



Thursday, July 30, 2009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Beth Ames Swartz: The Word in Paint
February 27 through May 17, 2009**

On Friday, February 27, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. the West Valley Art Museum in Surprise, AZ will host a public exhibition of paintings by Beth Ames Swartz at 17420 North Avenue of the Arts (just north of Bell Rd on 114th Avenue). (A private reception for museum members takes place on Friday, March 27.)

The painting exhibition, entitled *The Word in Paint*, occurs in conjunction with the publication by of a book by the same name. *The Word in Paint* is the result of a creative collaboration between the visual artist and the poet. Beth Ames Swartz, a nationally known American painter, was inspired by two of China's most revered poets from the eighth century, Du Fu (a.k.a. Tu Fu) and Li Bai (a.k.a. Li Po), to create a series of paintings entitled *The Thirteenth Moon*.

The career of Swartz spans fifty years, includes a 2002 retrospective at Phoenix Art Museum as well as receiving the highest award in the State of Arizona for an artist (the Governor's Arts Award), and enjoys other professional achievements that include a solo exhibition at The Jewish Museum, NY, over eighty other one-person museum and gallery shows as well as three books and many catalogs, articles and videos documenting her accomplishments.

The collaboration began when the Virginia G Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University hosted a delegation from the University of Sichuan in Chengdu, China. The Center's Global Studies Initiative introduced the Chinese delegation to the work of Swartz. Members of the delegation were excited about the cultural and artistic dialogue in Swartz's work and enthusiastic about the possibilities of exploring the creative expression of community between ASU and Sichuan University through visual and poetic art.

Rhodes then sought the involvement of poets in the MFA Creative Writing Program at Arizona State University who would be teaching at the University of Sichuan as part of the Piper Global Studies Initiative. Professor Beckian Fritz Goldberg, faculty member of ASU's MFA Creative Writing Program, two students from the Program (Iliana Rocha and Leah Soderberg), and Visiting Faculty John Sparrow from Royal Holloway College in England, viewed an exhibit of Swartz's paintings in Scottsdale, Arizona. In response, the poets wrote original poems based on particular works; *The Word in Paint* reproduces eight of these poems.

The book, *The Word in Paint*, also includes an essay of the art of Beth Ames Swartz by internationally known art critic, Donald Kuspit, Professor of Art History and Philosophy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Additionally, *The Word in Paint* contains essays by John Rothschild on the Tang Dynasty and on the art of Beth Ames Swartz as well as an extensive Bibliography on books in English on the poetry of

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, 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.

Du Fu and Li Bai.

The Word in Paint, ISBN 0-615-2222452450, is published jointly by The Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, Global Studies Initiative and the College of Public Programs at the ASU Downtown Phoenix Campus. The book is softcover, 136pp. that includes 59pp. of color and eight original poems as well as twenty poems by Du Fu and Li Bai reproduced in both Chinese and English; the book will retail for \$24.50.

The exhibition continues through May 17, 2009. For further information see our web site (<http://www.wvam.org/>) or contact Lori Toczek (ltoczek@wvam.org) or George Palovich (gpalovich@wvam.org), Curators, West Valley Art Museum, 623.972.0635.



The Thirteenth Moon: Facing Snow #3
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas



The Thirteenth Moon: Ch'eng-tu City
Acrylic and mixed media



Acrylic and
mixed media on
canvas

A Story For the Eleventh Hour:
And the lotos rose quietly, quietly



Listen acrylic on canvas

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