



Tuesday, May 02, 2006

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**“A Sense of Life - Recent Works in Art Photography”  
Michel Sarda  
May 26 - September 17**

Michel F. Sarda was born and raised in Paris, France, before moving to the United States and settling in Phoenix in 1984. After a 20-year successful career as an architect (he carries an Arizona active licence), he became an author and art book publisher in 1989, under the imprint of Bridgewood Press. With a degree in Professional Photography from the New York Institute, Sarda first released four large “coffee-table” books on Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe and Greater Phoenix (the “Valley of the Sun” series), widely used by public agencies and major businesses. He then engaged in writing and publishing richly-illustrated monographs on the late California artist Marion Pike (whose work was recently exhibited at the West Valley Art Museum) and celebrated Arizona sculptor John Waddell, creator of the 12-figure “Dance” group in front of the Herberger Theater.

Sarda established the Art Renaissance Initiative in 1992 with his wife DonnaLee, as a nonprofit vehicle for the commission of a large work of choral music to ASU composer James DeMars, **An American Requiem**. Premiered at Phoenix Symphony Hall in 1994 with a dedication from the President of the United States, this work has been performed in numerous places, including San Francisco, New York, and Washington, DC. A Memorial performance was given on September 11, 2002 at Phoenix Symphony Hall.

After his writing extended to screenplays, Sarda focused his photography on dancers for the purpose of a “storyboard” — and his interest outlived this specific project. Several years and exhibitions later, he still welcomes dancers in his studio, and has become the photographer of choice for several dance companies, such as Scorpius Dance Theatre, Movement Source, Terpsicore Dance, Mosaico Flamenco, etc.

In 1997, Sarda initiated the Arizona Millennium Trilogy, a series of three books of portraits, featuring artists, philanthropists and community leaders. The third and last book of the Trilogy, **Voices of Arizona**, was released in early 2005.

The “Sense of Form” series presented as such for the first time at the West Valley Art Museum originated ten years ago in John Waddell’s studio, after this prominent artist encouraged Sarda to pursue his research on “nudes as architecture.” The enthusiastic participation of dancers in this visual exploration contributed to producing powerful images that will become the subject of a book.

Other series include “Spirit of the Rose” — a flower that is among Sarda’s favorite subjects, and several series dedicated to dance: “Native Spirit”, “A Day in the Life of a Dancer,” “Shadow Dance,” etc. Between the opening in early June and the end of the show in September, a number of exhibits will be renewed to relate to the work of four guest artists; John McAlister, Delmar Boni, Cristiana Cole and Paolo Soleri.

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 five exhibition galleries, a Museum Store, *Classic Café*, and regularly scheduled education programs, the Museum welcomes all visitors. There is a small admission charge for non-members. \$7 adults, \$2 students, ages 5 and under are free.



### Statement by Michel Sarda

According to Susan Sontag in her famous essay "On Photography," for the past 180 years, photography has been essentially a tool allowing to record the physical appearance of people, places and events. This radically changed the way artists work (choice of subjects, composition, painting techniques, etc.). In addition, thanks to affordable reproductions in books and magazines, photography also facilitated our communication with art and our understanding of its many forms - as emphasized by Andre Malraux in *The Imaginary Museum*."

New image-capturing tools (digital cameras) as well as the improvement of the already existing ones, are offering new perspectives to photography by letting the artist take a near-total control of the imagery he creates. From an instrument of record, photography is more and more becoming a medium of artistic expression. A friend said recently: "If Leonardo were alive and working today, he would not paint on wood or canvas; he would use a computer and a digital camera."

The selected images belong to a series - more precisely a group of series I have been working on for several years, under the generic title of: "Dance - Art in Motion." Stages of this work have already been presented (see biography). I now capture most of these pictures in digital format.

The concept is to associate movement, space, light and color in one single, fluid visual statement that expresses more the spirit of the dance than it showcases the dancer.

Interestingly, although in most pictures dancers are not or hardly recognizable, they indeed recognize their art and gracefully contribute to creating ever more challenging imagery.

For reporters wishing to interview:

[Michel F. Sarda](#)

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“A Sense Of Form” photograph by Michel Sarda



“Spirit Of The Rose” photograph by Michel Sarda

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