

Phoenix Art Museum

NEWS RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Margaree Bigler, Assistant Director, Marketing and Public Relations
602.257.2105 | margaree.bigler@phxart.org

Phoenix Art Museum welcomes interim curator of fashion design

Helen Jean appointed to part-time role as Museum continues its search for a new Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design

(September 30, 2019) – Phoenix Art Museum has appointed costume historian, designer, and lecturer Helen Jean to serve as the interim curator of fashion design. Jean, who serves as a college representative at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM), previously served for five years at the Museum as the curatorial assistant for Dennita Sewell, who was recently named the Museum’s Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design Emerita. Over the next year, she will curate exhibitions presented in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery as the Museum continues its search for its next Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design.

“We are thrilled to welcome Helen Jean back to Phoenix Art Museum as our interim curator of fashion design,” said Gilbert Vicario, the Museum’s Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and the Selig Family Chief Curator. “We created this part-time, provisional role to ensure the continued success of our fashion design program during this period of transition. With experience working directly with Dennita Sewell, Helen has deep insight into our fashion collection, and this knowledge, coupled with her professional experience and intellectual curiosity, is why we are confident Helen will ensure the continued care of our fashion objects and the quality of our exhibitions until the new Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design is appointed.”

In August 2019, Phoenix Art Museum announced the planned departure of Dennita Sewell, who served as the Museum’s curator of fashion design for nearly two decades. Jean, previously known as Helen Nosova, served as the Museum’s curatorial assistant working with Sewell from 2007 to 2012, during which time she contributed to more than a dozen fashion exhibitions, the expansion of the Museum’s fashion design collection, and educational programming such as public lectures, object discussions, and gallery tours. Throughout her career, Jean has held various roles at arts organizations such as the Art Institute of Phoenix, the Santa Fe Opera, the Arizona Opera, the Rose Theater, and the Blue Barn Theater and the International Quilt Study Center in Nebraska. She will split her time between FIDM and Phoenix Art Museum.

“I am delighted to return to Phoenix Art Museum in a new capacity,” Jean said. “Over the coming year, I hope to present exhibitions that encourage visitors to engage with the Museum’s fashion design collection in new, and sometimes surprising, ways. My goal is to enable our audiences to discover fashion’s role as an artistic mirror, historic marker, and global influencer, capable of connecting us all through a web of unique culture and exquisite craft.”

Jean’s first exhibition at Phoenix Art Museum will open in spring 2020, and in addition to her curatorial work, she will support the work of Arizona Costume Institute, a support group of the Museum since 1966. Sewell’s final exhibition for the Museum, *Antonio: The Fine Art of Fashion Illustration*, is on view through January 5, 2020. For more information on fashion exhibitions and related programming, visit 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, or call 602.257.1880.

About the Fashion Design Collection of Phoenix Art Museum

Founded in 1966, the fashion design collection of Phoenix Art Museum is recognized for its quality and comprehensiveness. It is composed of more than 8,000 objects of American and European men's, women's, and children's dress and accessories, dating from the 18th century to the present day.

###