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The FAC Unveils Significant Art Purchase for the Museum's Permanent Collection

Colorado Springs Debutante Ball proceeds allow for major art acquisition on the occasion of the Ball's 50th Anniversary

COLORADO SPRINGS (Dec. 23, 2016) — Last night at the Colorado Springs Debutante Ball, a major purchase of art for the Fine Arts Center's permanent collection was announced. This purchase was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Colorado Springs Debutante Ball Committee and was made in honor of their 50th Anniversary. The newly acquired work was created by artist James Surls and is entitled *It's Not About the Numbers*. The stature of both the artist and this particular work are a perfect tribute to the significance of the 50-year partnership between the Debutante Ball Committee and the Fine Arts Center.

Born in 1943 in East Texas, James Surls has become an award-winning, global artist, exhibiting in over 350 solo, group, museum and gallery exhibitions across the world. He is sought-after for large-scale commissioned works throughout the U.S. and as far away as Singapore.

Surls is known for his largely monotone sculptures, drawings and prints that feature natural and human images and forms. Surls' work is particularly organic and primal. Having built a career in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s as a Texas artist, Surls currently lives and works on a Colorado ranch in the Roaring Fork Valley.

"It takes a mere moment in the presence of James Surls to realize that he is not only a technical and conceptual master of his craft, but an artist of profound philosophical depth," said FAC Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Joy Armstrong.

His work is featured in the public collections of more than 50 institutions, including the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, TX; High Museum, Atlanta, GA; Los Angeles County Museum, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Seattle Art Museum, WA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and now the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, CO.

"The Fine Arts Center is deeply grateful for the Debutante Ball Committee's ongoing support and we want to congratulate them on 50 years of grace, elegance and philanthropy," said FAC President and CEO, David Dahlin. "This purchase is another very fine example of the quality and magnitude of work that their generous contributions have made possible for us to bring to the community of Colorado Springs."

This large-scale sculptural work is installed in the front landing of the glass addition of the FAC, adding drama and beauty that is visible from the outside as well as from within. Other works by James Surls are currently featured in an expansive exhibition at the Fine Arts Center called *All I Ever Wanted*, along with the work of his wife, Charmaine Locke, through January 15, 2017. Also on view through January 2017 is the exhibition *50 Years of Grace*, featuring nearly every purchase made possible by the Debutante Ball Acquisitions Fund; beginning with the first, John Sloan's *Eagles of Tesuque* in 1968, and ending with 2016's recent acquisition, Cindy Sherman's *Madame Pompadour Tea Service*.

Fine Arts Center

In 1919 the Broadmoor Art Academy (BAA) was established in the former home of philanthropists Julie and Spencer Penrose. After the Great Depression hit in 1929, the BAA looked at diversifying further, expanding into an entire arts district under one roof. And that's how the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center (FAC) came to be. The FAC, built in 1936, is a privately funded, non-profit art museum, professional theatre company and arts education center. Built on the foundation of the prestigious BAA, the FAC carries the legacy of Colorado's arts and cultural heritage. One of 16 charter members of the American Alliance of Museums, the FAC offers the best in visual arts via its permanent collection and travelling exhibitions, as a TCG member theatre company, and through arts education with the FAC's Bemis School of Art. The FAC building is considered an architectural treasure in the Rocky Mountain region, designed by John Gaw Meem, and is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. For information, visit csfineartscenter.org

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