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**Larger Than Life *Don Coen: The Migrant Series* Exhibition Makes Its First Stop at Phoenix Art Museum**

*Includes series of 15 large-scale, realistic portrait paintings of U.S. migrant farmers*

**PHOENIX (October 9, 2014)** — [Don Coen: The Migrant Series](#) was organized by Phoenix Art Museum and opens there on October 18, 2014. The exhibition is comprised of a series of 15 large-scale, realistic portrait paintings of migrant farm laborers by the Colorado artist. The paintings are inspired by photographs of individuals that Coen took on farms across the U.S. over a decade. During the hundreds of hours he spent in the fields studying and taking photos of these farmers, Coen got to know each person's story and it shows in these paintings. Over the past decade, he painted these works measuring almost 10 by 7 feet using dozens of layers of paint applied with a spray gun – then added the finishing details by hand with pencil. In these portrait paintings, the artist's non-traditional approach of using airbrush is apparent.

Jerry Smith, Ph.D., curator of American and Western American art at Phoenix Art Museum, commented that "Through the large size of the paintings, the compelling subject matter, the wonderful details and airbrush technique used, this series is remarkably compelling." Adding, "Yet the one thing that comes through most clearly is the humanity of the individuals portrayed."

Having spent his youth on a family farm, the value of hard work and manual labor was instilled in Coen from a young age. He said that the goal of this series "is to raise the awareness of the average American to this overlooked, perhaps even invisible, yet vital part of our society." Coen called the series a "humble expression of gratitude" for America's migrant workers.

"When I walked into the artist's studio three years ago, I stopped in my tracks because of the power of those paintings," said James K. Ballinger, The Sybil Harrington Director at Phoenix Art Museum. He added that, "By the time I left, I knew we had to create an exhibition of those artworks as it is a crucial topic for our Arizona audience, and across the country."

*Don Coen: The Migrant Series* will be at Phoenix Art Museum from October 18, 2014 to February 1, 2015. The exhibition was organized by Phoenix Art Museum and will be accompanied by a full-color catalog with essays by Lewis Sharp, Denver Art Museum's Director Emeritus, and Jerry Smith, Ph.D., curator of American and Western American art at Phoenix Art Museum. It was made possible with support from the Peters Family Art Foundation and the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Endowment. For additional information about the exhibition please visit [phxart.org/exhibition/doncoen-migrant-series](http://phxart.org/exhibition/doncoen-migrant-series).

**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. Top national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the museum's collection of over 17,000 objects of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American,*

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*modern and contemporary art, photography and fashion design. The museum hosts photography exhibitions through its landmark partnership with The University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography in Tucson. Visitors can also enjoy the PhxArtKids gallery, the Dorrance Sculpture Garden, the Thorne Miniature Rooms of historic interiors, and a collection of works by renowned Arizona artist Philip C. Curtis. For additional information please visit [phxart.org](http://phxart.org) or call 602-257-1880.*

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