

*For Immediate Release*

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**PHOENIX ART MUSEUM CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF FASHION WITH A COMPREHENSIVE  
EXHIBITION OF ITS PERMANENT COLLECTION**

Fifty significant works of fashion will be exhibited in two galleries designed by renowned artist  
Ruben Toledo

PHOENIX (March, 2015) – To celebrate five decades of countless achievements in the area of fashion design, Phoenix Art Museum is organizing a dynamic retrospective that highlights masterworks and milestones from its permanent collection. “Defining Moments: 50 Years of Fashion at Phoenix Art Museum,” which is on view from April 2 to August 7, 2016, features more than 50 works culled from several eras throughout the history of fashion. Max Mara, Italian luxury fashion brand, is the presenting sponsor for the exhibit’s opening party on April 2.

The exhibition features iconic designers including Alexander McQueen, Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy and Chanel, alongside exquisite historical works, such as a leather gloves with metal lace and silk embellishments dating from 1650. In addition to an extensive display of ensembles and fashion accessories, New York artist Ruben Toledo has been commissioned to create exclusive, large-scale illustrations to commemorate the golden anniversary for Phoenix Art Museum’s Fashion Design Collection and volunteer support organization, Arizona Costume Institute, (ACI).

The institution is among a small group of art museums in the U.S. to claim a fashion collection. Phoenix Art Museum has acquired nearly 8,000 works from the likes of Elsa Schiaparelli, Charles James, Madeleine Vionnet and Cristobal Balenciaga, among others, since the Arizona Costume Institute was founded in 1966. In honor of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the ACI purchased a 3D-printed couture dress by Dutch designer Iris van Herpen. The groundbreaking, one-of-a-kind dress, which was featured prominently in National Geographic, is not only the first 3D-printed work acquired by Phoenix Art Museum but represents the ACI’s commitment to creating a diverse collection that follows the evolution of fashion.

The ACI's efforts were noted when The Arizona Republic recently awarded the Fashion Design Collection as the state's "Best Museum Collection." In addition to praise from peer institutions and fashion curators, the Fashion Design Collection receives ongoing support from countless stylish celebrities and fashion designers, moguls and models like Pauline Trigere, Joan Crawford, Zandra Rhodes, Pat Cleveland, Elizabeth Arden, James Galanos, Hubert de Givenchy and Edith Head. Each has participated in exhibits organized by Dennita Sewell, Curator of Fashion Design for the Fashion Design Collection.

"I've been working with this extraordinary collection for 16 years, and 'Defining Moments' marks my 40th original fashion exhibition for Phoenix Art Museum. Our collection's richness and diversity has fostered my ability to present a wide range of topics in two annual exhibits held in the fall and spring. I applied my background at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to updating our collection with contemporary acquisitions and to exploring topics that engage people from across the community," says Sewell.

#### **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 more than 18,000 objects of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, 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.