

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART COLLABORATES WITH THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN TO TRANSFER MORE THAN 500 WORKS OF ART TO TEXAS MUSEUMS



Seventeen Texas museums received works of art by leading Texas and national artists

Austin, Texas—August 21, 2018—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin announces an historic collection transfer of 500 works of art to seventeen museums throughout the state of Texas.

The Blanton’s wide-reaching distribution is the second phase of The Contemporary Austin’s [transfer of its legacy collection to the care of the Blanton](#); the first phase occurred in May of 2017. The Contemporary Austin’s legacy collection is comprised of 700 artworks in various media by artists from around the world, with a special focus on works on paper by Texas-based or regional artists. The collection was originally built by predecessors of The Contemporary Austin including the Texas Fine Arts Association, Laguna Gloria Art Museum, and the Austin Museum of Art. Since its inception in 2013, The Contemporary Austin has focused its acquisitions program on growing a collection of outdoor sculpture at the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria.

Complementary Missions in a Dynamic Arts City

A unique partnership between the Blanton and The Contemporary Austin allowed this unprecedented collection transfer to come to fruition. Begun in 2017, the collaboration between the Blanton and The

Contemporary Austin strengthened both institutions' distinct but complementary missions in Austin and Texas.

The Contemporary Austin is committed to the exhibition of internationally relevant contemporary art, inspiring artists to create new works for the museum and for Austin. This commitment is realized through a robust program of temporary exhibitions at its Jones Center location on Congress Avenue and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria, and through its growing permanent collection of outdoor sculptures and installations at these sites and across the city with its Museum Without Walls program. Similarly, the Blanton continues to build its collection of nearly 18,000 objects and expand educational opportunities for diverse constituencies at UT and in the Austin community.

"As leaders in Austin's vibrant and rapidly growing arts community, the Blanton and The Contemporary Austin are delighted to collaborate on this ambitious multi-phase project, which will impact the arts here in Austin and throughout Texas," said Blanton director Simone Wicha. "The Blanton is proud to act as steward for the legacy collection, which represents the significant artistic history of central Texas and beyond, and to share it with our visitors."

As part of the first phase of the transfer, the Blanton incorporated into its permanent collection more than 200 works of art in resonant collecting areas such as modern and contemporary photography. Since the fall of 2017, the museum has featured works by Polly Apfelbaum, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Michael Ray Charles, and Dario Robleto in its galleries. To celebrate the gift, the Blanton organized the fall 2017 exhibition [*Austin Collects Contemporary: Selections from the Blanton's Gift from The Contemporary*](#), featuring highlights from the gift by Texas- and Austin- based artists including Jules Buck Jones (UT MFA, 2008), Lance Letscher (UT BFA, 1985; MFA, 1989), César Augusto Martínez, and Eduardo Muñoz Ordoqui (UT MFA, 2005).

"It has been exciting to see works from the legacy collection on view in the Blanton's galleries over the past year," said Louis Grachos, Ernest and Sarah Butler Executive Director and CEO of The Contemporary Austin. "These exhibitions underscore the unique value of our collaboration with the Blanton, as they re-introduce the public to the drawings, paintings, photographs, and other works within a new context, while respecting the artists and donors who built the collection over decades. Further transferring select works to collecting institutions across the state will extend the legacy collection's impact immeasurably, ensuring that the art works are properly cared for, studied, and enjoyed by thousands of visitors for many years."

Bringing the Collaboration Statewide

The remaining 500 works from the legacy collection were prepared for collection transfer by the Blanton's curatorial, exhibitions, and collections teams and include nationally renowned artists such as Alexander Calder, Dorothy Hood, Luis Jiménez, Alex Katz, and Robert Rauschenberg. During the transfer event on May 18, 2018, representatives from the participating museums viewed and selected lots to incorporate into their permanent collections based on a lottery pick system. The original credit lines of artworks from the legacy collection were retained as part of the transfer of ownership.

"It's gratifying to know that the second phase of this collection transfer reached seventeen museums throughout Texas, bringing the impact of our collaboration statewide," continued Wicha. "As part of this large and thriving arts ecosystem, the Blanton is proud to support other Texas institutions in serving their communities, while also preserving this important collection of Texas art for future generations."

Participating institutions included the Amarillo Museum of Art; Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont; Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, affiliated with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; The Grace Museum, Abilene; International Museum of Art & Science, McAllen; Kerr Arts and Cultural Center, Kerrville; Longview Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of Texas Tech University, Lubbock; Nancy Fyfe Cardozier Gallery, Odessa at The University of Texas Permian Basin; Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts, Spring; Regional Arts Center, Texarkana; San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts; The Wittliff Collections and Texas State Galleries, San Marcos; Tyler Museum of Art; Visual Arts Gallery, Brownsville at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley; and Wichita Falls Museum of Art at Midwestern State University.

“We are delighted to have received so many terrific pieces from The Contemporary Austin legacy collection with the help of the Blanton,” said David Coleman, Director of The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos. “The Wittliff and the Texas State Galleries together chose a large group of E.O. Goldbeck photographs, which we will be sharing in the years to come. We also received a large work by Austin artist David Everett, from whom we’ve commissioned many pieces in years past. We are now working on placing it for permanent display at The Wittliff.”

Judy Deaton, Curator of The Grace Museum in Abilene, added, "The Grace Museum is delighted to add art by outstanding mid-career Texas based artists to our art collection. Margo Sawyer's large-scale installation, *Blue* and Ken Hale's painting *Untitled* (Blue painting with flower pot) are prized additions to The Grace art collection. We are thankful for the Blanton and The Contemporary Austin's support of The Grace and our mission of collecting and exhibiting the best in American art with Texas connections."

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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.

About The Contemporary Austin

As Austin's only museum solely focused on contemporary artists and their work, The Contemporary Austin offers exhibitions, educational opportunities, and events that start conversations and fuel the city's creative spirit. Known for artist-centric exhibitions and collaborations, The Contemporary invites exploration at both its urban and natural settings—downtown at the Jones Center (700 Congress Avenue), lakeside at the Laguna Gloria campus (3809 West 35th Street), and around Austin through the Museum Without Walls program.

Image

Margo Sawyer
Blue, 1998, detail
Wood tempera and gold and silver leaf

Collection of The Grace Museum, gift of the Blanton Museum of Art 2018, Transfer from The Contemporary Austin, partial gift of the artist, with funds generously provided by ArtPace, A Foundation for Contemporary Art/San Antonio; Deborah and Tom Green; William F. Stern; Lee M. Knox, Juan and Carmen Creixell, and an anonymous donor