

Phoenix Art Museum

News Release

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Phoenix Art Museum Receives \$2 Million Endowment Benefiting Fashion Design

Donation in honor of Arizona Costume Institute's 50th anniversary will support curator of fashion design

PHOENIX (April 4, 2016) – Phoenix Art Museum announced this weekend that it has received a \$2 million endowment from Jacquie Dorrance, longtime Museum patron and member of Phoenix Art Museum's Board of Trustees. One of the largest gifts the Museum has received in recent years, the endowment commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Arizona Costume Institute and the 16-year tenure of Dennita Sewell, curator of fashion design. It will provide a permanent funding source for the curator of fashion design position which will be named the Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design.

"Jacquie Dorrance's vision, leadership and profound generosity will have a transformative impact on the Museum's ability not only to develop fashion exhibitions and programming, but to retain and invest in our curatorial talent for decades to come," said Amada Cruz, the Museum's Sybil Harrington Director. "At Phoenix Art Museum, we are truly humbled by the largesse of our donors, whose support enables us to make our most ambitious goals a reality."

Mrs. Dorrance and her husband Bennett have supported Phoenix Art Museum for nearly four decades, and Mrs. Dorrance has served as a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees since 1999, also serving as chair of the Museum's 50th Anniversary gala in 2009. Passionately committed to the arts in Arizona, Mrs. Dorrance has also been a longtime patron of the Arizona Costume Institute (ACI). ACI was instrumental in the establishment of the fashion design collection in 1966, and has continued to raise funds that enabled the expansion of the collection, exhibitions, and programs. This endowment recognizes ACI's lasting commitment and aids the continuation of their work by providing funding in perpetuity for the the curator of fashion design position.

"I am pleased not only to support fashion design at Phoenix Art Museum and celebrate the contributions of Arizona Costume Institute, but also to recognize the exceptional talents, leadership and unparalleled commitment of Dennita Sewell, whose dedication has enabled the Museum to expand its collection and develop world-class exhibitions," said Mrs. Dorrance.

Sewell has held the curator of fashion design position at Phoenix Art Museum since 2000. She came to the Museum from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, where she managed that august institution's extensive costume collection. Over the nearly two decades at Phoenix Art Museum, she has organized and curated 40 exhibitions, including *Fashion Independent: The Original Style of Ann Bonfoey Taylor*, *Chado Ralph Rucci*, and most recently, *The White Shirt According to Me. Gianfranco Ferré*. Through her work both with donors and international fashion houses, Sewell has played a key role in the evolution of the fashion design collection, now numbering more than 5,000 objects, elevating its prestige and infusing the historical collection with contemporary objects from some of the most recognized names in couture.

This gift ensures that the Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion Design will continue to lead research and scholarship in this collection area and to develop internationally-acclaimed exhibitions, presenting fashion in all of its complexity and nuance, and allowing visitors to find new connections between the past and the present everyday.

About the Fashion Design Collection

Founded in 1966, Phoenix Art Museum's fashion design collection is notable for its quality and comprehensiveness. More than 8,000 objects comprise the collection, including 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 two exhibitions a year in the Kelly Ellman Fashion Design Gallery. Phoenix Art Museum is one of only a handful of art museums in the country with a long and continuously 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. In addition to an annual calendar of special exhibitions, Phoenix Art Museum’s permanent collection galleries are drawn from more than 18,000 objects of modern and contemporary art, fashion design, and photography, as well as American, Asian, Latin American, and European art. Each month, the Museum hosts a wide variety of public programs, including lectures, performances, tours, workshops, and film screenings designed for audiences of all ages to enjoy.

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