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**PHOENIX ART MUSEUM ANNOUNCES *GEOFFREY BEENE: TRAPEZE***

***High-Flying Exhibition Honoring One of America's True Design  
Visionaries Opens November 7***

*"The unimaginable always becomes the unforgettable."* – Geoffrey Beene

**PHOENIX** (May 27, 2009) – Geoffrey Beene (1927-2004) was one of America's most original fashion designers, a true design pioneer that elevated his craft to an art. In this spirit, the Fashion Design Department of Phoenix Art Museum presents *Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze*, an engaging exhibition with attitude that goes beyond the study of dressmaking into the world of conceptual art. The exhibition will be on view at Phoenix Art Museum from November 7, 2009 through March 7, 2010.

*"Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze* is drawn from a superb private collection acquired in the 1980s and 1990s, when Mr. Beene was at a creative peak," commented Dennita Sewell, curator of fashion design, Phoenix Art Museum. "The exhibition, much like Mr. Beene's life in fashion, is witty and irreverent. It will allow visitors to experience his celebrated designs and philosophies in a striking and stimulating way."

For 40 years, beginning with the opening of Geoffrey Beene, Inc. in 1963, Beene challenged the American Fashion establishment by creating visionary haute couture for women and superbly tailored styles for men that married comfort and luxury. Winner of eight Coty Awards, three CFDA Awards, an honorary doctorate from the Rhode Island School of Design, he was deemed an "American Original" by the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. Featuring more than 30 garments, *Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze* profiles the fanciful custom-made wardrobe of Patsy Tarr, a prominent supporter of dance in New York and founder and publisher of the award-winning *2twice* magazine.

"No part of a Beene wardrobe was ever out of style; indeed subsequent purchases simply revealed his ideas in more depth. And of course there was the originality, the wit, the materials and lightness," commented Tarr. "Beene's clothes were masterly, unusual and rare."

**Exhibition Overview**

*Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze* reveals the mutual love of dance and art shared by Tarr and Beene and how it fostered her highly creative wardrobe. Unlike a retrospective, the exhibition provides unique insight into the creative relationship between designer and client. Featuring one-of-kind garments and unique items, the exhibition clearly expresses the designer's sense of humor and expertise with fabric. Also present is Beene's love of flowers, dots, curves, wraps, folds and triangles, reoccurring themes present in several of the designs.

Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze – add one

Designed by Abbott Miller, a partner at the award-winning New York design firm Pentagram, the installation draws inspiration from Beene's love of the circus. Surrounded by polka-dots and stripes, specially designed mannequins will be suspended from the ceiling displaying Tarr's fantastic clothes. Tom Kalin's film "30" commissioned by Beene in 1993, will play on a continuous loop – its film noir surrealism complementing the installation theme.

Miller previously designed six Geoffrey Beene exhibitions as well as graphic design and branding materials for the designer. In addition, Miller has collaborated with Tarr as art director and designer for more than 20 years on her publications, including *Twice* and *Geoffrey Beene: A Design Tribute* (Twice Arts Foundation, 2005).

### **Exhibition Details**

This exhibition is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and is presented in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery November 7, 2009 through March 7, 2010.

The Geoffrey Beene Foundation is dedicated to fashion-design education and supporting emerging fashion talent. *Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze* will support the foundation's vision through special programming, lectures and gallery talks.

The Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) will support a lecture on January 20, 2010, with Russell Nordoza, Senior Vice President and COO of the Geoffrey Beene Foundation, and esteemed fashion designer Doo-Ri Chung, who after graduating from the Parsons School of Design worked for Geoffrey Beene for five years and rose to the position of Lead Designer.

Admission to the exhibition 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 6-17 and free for children under 6 and for museum members.

Phoenix Art Museum is located in downtown Phoenix at the corner of Central and McDowell Road. Museum Hours are Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., Thursday thru Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, Noon – 5:00 p.m. The museum will be closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and major holidays. Admission is free on Wednesdays from 3:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and for everyone on First Fridays, 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Major support for this exhibition provided by Patsy Tarr and Robert Burg Designs. Additional support provided by the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

### **About the Fashion Design Collection**

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.

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Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze – add two

**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 [PhxArt.org](http://PhxArt.org), or call the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.

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