Phoenix Art Museum

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PHOENIX ART MUSEUM DIRECTOR JAMES BALLINGER ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO RETIRE AFTER NATIONAL SEARCH FOR HIS SUCCESSOR

2014 Marks His 40th Anniversary With The Museum

Phoenix, (APRIL 17, 2014) - James K. Ballinger, The Sybil Harrington Director of the Phoenix Art Museum, announced today to the museum's Board of Trustees and staff his intention to retire, and requested the Board initiate a search process to replace him.

Ballinger, who will celebrate his 40th anniversary with the museum in December and his 33rd year as director in February, said the timing of the announcement was to "ensure that the succession-planning process will be deliberate and seamless until the proper person is found, and that a smooth transition follows."

Ballinger joined the museum in 1974 as Curator of Collections. He was named Director in February, 1982.

"Jim Ballinger is a visionary and nationally respected arts advocate who has guided the Phoenix Art Museum's physical growth and extensive reach as part of his overall passion to grow and expand the arts in Arizona," said Phoenix Art Museum Board of Trustees Chairman Jim Patterson. "His legacy will be as a savvy businessman, a great communicator and a renowned art expert who did—and will continue to do—his job with grace and enthusiasm. Ballinger very much is the Phoenix Art Museum."

Patterson said the Museum's Succession Planning Committee will retain a national search firm to oversee an international process.

During Ballinger's tenure, the museum has presented nearly 500 exhibitions and the collection has grown by 10,000 objects. Ballinger has personally organized more than 50 exhibitions, authored exhibition catalogues, a book on Frederic Remington, administered two major capital campaigns that expanded the museum from 72,000 square feet to its current 285,000 square feet and brought a number of blockbuster exhibitions to Phoenix, including the current *Hollywood Costume*. He currently manages a staff of more than 115 and an operating budget of $11.6 million a year. He is recognized as a leader nationally in the field of Western American art.

"When I looked at the numbers, they simply added up: I will turn 65 this year and I'll celebrate 40 years with the museum and 33 years as Director. Looking at the Museum's next decade, it's the right time to turn over the reins," he said. "We have a great

exhibition schedule set through 2016 and a quality staff to carry us forward. I am a bit of an oddity in that I have stayed so long in one place.

“A lot of people move to other museums for greater challenges, but, if you think about it, I’ve worked for at least three different museums without leaving Central and McDowell,” he said. “Today, the museum is four times the size physically and the budget is more than 10 times the size as when I started as director. When I realize the growth we’ve gone through, it’s tremendously satisfying. In many ways I view myself as an advocate for our visitors making sure the museum is a special place with special enriching experiences for everyone.”

He points to the City of Phoenix Bond Election in 1988 as a milestone launching point for the museum’s growth and as “transformative to the arts community of Phoenix. I’m proud to have played a key role in that election.” Ballinger served as Treasurer for the last two City of Phoenix Bond Programs by mayoral appointment.

Following the first expansion for the Steele Gallery, Cummings Great Hall, JP Morgan Chase Lobby, Harnett Gallery and Whiteman Hall, the museum’s first “blockbuster” exhibition, *Splendors of Ancient Egypt* in 1998, attracted sellout crowds that continued with follow-up blockbusters *Monet at Giverny* in 1999 and *Secret World of The Forbidden City: Splendors from China’s Imperial Palace* in 2001.

Under Ballinger’s direction, in 2006, following a $41.2 million campaign, the museum completed its 18-year facilities master plan when it opened the Greenbaum Lobby, Dorrance Sculpture Garden and the Marshall, Hendler, Anderman, Marcus, Marley, Brown, Norton and Men’s Art Council galleries in the Katz Wing for Modern Art. Shortly thereafter they opened *Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art: Treasures from the Rijksmusen, Amsterdam*. At that time the acclaimed model program with The University of Arizona’s Center for Creative Photography was unveiled.

“I firmly believe in the mission of the museum—bringing great art from all over the world to the people of Arizona to enrich their lives and their communities,” Ballinger said. “The museum has built a significant national and international reputation. Our board has believed that the Phoenix Art Museum should be a leader in the community and has allowed me to do that, for which I am most grateful.”

Nationally, Ballinger was a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors Board of Directors for 10 years, serving as its President in 2006-2007. He recently completed an extended term on the National Council of the Arts after being appointed by President Bush in 2004. He currently sits on the board of directors for the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas, the Phoenix Community Alliance and Papp Investment Trust.

Among his many accolades and honors is the 2013 Shelley Award at the 33rd annual Governor’s Arts Awards and being named Nonprofit Director of the Year by the Organization of Nonprofit Executives of Arizona.

“I have had the privilege of working with many dedicated volunteers, great trustees, a very supportive wife and family, and incredible staff members who have always worked together for the good of the museum,” Ballinger said. “Many of those people have taught me a lot. I am most proud of how the museum has served the community beyond our

walls. Many times we don't realize how we've impacted the community and individuals' lives."

For more information, visit www.phxart.org.

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 collection of more than 17,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions 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 the 24-hour recorded information line at (602) 257-1222.