

STYLE STAR

The Arizona Costume Institute fundraiser will feature award-winning designer and *Project Runway* icon Christian Siriano as the keynote speaker

If you've ever seen any of the fashion exhibits at Phoenix Art Museum, you have the Arizona Costume Institute (ACI) to thank for acquiring and preserving these items. The annual ACI Holiday Luncheon supports the acquisition of couture fashion with a holistic approach to caring for the collection. This year, award-winning designer Christian Siriano will be the event's keynote speaker—and will bring some of his favorite runway looks.

"This annual fundraiser directly impacts the museum's fashion collection and influences how magnificent it continues to become," says Helen Jean, Phoenix Art Museum's Jacquie Dorrance Curator of Fashion. "In addition to helping ACI bring designers, journalists and academics to speak to our community, these funds support the full care of our fashion objects, from shipping and conservation through storage and display costs."

The event began in 1974 as a Christmas Tea. For its 50th anniversary, ACI is excited to offer a new event while honoring the history of the organization. Siriano's participation in the luncheon is a testament to ACI and Phoenix Art Museum's dedication to the art of fashion and its prestige.

"We can watch runway shows and examine garments at Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue, but hearing from the creative genius themselves is a supremely rare opportunity we are proud to be able to offer the Arizona community," said Jean. "These designers travel with their garments – it's their artwork. A visit is never just a popover – it's a production. We are supremely lucky to have a collection and support organization that can attract such exciting and influential artists and designers."

Siriano gained pop culture renown through his work on *Project Runway*, but his approach to design has been appreciated in the fashion community alongside fashion greats like Elsa Schiaparelli, Walter

BY BECKY ANTIOCO



Van Beirendonck, Geoffrey Beene and Bob Mackie. Jean explains that Siriano's popularity as a designer comes from his ability to celebrate the people he dresses rather than forcing them into his vision.

"Christian seems to be able to design garments that draw strength from the bodies they enshroud, rather than forcing bodies into his preferred silhouette," she explains.

His designs have been worn by celebrities and dignitaries, and his work has been featured in museum exhibitions worldwide. Attendees who purchase a VIP ticket will receive an invitation to a private event before the luncheon.

For those who are unable to attend, gowns from the Museum's fashion collection will be on view at the Phoenix Art Museum on the day of the luncheon.

IF YOU GO...

What: Arizona Costume Institute Holiday Luncheon

When: Dec. 9, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Where: Arizona Biltmore, 2400 E. Missouri Ave., Phoenix

Tickets: \$350 to \$1,500

Info.: www.arizona-costumeinstitute.org