



TUCSON MUSEUM of ART AND HISTORIC BLOCK

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Thomas A. Philabaum Awarded TMA Ambassador Circle Lifetime Achievement Award

TUCSON, ARIZONA (January 15, 2018) – The Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block is pleased to announce Thomas A. Philabaum as the 2018 recipient of the museum's Ambassador Circle Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Ambassador Circle is a component of TMA's Leadership Circle, the museum's foremost philanthropic membership group. The Ambassador Circle Lifetime Achievement Award, first presented in 2017, celebrates the career of an artist, patron or community member, who, among other distinctions, has demonstrated a particular commitment to the advancement of the Southern Arizona arts community and the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block.

Philabaum is a glass artist who operates the Philabaum Studio and Glass Gallery at 711 S. Sixth Ave., just south of downtown. Visitors to the gallery often are invited to watch Philabaum and other artists do their work in the studio. Employees of the gallery also are able to use the studio to create their own works.

"Tom is one of those artists who does more than create spectacular art," said TMA CEO Jeremy Mikolajczak. "Tom is an advocate and educator who has made significant contributions to the medium of glass in contemporary art. We are fortunate to have him in our community, and he's extremely deserving of this honor."

A native of Toledo, Ohio, Philabaum earned a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Arizona in 1983. He began his art career doing paintings and drawings, then working with clay.



Thomas A. Philabaum

In the mid-1970s, he introduced glass to his repertoire and began having his glassworks exhibited throughout the U.S. After earning his degree from the UA, he remained in Tucson and set up his studio and gallery.

His work is part of collections throughout the world including the Tucson Museum of Art, Seattle Art Museum, the University of Florence in Florence, Italy, Glasmuseum Frauenau in Germany, Glasmuseum Ebeltoft in Denmark, and the Arizona State University Museum of Art. He also has works in a variety of businesses throughout the U.S. including Tucson International Airport and a Saks Fifth Avenue in Miami.

“When I arrived in Tucson in 1975, the arts community was comprised of a few Western art galleries, the UA art department, Berta Wright's, the Harlan Gallery, TMA, and the new Pima College art department,” Philabaum recalls. “Eventually, our markets and contacts grew from Arizona to California and beyond.

“Along with the 150 gallery exhibitions of glass art in our gallery, the TMA has sponsored several major glass exhibitions that have travelled to other museums. Tucson is remembered fondly by the international glass art community.”

Philabaum’s involvement in arts organizations and causes is as extensive as his art career.

From 1993 to 1996, he served on the Board of Directors of the Glass Art Society which held conferences throughout the U.S., including Tucson. In 1997, he was elected to the board of trustees of the American Crafts Council.

Arizona Gov. Jane Hull presented Philabaum with the Arizona Governor’s Art Award for Artist of the Year in 1998. In May 2000, the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona awarded him the prestigious \$25,000 Arizona Arts Award in recognition of his significant contribution to the growth and development of the arts in Arizona.

In 2000, he began teaching nationally accredited classes at his studio, giving rise to the Sonoran Art Foundation, which he co-founded. It is now known as the Sonoran Glass School and has its own location in Tucson.

Today, Philabaum continues as an adjunct instructor at the University of Arizona and Pima Community College.

Philabuam will conduct a public lecture on March 31, at 11:00 a.m., at the museum entitled “The Flame – Tom Philabaum.” The event is free, and reserved seating is available. Members of the public should RSVP to dzeller@tucsonmuseumofart.org, or call (520) 616-2698.

Museum Directions

The Museum is located at 140 N. Main Avenue in historic downtown Tucson at the crossroads of West Alameda Street and North Main Avenue. Parking is free in the Museum’s lot on West Washington Street.

Museum Hours

Tuesday through Sunday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Free First Thursday!: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Free admission for all, make, drink, and explore.

Second SundAZE @ TMA: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Free admission for Arizona and Sonora, Mexico residents every second Sunday of the month. Art-making activities and music. Fun for all ages.

Closed Mondays.

Admission

Adults, \$12; Senior (65+), \$10; Student (with college ID), \$7; Youth (13-17), \$7; Child (12 and under), free; Veteran and active military with ID, free; Museum Member, Free.

About the Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block

The Tucson Museum of Art and Historic Block’s mission is *Connecting Art to Life*. The Museum was founded in 1924 in the El Presidio Historic District of downtown Tucson. It is Southern Arizona’s premier presenter of fine art and art education programs.

The 74,000 square foot museum features permanent and traveling exhibitions of Modern and Contemporary, Native American, American West, Latin American, and Asian art; and offers guided tours, education programs, and cultural opportunities in a unique setting. The museum’s historic block of 19th and 20th C. adobe and Mission Revival-style buildings, encompassing an entire four-acre city block, includes the highly acclaimed museum restaurant Café a la C’Art, the Museum Store, children’s Creative Space, and the museum’s Education Center and Research Library. For more information, please visit www.TucsonMuseumofArt.org or call (520) 624-2333. Follow the latest events on Facebook and Instagram. TMA is a private 501(c)(3) charitable arts and education organization.