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PHOENIX ART MUSEUM CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Festivities, Exhibitions, Renovations and Additions Commemorate Milestone

PHOENIX (September 8, 2009) – For 50 years Phoenix Art Museum has been fulfilling its organizational mission to bring great art from around the world to the people of Arizona. Since 1959, the Museum has hosted hundreds of exhibitions and millions of visitors. It has grown from 25,000 square feet to 285,000 square feet and has seen metropolitan Phoenix's population swell from less than 300,000 to more than 4 million people. It's been 50 amazing years of art, education, community and growth, and the Museum is commemorating its golden anniversary with a spectacular celebration!

"A Golden Anniversary provides a golden moment to reflect on the successes of our institution and to look forward to even greater potential," commented James Ballinger, The Sybil Harrington Director, Phoenix Art Museum. "The Museum at fifty has grown to an institution with an international reputation for excellence. However, it is the way the Museum raises the quality of life in metropolitan Phoenix through educational programs, memorable exhibitions and community outreach that is the most rewarding for the Museum's leadership, staff and volunteers. We look forward to sharing and celebrating this tremendous milestone with the people of Phoenix."

On Saturday, November 7, the 50th Anniversary festivities begin with the pARTy 2009. Regarded as one of the Valley's premier social events, the annual black-tie gala attracts more than 750 enthusiastic Museum friends and supporters. Guests enjoy cocktails in the Jacquie and Bennett Dorrance Sculpture Garden, a gourmet dinner in the Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art and dancing to live music in the Cummings Great Hall. This year's event features live music performed by world-renowned entertainers, The Peter Duchin Orchestra. All proceeds from the pARTy benefit the Museum's education programs and exhibition schedule. Individual tickets may be purchased and range in price from \$250, for guests under 35, up to \$5000. For tickets or more information, call (602) 257-2101.

The pARTy 2009 will also feature the unveiling of *Fabulous at 50: Phoenix Art Museum* a 400 page coffee table book honoring the history of the Museum. This beautiful hardbound book includes a detailed account of Museum milestones and a selection of significant exhibitions and collection highlights. *Fabulous at 50* will also be available in the Museum Store beginning November 8, 2009.

In addition to the commemorative gala, the Museum will host a 50th anniversary party for the entire community on Friday, December 4, 2009. Part of the Museum's ongoing First Friday festivities, this free and open to the public celebration includes music, performances, food, drinks and one or two surprises. It will also be the Valley's first chance to view an installation of 50 new gifts of artwork acquired in honor of the Museum's anniversary. These exciting additions will impact each of the Museum's seven collection areas and will be showcased in the Museum's Steele Gallery December 4, 2009 through January 3, 2010.

"A majority of the 18,000 objects in the Museum's collection are the result of gifts from generous donors. In fact, the collection was started long before the Museum actually opened with a gift of a single painting in 1915. It's wonderful that *50/50: Fifty Gifts for Fifty Years* will continue this tradition and provide 50 new works for the community," commented Ballinger.

50/50: Fifty Gifts for Fifty Years is one of several exciting exhibitions in the Museum's 2009-2010 line-up. Photography will be a main focus with *Ansel Adams: Discoveries* opening in the Steel Gallery on January 31, 2010, and *Exposing Time* a Norton Gallery Photography Show opening on March 6, 2010. Other scheduled exhibitions include *Geoffrey Beene: Trapeze* (November 7, 2009 – March 7, 2010); *Southeast Asian Textiles from the Hudak Collection* (February 13 – July 4, 2010); *Tea and Immortality: Contemporary Chinese Yixing Teawares from the James Bialac Collection* (February 20 – April 25, 2010); and *Cézanne and American Modernism* (July 3 – September 26, 2010).

The Museum's 50th year will culminate in two ambitious endeavors that will modernize the existing facilities. Beginning in spring 2010, and funded by City of Phoenix 2006 general obligation bonds, renovations will commence on the gallery space in the 1959 and 1965 north wings including the Western American, Latin American, European, Asian Art and Thorne Miniature Room Galleries. Plans include the installation of wood floors, new ceilings, lighting, HVAC and security systems. Also slated for construction in 2010 is a 2,500 square foot Community Room that will be located on the Museum's South side. This dramatic space designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, the same architects that facilitated both the 1996 and 2006 Museum expansions, will be a high-tech gathering space ideal for symposiums, classes, support group gatherings and Museum meetings. The Community Room will also be available as a facility rental for outside organizations.

"The upcoming building renovations and additions will bring all of the Museum's facilities up to the standard established by the most recent expansion in 2006 and will ensure that our guests have a top-notch experience in every part of the Museum. In the next 50 years, as in the last half century, Phoenix Art Museum will continue to evolve to meet the needs of Valley residents and visitors. As an institution and as a community we have so much to celebrate," said Ballinger.

For more information about the Phoenix Art Museum including the Museum's 50th Anniversary and upcoming events and exhibitions, visit phxart.org.

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 18,000 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.

Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 senior citizens (65+) and full-time students with ID; \$4 children ages 6 to 17; Children under 6 and Phoenix Art Museum members receive free admission. The Museum offers free general admission for everyone on Wednesday evenings, 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. and for First Fridays, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Some exhibitions have special admission fees.

Hours: Wednesday 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Thursday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday Noon to 5 p.m.; First Fridays, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The Museum is closed Mondays, Tuesdays and major holidays. The Museum Store and Arcadia Farms at Phoenix Art Museum are open during Museum hours.

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