illustration, and how their vibrant designs expanded and transformed fashion’s view of beauty, ethnicity, and sexuality.

“We are excited to present *Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration* to our audiences in Arizona,” said Gilbert Vicario, the Museum’s Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and the Selig Family Chief Curator. “Through their unique aesthetic and diverse body of work, Antonio Lopez and Juan Ramos redefined the fashion illustration industry, and we are proud to pay homage to their contributions through this exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum.”

Born in 1943 in Utuado, Puerto Rico, Lopez and his family moved to New York when he was 7. He attended the Traphagen School of Fashion and the High School of Art and Design (formerly High School of Industrial Arts) before being accepted to the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). Through a work-study program at FIT, Lopez was offered a job at *Women’s Wear Daily*. He accepted the position with the fashion trade paper and left FIT before graduating. Lopez would go on to illustrate for the world’s preeminent fashion publications and retailers before moving to Paris in the 1970s, where he worked with Karl Lagerfeld and Yves Saint Laurent, among other significant designers. He moved back to New York in the 1980s, during which time his work was heavily influenced by athletic wear and street and break-dancing style. Throughout his career, he also discovered some of fashion’s most successful models, including Pat Cleveland, Tina Chow, Jerry Hall, Grace Jones, and Jessica Lange. He championed these diverse women, and through his illustrations, he re-envisioned what fashion illustration was and could be.

Lopez’s work was heavily influenced by his creative partner Juan Ramos, who he met at FIT. A fellow New-York transplant from Puerto Rico, Ramos brought significant knowledge of pop culture and art and fashion history to Lopez’s drawings. *Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration* showcases the work the collaborators produced for publications and retailers such as *Vogue*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *French Elle*, *Harper’s Bazaar Italia*, *Saks Fifth Avenue*, and *Bloomingdales*. Additionally, more than 20 lavish drawings from Lopez’s *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*, an illustrated book of stories from *The Arabian Nights*, are also featured, alongside 12 never-before-exhibited, large-scale drawings from 1973 that feature models Pat Cleveland and Amina Warsuma and were commissioned by former *Vogue* editor Carrie Donovan. *Antonio* also includes a continuous screening of the documentary *Antonio Lopez 1970: Sex, Fashion and Disco* (2017) by director James Crump. The film explores the impact of Lopez and Ramos on the fashion industry.

“Antonio’s work has inspired me for decades,” said Dennita Sewell, the exhibition’s curator who served as the Museum’s Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design from 2000 to August 2019. “Antonio added a sensuality to his illustrations that wasn’t allowed to be explored in the cultural climate until the 1960s and 1970s. His work was

about more than just making an image. He styled and fostered unique identities for the women he drew, and he was at the forefront of the movement toward diversity and inclusion in the fashion image.”

For interviews and high-resolution photography, contact the Museum’s Press Office at 602.257.2015 or margaree.bigler@phxart.org. For more information about Phoenix Art Museum and its collections, exhibitions, and education programs, visit phxart.org.

About the Exhibition

Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration is on view from September 21, 2019 through January 5, 2020. It is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and made possible through the generosity of Arizona Costume Institute, with additional support from the Museum’s Circles of Support and Museum Members.

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, or call 602.257.1880.

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