BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BLANTON MUSEUM CELEBRATES OPENING OF ELLSWORTH KELLY’S AUSTIN WITH HISTORIC GALA

Black-tie event drew notable attendees from across the country and raised more than $1.1 million in support of the museum

AUSTIN, Texas—February 16, 2018—On Saturday, February 10, the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin hosted an exclusive fundraising dinner commemorating the opening of *Austin*, Ellsworth Kelly’s most monumental work and a new cornerstone of the Blanton’s permanent collection. The black-tie event, a celebration of Kelly’s life and legacy, was attended by 300 supporters and art world friends from across the country including major funders, collectors, gallerists, museum directors, and other distinguished arts, community, and business leaders. A record $1.1 million was raised to provide essential funding that impacts every aspect of the museum’s programming.

The evening’s hosts were Simone J. Wicha, Director, Blanton Museum of Art; Gregory Fenves, President, The University of Texas at Austin; Michael Klein, Chairman, Blanton National Leadership Board; and Jack Shear, President, Ellsworth Kelly Foundation. They gave personal remarks about how this landmark project was realized and its significance for the Blanton, UT, and the city of Austin. “Ellsworth Kelly’s *Austin* is the culmination of his career,” said Wicha. “And, as his many friends and supporters of this project can attest, it is also a reflection of the artist’s own monumental generosity and spirit.”

Guests enjoyed dinner by Chef Elmar Prambs of the Four Seasons Hotel Austin under a tent twinkling with lights, set on the Blanton’s grounds in perfect view of *Austin* and the Texas State Capitol. Before and after dinner, guests were invited to preview *Austin* and the accompanying exhibition, *Form into Spirit: Ellsworth Kelly’s Austin*, which examines the conceptual origins of Kelly’s last work, as well as tour the museum’s permanent collection galleries. The weekend also included an exclusive luncheon event for major donors to the *Austin* campaign, as well as special viewing hours of *Austin* and *Form into Spirit*.

Attendees included:

*Major Funders of the Austin campaign from across the country:*

**Austin:** Janet & Wilson Allen, Suzanne Deal Booth, David G. Booth, Sarah & Ernest Butler, Stacy & Joel Hock, Jeanne & Michael Klein, Clayton Maebius, Lora Reynolds

**Dallas:** Mary McDermott Cook, Sally & Tom Dunning

**Ft. Worth:** Mary Ralph Lowe

**Houston:** Judy & Charles Tate, Leslie & Jack S. Blanton, Jr., Kelli & Eddy Blanton, Judy & David Beck, Eliza & Stuart Stedman, Ellen & Steven Susman

**New York:** Amanda & Glenn Fuhrman, Agnes Gund
St. Louis: Emily Rauh Pulitzer

Additional Blanton Board Members:

Past and Present University of Texas at Austin Presidents
Larry & Mary Ann Faulkner, Bill Powers, President Greg & Carmel Fenves

State and City Officials:
Governor of the State of Texas Greg Abbott, Mayor of the City of Austin Steve Adler, Chancellor of The University of Texas System Admiral William H. McRaven & Georgeann McRaven

Museum Directors from across the country:

Art Collectors:

Gallerists:
Matthew Marks; Jacqueline Tran; Hiram Butler; Marc Glimcher; Brett Gorvy; Dominique Lévy; Anthony Meier; Craig F. Starr; Irving Blum; Lisa Dennison, Eric Shiner, Liz Sterling, and Aliyya Stude of Sotheby’s; Max Teicher and Kara Vander Weg of Gagosian Gallery

Artists:
Teresa Hubbard & Alexander Birchler, Arlene Shechet, Suzanne Bocanegra, Terry Winters

Other Notable Guests:
Ann Temkin, Chief Curator, Painting and Sculpture, the Museum of Modern Art; David Breslin, Curator and Director of the Collection, and Scott Rothkopf, Chief Curator, the Whitney Museum of American Art; Carlos Basualdo, Curator of Contemporary Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Dorothy Lichtenstein; Carol LeWitt; Staffan Ahrenberg; Yve-Alain Bois; Elaine Molinar, Snøhetta; Michael & Petra Mayer, Franz Mayer of Munich, Inc.; Sidney Felsen & Joni Weyl Felsen, Gemini G.E.L.; Steve Enniss

Texas Philanthropic Leaders:
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**About Ellsworth Kelly's AUSTIN:**
In January 2015, the renowned American artist Ellsworth Kelly gifted to the Blanton the design concept for his most monumental work, a 2,715-square-foot stone building with luminous colored glass windows, a totemic wood sculpture, and fourteen black and white marble panels. Titled *Austin*, honoring the artist’s tradition of naming particular works for the places for which they are destined, the structure is the only building the artist designed, and will be his most lasting legacy. Envisioned by Kelly as a site for joy and contemplation, *Austin* is a cornerstone of the Blanton’s permanent collection and will enrich the lives of visitors from around the world. The building is open during regular museum hours; entry is included with museum admission. For more about *Austin* and the artist, visit KellyattheBlanton.org.

**About the Blanton Museum of Art**
Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with nearly 18,000 objects. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10–5, Saturday from 11–5, and Sunday from 1–5. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9. Admission Prices: Adults $9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) $7, Youth/College Students (13–21) $5. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471–7324 or visit blantonmuseum.org