



17420 N. Avenue of the Arts
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**John Battenberg: Critters - The Phoenix Years
December 5, 2008 through February 22, 2009**

John Battenberg: Critters - The Phoenix Years, an exhibition of the painting and sculpture of artist John Battenberg, opens at West Valley Art Museum in Surprise, Arizona December 5. For many years a California artist, John now resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.

John Battenberg's mission as an artist could be said to have been that of a devotion to relevancy for his entire career. There is nothing frivolous or light weight about anything John makes. It all has a reason for being, whether it is drawing attention to the ugliness of war, the damage we are doing to the environment and ultimately to ourselves, or the follies committed by our so-called leaders.

Along the way he has managed to be relevant as a teacher for twenty years at San Jose College and began his teaching journey at Silver City, New Mexico where he revolutionized the teaching of bronze casting in a University setting in America. He has served as Artist In Residence and lectured all over the world.

His background began with study in painting at the University of Wisconsin and later at St Cloud State University of Minnesota. Interrupted by a stint in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, he used his GI Bill to attend Ruskin School, Oxford University, where he remained until 1957. His exposure to European art and schooling was important in shaping his philosophies on art for the rest of his life.

Finishing an MFA at Michigan State, he returned to Europe to continue his work as a painter and printmaker. By the time he was offered the opportunity in New Mexico, he had become an established professional and eventually became an artist collected by prominent collectors all over the world.

This exhibition offers the latest in many series by this artist for Valley art lovers. It is a unique opportunity for visitors to acquaint themselves with John's amazing work if they haven't before or view his latest if they have.

West Valley Art Museum is open 10 AM to 4 PM Tuesday through Sunday. The Museum is located at West Bell Road and 114th Avenue. With nine exhibition galleries, a Museum Store, *Café On The Avenue*, and regularly scheduled education programs, the Museum welcomes all visitors. There is an admission charge for non-members. \$7 adults, \$2 students, ages 5 and under are free.



“Wolf and Crow” oil painting by John Battenberg



“Couger” bronze by John Battenberg



“Bear” bronze by John Battenberg



“Fish 1” oil painting by John Battenberg

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