Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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The Cape Uncovered: Phoenix Art Museum Presents Fall 2013 Fashion Exhibition

The Cape explores the styles and themes of the iconic garment beginning September 15

PHOENIX (September 11, 2013) – Phoenix Art Museum will present *The Cape*, the latest exhibition drawn from its significant fashion holdings, on view in the Ellman Fashion Design Gallery, September 15 through February 9, 2014. Featuring more than 40 pieces comprised from the Museum's fashion collection, *The Cape* traces the eponymous garment through its many centuries, as it evolved to become a symbol of fantasy, authority, elegance and adventure, spanning the 18th century to trends from recent runway collections worn by well-known Hollywood icons.

"Capes have long been a symbol of mystery, romance and even heroism," said Dennita Sewell, Curator of Fashion Design at Phoenix Art Museum. "The varied fabric and function of capes, likely one of the earliest garments constructed by humans, has made it a mainstay of fashion."

The exhibition explores the drama, romance and history of the legendary outwear through themes such as tradition, authority, fictional characters, and the golden age of Hollywood. The works range from the historical, including an 18th century Dutch cape of Indian painted cotton, to 20th and 21st century couture, Tom Ford, Givenchy, Gucci, Trigere, and Vionnet. Highlights include two dramatic, red carpet looks by Giambattista Valli worn by Sarah Jessica Parker and Jennifer Lopez. In addition to couture, *The Cape* also examines the appearance of capes, cloaks and capelets in the more romantic context of fairy tales, military uniforms, travel, and, even the colorful, decorated costume of a matador.

Beyond the Gallery

The Cape will also feature a robust educational program. It begins with a student salon for college and high school students and teachers of fashion, on September 28, 10:30 am and a gallery talk, October 2, 7 pm, both lead by Sewell. On December 18, at 7 pm, the Museum will present a lecture and book signing by Phoenix-based costume designer Connie Furr Soloman, whose recent book *Liberace Extravaganza!* details the performer's fur, feather and sequin-laden ensembles, including capes. Finally, the Museum will present "The Cut of a Cloak: An 18th Century Tailor's Perspective," a discussion with Mark Hutter, a tailor with the Department of Historic Trades in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. He will illuminate the history of cloaks in the 17th and 18th centuries, and will demonstrate cutting the fashionable styles.

The Cape is organized by Phoenix Art Museum and curated by Dennita Sewell, Curator of Fashion Design. *The Cape* will be on view through September 15, 2013 – February 9, 2014. For more information, visit phxart.org/exhibition/thecape.

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 17th 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.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 17,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona.

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