MUSEUM STORY

From its humble beginnings at the Arizona State Fair to its modern role as an anchor of culture and expression in the nation's fifth largest city, Phoenix Art Museum—like the community which fostered it—has thrived as an American original.

BY **REBECCA L. RHOADES OF *PHOENIX* MAGAZINE**

When people think of art museums, they often imagine solemn, stately places filled with tidy rows of ancient works meant to be contemplated in silence, their details and meanings researched and analyzed with academic gravity in an effort to understand how they fit into history. But museums are more than containers of things. Rather, they are complex reflections of the cultures and people that produced them.

In the case of Phoenix Art Museum, celebrating its 60th year of existence this fall, we find a profoundly unique strand of DNA—one unlike any other in the country, in fact, reaching back to a single piece of artwork. Tracing this living history, we also find a determined group of town leaders, entrepreneurs, politicians, and aficionados who fought against all odds to flourish in an unforgiving environment.

So, while Phoenix Art Museum itself is celebrating 60 years, its genealogy begins much earlier than that.

DEFINING MOMENTS

"If you look at other art museums around the country, they were created in one of two ways: Either somebody left a lot of money with the condition that it be used to fund a museum for the community, or someone donated a large collection that needs to be housed," says the Museum's Sybil Harrington Director Emeritus, James K. Ballinger, who led the Museum from 1982 to his retirement in 2014. "Neither of those happened here."

In 1915, just three years after Arizona achieved statehood, a group of local women, known as the Phoenix Women's Club, sought to improve the quality of art offerings at the Arizona State Fair. Collecting penny donations, they raised $125 to purchase *Egyptian Evening* (c. 1911), a tranquil oil painting of a family gathering reeds on the banks of a river by Swedish-born artist Carl Oscar Borg.

Additional works would follow, one each year, forming the nucleus of a community art collection, which would be displayed at various locations across the city. A decade later,

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A young visitor and Hoy Orton Hobbs at Phoenix Art Museum. Today, Hobbs' granddaughter, Nancy Hanley Eriksson, is a Museum Trustee. Image courtesy of Hanley Eriksson.

the State Fair Committee expanded its charter and established the Phoenix Fine Arts Association to promote community interest in art, acquire additional works, and maintain a permanent gallery.

In the mid-1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) brought Philip C. Curtis—who would go on to become a celebrated surrealist painter whose work can be seen in the Museum today—to Arizona to institute and serve as director of the Phoenix Art Center, the local arm of the WPA's Federal Art Project, which was designed to preserve the skills of professional artists and establish community art centers. Under his direction, a board of trustees was established, art classes taught by painter Lew Davis were offered, and more artworks were donated.

The center's success led to the formation of the Civic Center Association, which would oversee development of a six-and-a-half-acre property at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and McDowell Road that was donated in 1940 by the heirs of hardware magnate Adolphus C. Bartlett. Among those was his daughter, Maie Bartlett Heard, who, with her husband, founded the Heard Museum in the late 1920s. The proposed complex would include an art museum, public library, and theater.

World War II, however, brought progress to a halt. During the war, the Fine Arts Association made use of rooms at the Heard Museum for exhibitions and storage. Shortly after the conclusion of the conflict, it purchased a Prairie-style house at 45 East Coronado Road, adjacent to the donated acreage. Known as the Civic Center House, and later called the Art Center, it was used for cultural activities, exhibitions, and art classes.

"Curtis came back to Arizona after the war and settled in the Cattle Track Arts Compound in Scottsdale," Ballinger remembers. "He and Lew Davis continued to work with the association. In fact, during those years, Davis brought in an exhibition from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and it was shown in someone's house. Talk about how the world has changed."

In 1949, the Fine Arts Association officially incorporated as a tax-exempt organization and formed a board of trustees. Eight years later, it named founding member Forest M. Hinkhouse as the first director of the planned museum. "Hinkhouse was kind of a flamboyant personality—a little bit of Elmer Gantry thrown in on the side," says Ballinger. "But when you think about it, in order to get a museum going in a small town, it worked."

An art reviewer for *The Arizona Republic* during the '50s, Hinkhouse frequently promoted the association's activities in the newspaper, increasing public interest in the local art scene. Under his guidance, exhibitions, gallery talks, and public-relations activities increased. Following the success of a $1 million fund drive in 1957—in honor of the association's 32nd anniversary—construction began on the property donated by Bartlett's descendants to build what would eventually become Phoenix Art Museum. According to Ballinger, board members Walter Bimson, chairman of Valley National Bank, and Frank Snell, founder of law firm Snell & Wilmer, took it upon themselves to find an architect.

"One had discussions with Frank Lloyd Wright, and the other had discussions with Alden B. Dow," he says. Earlier that decade, Dow, a Michigan-based architect and student of Wright, had designed and built the Phoenix Public Library and Phoenix Little Theatre (now The Phoenix Theatre Company) on the same grounds. "It was never clear if Dow was selected and then came to town, or if he thought he was going to be selected and came out, but he went to see Mr. Wright, who asked him what he was doing in town. Dow replied, 'I'm going to design Phoenix Art Museum.'"

Dow eventually was chosen for the project, along with associate architect Blaine Drake, one of Wright's original apprentices at Taliesin in Wisconsin and Taliesin West in Scottsdale. The hiring of the two men irritated the famously prickly Wright, who disassociated himself from the Museum. It wasn't until Phoenix Art Museum presented the exhibition *Frank Lloyd Wright Drawings: Masterworks From the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives* in 1990, co-curated by Ballinger and Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, that the two organizations were once again on friendly terms.

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Carl Oscar Borg, *Egyptian Evening*, c. 1911. Oil on canvas. From the Municipal Art Collection, by exchange.


Phoenix Art Museum opening, 1959.

Like the library and theater, Dow's three-level modern structure was constructed of steel and reinforced concrete, featured flat roofs, and was surfaced in a soft pink stucco. Joining the Kiva room of the library, it helped form an inner courtyard with the two existing buildings. The first floor featured a spacious foyer, administrative offices, and a large gallery space. The second floor offered art galleries and an auditorium, and the lower level included a children's museum and art school.

It was a hit with the critics. An article in the internationally respected publication *ARTS* proclaimed, "Architects Alden Dow and Blaine Drake designed the exterior of the museum so that its appearance would fit, as an aesthetic unit, into the architectural compound of the Phoenix Civic Center quadrangle. ... Its low lines, color and cantilevered gardens will suit the region of cultivated desert, brilliant light, and eroded mountain ranges which deeply impress life in the community. Its plan is spacious, the effect open and generous, yet nowhere does it yield to the signs of artificial grandiosity which characterize so many of its elder sisters in other cities."

When the Museum opened its doors to the public on November 18, 1959, local reception was nothing short of enthusiastic as well. Approximately 5,500 Valley residents attended the grand opening. "It's even better and greater than I expected," one attendee told *The Arizona Republic* in the following day's newspaper. In the same edition, an unnamed local artist added, "Here is the dream come true of every artist in this area. And I'm astonished to see paintings here that it normally takes a museum 10 years to collect."

The *Los Angeles Times*, which just a few months earlier had praised the desert metropolis as "no longer a cultural wasteland," celebrated the Museum's launch, noting "Phoenix may well be proud of the art museum it opened last week end [sic]... It was quite an accomplishment for the desert city to simultaneously erect a building and gather the nucleus for an impressive collection."

Following local and national acclaim, generous donations began to pour in. In 1962, miniature artist Narcissa Niblack Thorne, whose work was displayed in the 1933 Chicago World's Fair, donated 20 Lilliputian rooms that she crafted primarily during the 1930s. Part of a collection of 100 that are now scattered in museums across the country, the 1:12 scale scenes remain on permanent display in the Museum's North Wing.

Two years later, Texas philanthropist Sybil B. Harrington and her husband, Donald, a successful oil and gas producer—both fierce supporters of the arts—bestowed their collection of 45 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works on the Museum, including Claude Monet's *Les arceaux fleuris, Giverny* (1913) and Camille Pissarro's *Landscape at Varengeville, Gray Weather* (1899), both of which remain some of the Museum's most beloved works. The gift put Phoenix Art Museum on the proverbial map. It also reinforced the need for additional exhibition and display room.

"The association built a 25,000-square-foot building, and they were out of space from the get-go," Ballinger notes. The addition of the East Wing in 1961, also designed by Dow, nearly tripled the size of the institution, resulting in more than 70,000 square feet of exhibition space, classrooms, and offices.

For her contributions to the Museum, Sybil Harrington was endowed with immortal status among the Museum's many benefactors: the Museum's highest administrative position, the Sybil Harrington Director, was named for her.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

As the Museum grew, so did the community's involvement. Friends of Art, a support group designed to provide assistance and raise funds for the acquisition of art, formed in 1962. The group's first purchase was a bronze sculpture, *First Portrait of Kitty (with curls)* (1944), by Jacob Epstein. Additional works by Andrew Wyeth, Narcisse Virgile Díaz de la Peña, and George Inness, among others, were added. In 1967, member John Pritzlaff purchased a painting directly from renowned Southwest artist Georgia O'Keeffe. Titled *Pink Abstraction* (1929), the work was inspired by the artist's time on Lake George in New York.

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Claude Monet, *Les arceaux fleuris, Giverny (Flowering Arches, Giverny)*, 1913. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald D. Harrington.

Ironically, the acquisition touched off a bitter existential controversy.

"There was a strong debate in the community about whether we should be a Western art museum or we should take a more metropolitan approach," Ballinger says. "When Pritzlaff bought O'Keeffe's painting, it just blew up. People wanted to know why he bought an Eastern work. The infighting over the purchase led to the demise of the Friends of Art."

Working with the template provided by Friends of Art, volunteers began forming new support groups, each covering a specific curatorial area: Western Art Associates, Arizona Costume Institute, and Contemporary Forum (recently renamed Friends of Contemporary Art) are just a few of the groups that emerged.

The great majority of the Museum's more than 20,000 objects were acquired with funding provided by these support groups or given to the institution by their owners.

The Asian collection began with a gift of 150 pieces of 16th- and 17th-century blue-and-white porcelain from Dr. Matthew Wong, a U.S.-educated physician who lived in his native Canton in the late 1930s before settling in Yuma. An assemblage of cloisonné from the Ming and Qing dynasties, donated by Robert and Marian Clague, strengthened the Museum's emphasis on Chinese decorative arts. And the contribution of nearly 200 works of Chinese painting and calligraphy from the Jeannette Shambaugh Elliott collection offers an understanding of China's artistic transformation from a traditional to a modern society.

Writer and politician Clare Boothe Luce—who with her husband, Henry, founder of the *TIME/Life* publishing empire, owned a seasonal home in the Valley—made important contributions to the Museum's holdings. In 1960, she donated what is now the Museum's most sought-after work: *El suicidio de Dorothy Hale (The Suicide of Dorothy Hale)* (1939), by Frida Kahlo, based on the real-life tragedy of a New York socialite who plunged to her death from a skyscraper in the 1930s. Painted in the style of a traditional ex-voto, which typically depicts a miracle and is accompanied by a narrative description of the event, the work presents both a visual and written account of Hale's violent demise. According to Museum lore, Luce was no great fan of the work, which may have dulled the sting of donating it. Be that as it may, its modern popularity is beyond question.

"Every other month, we get a request for the painting from different institutions, but we have to be very selective because we want to keep her here so our community can enjoy her," says Vanessa Davidson, PhD, who served as the Shawn and Joe Lampe Curator of Latin American Art from October 2011 to September 2019.

Luce also donated a piece by Kahlo's husband, Diego Rivera. The work, titled *Indígena tejiendo (Indian Woman Weaving)* (1936), features a lone woman separating strands of yarn. Denison Kitchel, lawyer and campaign manager for Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential run, and his wife, Naomi, the first female trustee of the Museum, donated numerous pieces of Spanish and Mexican glassware, furnishings, pottery, and paintings.

In 1984, the Museum hosted *Diego Rivera: The Cubist Years*, which introduced many guests to the artist's paintings. "This was a landmark exhibition because most people know Rivera only as a monumental mural painter. But in the early 1900s, he was a very accomplished Cubist master living in Paris," Davidson says. "It really opened people's eyes to the diversity of art, not only in Mexico, but in the work of a single artist." Davidson joined Phoenix Art Museum after receiving her PhD in Latin American Art History from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. When she arrived, the strength of the collection was Mexican prints, paintings, and works on paper—predictable acquisitions for a community museum in a city located just hours from the border and with a large Latina/o population. The young curator was tasked with growing the department's reputation and expanding its focus.

"Phoenix Art Museum is only the second museum in the country to establish a department of Latin American Art,"

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Davidson notes. "My goal was to diversify the collection, both in geography and chronology, by adding more works by artists from throughout Latin America."

During her tenure, Davidson spearheaded the acquisition of 296 Spanish colonial artworks from the Gary S. Culpepper Collection, which included not only paintings but *retablos*, or devotional paintings; *santos*, carved sculptures of saints; *oratorios*, wooden domestic altars; and *relicarios*, miniature religious paintings meant to be worn around the neck. A 2017 gift of 112 post-1990s abstract works from Nicholas Pardon, representing 49 artists from 14 countries, increased the department's holdings in contemporary Latin American art by 280 percent. Recently, the Friends of Mexican Art, an arts-advocacy group, celebrated its 50th anniversary by gifting a monumental installation titled *Columna interminable (Endless Column)* (2015), by Betsabeé Romero.

"I feel very strongly that when people come to the Museum, they should be able to see themselves reflected in the works on display," Davidson explains. "Our community is 41 percent Hispanic, and all of our labels and signage is bilingual."

Another distinctive department is the Fashion Design collection, which originated as donations from Arizona Costume Institute, a Museum support group that for more than 50 years has been—and remains—instrumental in acquiring and preserving garments and accessories of historical and aesthetic significance. As early as 1966, Harrington, Kitchel, Virginia Ullman, Ellen Duke, and other Valley society women, inspired by clothing exhibitions at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, began gathering pieces that would form the foundation of the collection.

Phoenix Art Museum atrium, 1965.

In 1970, Jean Hildreth was hired as the collection's first curator. With a background from Colonial Williamsburg, her interest was in 18th-century clothing. The addition of some 19th-century pieces donated by the Grosvenor family, expanded the collection's historical foundation. However, Hildreth also had a pioneering vision. She was one of the first curators in America to welcome Japanese designers. *A New Wave in Fashion: Three Japanese Designers*, which ran briefly from March through April 1983, featured experimental and inventive fashions by Issey Miyake, who is known for his pleated creations as well as designing the ubiquitous black turtleneck worn by Apple's Steve Jobs; Rei Kawakubo, founder of Comme des Garçon; and Yohji Yamamoto, whose oversized silhouettes feature avant-garde tailoring.

"That was very early to present that material here—anywhere—in museums," says Dennita Sewell, the Museum's Curator Emerita of Fashion Design, who served as fashion curator from January 2000 to August 2019. "The field at that time was more historical based. It's only been since the mid-'90s that more contemporary shows have been a regular part of museum programming."

Like the department, Sewell owes a lot of her insight and success to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art as well. After studying costume design at the University of Missouri and Yale University, she landed a job as a collections manager in The Met's Costume Institute, overseeing its archive, meeting with scholars and designers, and teaching classes.

Sewell was hired by Ballinger following a two-plus-year search. "Jean was heavily historical, and I didn't want someone who was out of that same mold. They had to have more zip," he recalls. "Dennita had the right mix of wanting to be edgy and inventive with fashion design. I remember telling her that if she ever did anything that looks like a historical society show, she could pick up her pink slip the following morning. She immediately said, 'I want to work for you.'"

Sewell went on to curate such innovative and acclaimed exhibitions as *Motorcycle Jacket* in 2004, *Trench Coat* in 2005, and *Emphatics: Avant-Garde Fashion 1963-2013* in 2016. The latter featured fashion, accessories, and ephemera by renowned designers such as Alexander McQueen, John Galliano, and Jean Paul Gaultier that had been recently acquired by the Museum.

Today, Phoenix Art Museum is one of only a handful of art museums in the country to offer a fashion department. "The collection has such a comprehensiveness and such breadth that it's possible to have this roster of exhibitions where we can present things that resonate all across the country," says

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Sewell, who now teaches fashion at Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. While her innate ability to see fashion as art and to understand its role in American culture has helped transform the Museum's fashion collection, growing it from about 5,000 objects to more than 8,000, with many of the new acquisitions falling under the contemporary label, she commends the dedication and foresight of fashion's early admirers. "I really credit the founding members for having a vision and working really hard to make it happen."

AFFIRMING THE ARTS

By the time Ballinger joined the Museum in the mid-1970s as a curator, it—along with the city of Phoenix—was expanding rapidly. Fresh out of the University of Kansas, Ballinger didn't plan on staying long.

"My plan was to be here for five years, curate some shows, and then move on to a real museum," he recalls. "The interesting thing was it became more enjoyable to build a real museum. We created bigger challenges and more opportunities."


James Ballinger

Ballinger ended up taking over the directorship in 1982 and holding the position for 32 years.

Tall and distinguished, with an affable demeanor, Ballinger's adeptness at relating to everyone from government officials to high-profile donors to schoolchildren helped grow the Museum's reputation as an unpretentious, welcoming establishment. "I always used to laugh, because if you watch movies, museum directors always have white hair and a British accent and always wear a tuxedo," he says. "That's not who we were."

One of the defining moments of his career came in the late 1980s. Urban livability and culture were issues at the forefront of the local political scene; the efforts were championed by Phoenix Mayor Terry Goddard. A general-purpose bond was put up for election that would deliver more than $1 billion to the arts—and increase tax rates.

"If you're talking about pivotal moments in the history of the Museum, the biggest one would be the founding. Otherwise, it wouldn't be here," Ballinger, now retired, says. "The second biggest would be the '88 bond election."

A fierce grassroots campaign spread support for the bond, and on April 19, 1988, it passed by 600 votes—just 1 percent of the total votes cast. "Phoenix Art Museum received [$20 million], which led to the Museum as we know it today," Ballinger says. Other projects funded by the bonds were the establishment of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve Program; the construction of the Burton Barr Central Library, Phoenix History Museum, and the Arizona Science Center; and the renovation of the Orpheum Theater. "If that election had failed, I don't know where arts would be in Phoenix today. Terry Goddard deserves a lot of kudos for having a vision," Ballinger says.

Flush with bond funding, the Museum embarked on an expansion and renovation that would more than double the 72,000-square-foot facility. An architectural selection committee, comprising City of Phoenix employees and Museum representatives, launched an extensive search that began with solicitations from 75 architectural firms across the country and was eventually winnowed to a short list of six that included the much-heralded James Stirling, Charles Moore, and Peter Eisenman. "Even though the renovation was a big deal to us, for some of these big-time architects, we weren't going to be big fish, and people were worried about that," Ballinger recalls.

In the end, a relatively unknown team from New York City, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, were given the nod. "The decision was based on one photograph," Ballinger says. "They had designed a private home with an indoor swimming pool. Covering one wall of the pool room was a 70-foot-long painting by Sol LeWitt, who was a great American conceptual artist. This photograph was like magic.

"We were their first major commission, and the theory was that they would deliver 120 percent, which was exactly what it turned out to be."

The architects were presented with two key challenges on a relatively restricted budget: creating a presence on Central Avenue and designing a structure that would house a growing collection of works and changing exhibitions in a style that is timeless—all on a budget of $180 per square foot.

"Jim was very clear that we needed to keep the existing library and theater," Williams recalls. "Our solution was to design two boxes along Central Avenue." The architects salvaged the old Museum building by removing asbestos, adding insulation, and upgrading its air-conditioning, lighting, storage, and security systems. Half of the former Phoenix Public Library was torn down, and the remaining half was refurbished and turned into administrative offices and educational facilities. Finally, and most noticeably, Williams and Tsien—who went on to design the Barack Obama Presidential Center in Chicago, among other high-profile projects—utilized the footprint of a parking lot that sat on the street-facing side of the building and built two low-slung rectangles connected by a set-back glass entrance and a steel bridge that floats above the entry walkway.

For the facade, the pair used materials that were inspired by and sourced from the surrounding landscape—namely precast concrete that was manufactured at a site just a few blocks from the Museum. "The whole sense of the power of the desert was quite

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amazing to us, and with that comes the ideal of the oasis," Tsien says. "We wanted the building to present a perception of coolness."

Influenced by the green bark of the palo brea trees that lined Central Avenue, the duo searched for a finish that was natural in color but not the typical pink or buff stucco and sandstone that adorned so many structures throughout the Valley, including the original museum. Oversize pigmented green concrete panels inset with chunks of green glacier quartz, mined from a quarry in Utah and varying in hue from cream to forest green, and mixed with white sand and mica from Georgia, cover the west side of the building. Green-tinged glass panels protrude perpendicular from the windowless front elevation, which is inset with tall, narrow niches originally meant to hold artworks. "The side that faces Central Avenue faces west, so it gets very hot, so it needed to block light, but it also needed to feel open, airy, and cool," Williams notes.

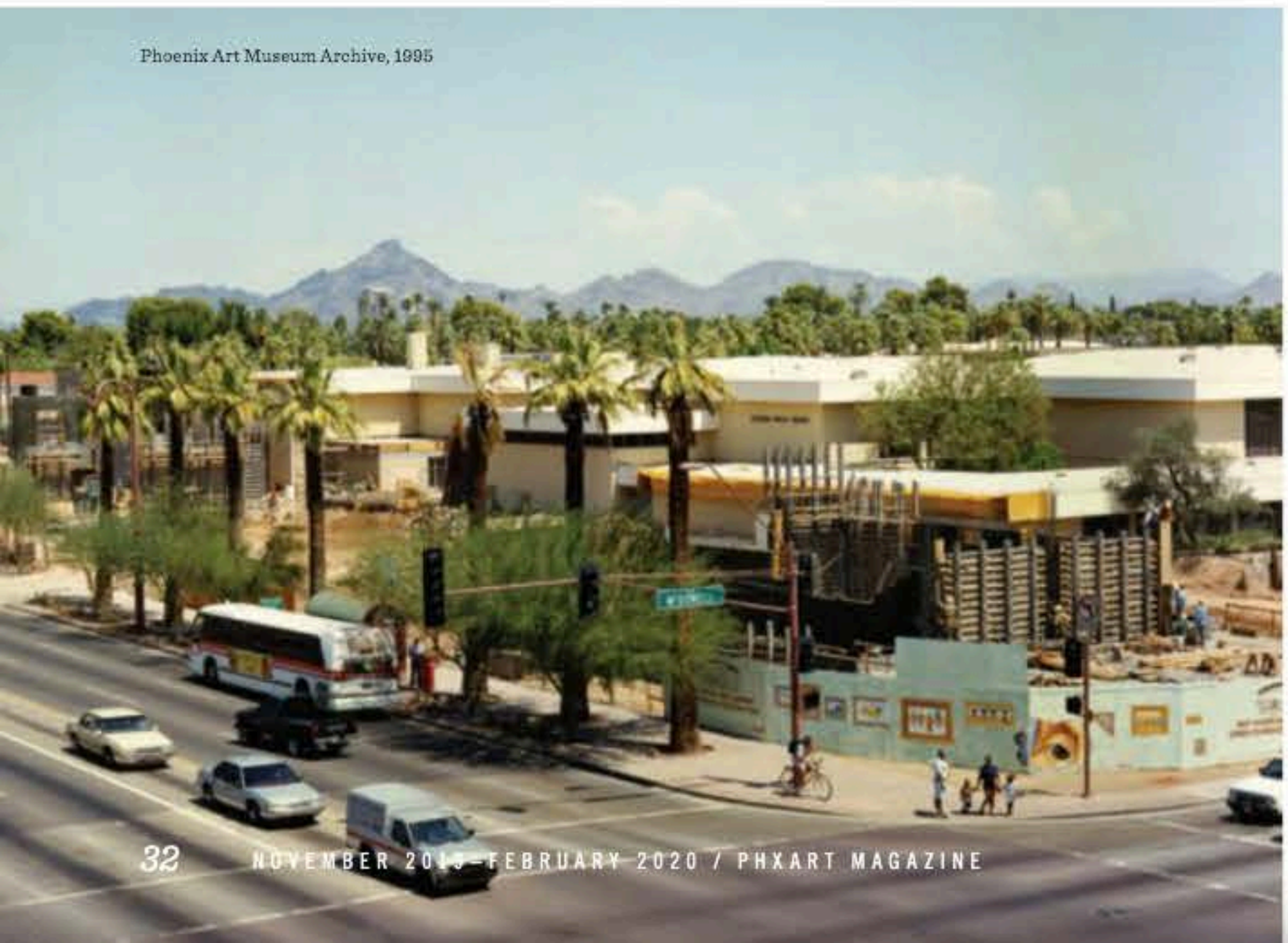
Inside, large open spaces offered plenty of room for an ever-growing collection as well as changing exhibitions.

"It's the architect's role to transform banalities into poetry, architectural facts into art, and to make the impersonal become personal," Tsien said in a 1996 *Arizona Republic* article hailing the completion of the expansion.

Ten years later, Williams and Tsien returned for the second phase of the expansion, which included a new entrance plaza on the northwest corner of the building; a 40,000-square-foot outdoor sculpture courtyard; and the Ellen and Howard C. Katz Wing for Modern Art, a four-level wing that added more than 25,000 square feet of gallery space. "When I was interviewing for my current position, I was blown away by the building and its possibilities. It just took my breath away," says Gilbert Vicario, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and the Selig Family Chief Curator. "There's a creative energy that comes out of the space."

The enlarged building opened up the Museum to new and exciting exhibitions. In 2007, *Curves of Steel* explored the impact and influence of American and European automobile design in the 20th century. It was complemented by an exhibition called *Automotivated*, which explored fashion inspired by cars. "This exhibition was an 'aha' moment for me, because for the first time, I recognized the importance of having fashion in a museum and how it's all connected," says Master Docent Judy Steers, who has been volunteering at Phoenix Art Museum since 2002. "I found it unusual to have a fashion collection, but this introduced me to the fact that fashion was directly impacted by the design of things such as the cars. It was one of my favorite shows."

Phoenix Art Museum Archive, 1995



BY PEOPLE, FOR PEOPLE

Phoenix Art Museum is not just its structure, an expansive box of concrete-covered steel. Nor is it solely its collections. "The strength of the Museum, from its founding through its recent history, is based around people," Ballinger says. "When I started, we had 17 staff members and an annual budget of $375,000."

By the time he left 32 years later, the Museum had about 150 employees, and a $10 million budget.

In 2015, Ballinger was succeeded as director by Amada Cruz, whose career included directorial and curator positions at Artpace San Antonio, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C., and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Following her departure in July for the Seattle Art Museum, the Museum is conducting a national search for her replacement.

During her tenure, Cruz prioritized increased diversity in the art and exhibitions presented to the community. Works by women, artists of color, and LGBTQI+ artists—groups that have historically been underrepresented in museum collections—were brought to the forefront. "When Amada hired me three and a half years ago, we spoke about how the Museum was perceived," Vicario says. "People like to talk about the Museum as one of the few public spaces where they can gather around and have a shared experience. So our efforts have really been in reaching out to a more inclusive and multicultural community and building that audience space."

Recently, the Museum has also endeavored to project its influence and values beyond the Valley. Recent exhibitions featuring the works of renowned cross-disciplinary feminist artist Sheila Pepe (*Hot Mess Formalism*) and Agnes Pelton (*Desert Transcendentalist*) are helping grow the Museum's reputation on a national level. Pepe's work traveled to three venues, and Pelton's show is headed to the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

"It's the first time a Phoenix Art Museum show has traveled to New York," Vicario says. "That's a big deal, because curators are always wondering if what they do matters out there in the world."

The Museum's modern mission has also been propelled by its volunteer army of Docents: educators, guides, and advocates who donate

Amada Cruz.

many dozens of hours in training before joining the team. "They're incredibly passionate and generous, and they want to share their knowledge with the public," Vicario says.

Steers was named a Master Docent after 10 years of service. "The Museum focuses on reaching out to the community and making sure that everyone feels comfortable. We embrace diversity and give people an opportunity to talk about art, culture, and history," she says.

For more than 100 years, that focus on the community, on people, from Museum staff to volunteers to visitors, has defined the evolving character and dynamics of Phoenix Art Museum. "In our case, people might have been more valuable than the art," Ballinger says. "None of this would exist without the people who built it."

To remember and honor those people, down to the very first, just visit the Museum this fall. There, you will find *Egyptian Evening*, the painting acquired via those century-old penny donations. Perfectly preserved. A seed protected by its ever-expanding bloom.

ONWARD

NEW WEBSITE AND FILMS REPRESENT COMMUNITY AND FUTURE OF PHXART

Through the generosity of Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and The Steele Foundation, Phoenix Art Museum began a journey in 2017 to create new tools with which to engage our ever-transforming community. Coming soon, the Museum's new website will be thoughtfully translated in both English and Spanish and will offer a dynamic and visually immersive user experience to highlight the rich stories that engage our community through art.

In addition to the new website, Phoenix Art Museum created three short films to celebrate its 60th anniversary through art, community, and inclusivity. Premiering online and across multiple platforms throughout the anniversary season, each film will share a unique vision of our Museum, our world, and ourselves.

THE FIRST TIME

If these walls could talk, the stories, the memories, and the moments they would share.

REPRESENT

Discover a story of finding yourself, one work of art at a time.

WISH YOU WERE THERE

Fall in love for the first time, again and again.

JOIN US THIS FALL FOR THE PREMIERES OF ALL THREE FILMS WITH THE FILMMAKERS AND CAST.

Visit *phxart.org* for more information.

Phoenix Art Museum extends its deepest gratitude to Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust and The Steele Foundation, whose profound support made these opportunities possible. We also thank Kitchen Sink Studios for developing the new site, Wanderers Guild for production of the film series, and Bill Timmerman for his photographic vision.

IN GRATITUDE: CYBERITAS TECHNOLOGIES

As we transition to our new site, Phoenix Art Museum is profoundly grateful to Cyberitas Technologies, LLC, for generously developing and hosting the Museum's previous website for more than a decade. Through Cyberitas' generosity and dedication to the Museum over the years, we served more than 10 million visitors to our website, helping to create access to art for so many within our community. We simply could not have done so without their support.