Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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New exhibition explores friendship, creative symbiosis of Xul Solar and Jorge Luis Borges

Xul Solar and Jorge Luis Borges: The Art of Friendship *arrives from New York October 2-December 31, 2013*

PHOENIX (July 2, 2013) – Beginning this fall, Phoenix Art Museum will present *Xul Solar and Jorge Luis Borges: The Art of Friendship*, direct from its premiere at the Americas Society in New York. The exhibition, which tells the story of the creative symbiosis resulted from the lasting friendship and intellectual exchange between Argentines Xul Solar, artist and Jorge Luis Borges, writer, includes works that until recently, have never been seen outside of Argentina. *The Art of Friendship* will include paintings, publications, letters, and other objects, all of which illustrate the influence of each creator on the work of his friend and confidant.

The mystic artist Xul Solar (1887-1963) was born Oscar Agustín Alejandro Schulz Solari in Buenos Aires. First educated as a musician and later as an architect before working as a schoolteacher, he traveled throughout Europe, where he adopted the pseudonym Xul Solar, a play on Schulz Solari, with a nod to the brilliant luminosity of the sun. As an artist, both as a painter and a sculptor, Solar first exhibited his work in Milan in 1920, and thus began an expansive, imaginative career and body of work. Often incorporating elements of astrology and Eastern religions, his art features an ethereal, mystical quality.

Solar met Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) in 1924, after both returned to Buenos Aires from Europe. Borges, a short story writer, essayist and poet, also born in Buenos Aires, was known for his engagement with philosophical literature as well as the elements of magical realism that pervade his work. The two men met through the the literary and artistic circles of the journal-magazine *Martin Fierro*. In the search of a new Argentine identity, Borges and Solar, along with other *martinfierristas* developed a Neo-Creole identity that fused European modernism with Argentine nationalism and *gaucho* culture. Nonetheless, each developed distinct voices within this group, Borges reinventing the slums and unpaved streets of Buenos Aires' suburbs, and Xul creating the new languages Neo-Creole and Pan-Language as well as fantastic landscapes filled with monstrous figures in which he blended mystic and occult references with Pan-American symbolism.

The exhibition is curated by Gabriela Rangel, Director of Visual Arts and Chief Curator at the Americas Society, and touches on the influence Solar and Borges had on each other throughout their friendship and collaboration that lasted until Solar's death in 1963. To this day, the two men are considered two of the most important cultural figures of 20th century Buenos Aires, whose impact on art, literature, and culture in Argentina is still felt today.

Xul Solar and Jorge Luis Borges: The Art of Friendship, is on view September 21 – December 31 in Orme Lewis Gallery. The exhibition is organized by the Museo Xul Solar, Buenos Aires, and the Americas Society, New York, and is curated by Gabriela Rangel, Director of Visual Arts and Chief Curator at Americas Society. Its Phoenix premiere is organized and directed by Vanessa Davidson, PhD, Curator of Latin American Art at Phoenix Art Museum.

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 18,000 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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