

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Carlotta Stankiewicz, 512.475.6784, carlotta.stankiewicz@blantonmuseum.org

Penny Snyder, 512.471.0241, penny.snyder@blantonmuseum.org



Moody Foundation Gift of \$20 Million to Blanton Will Transform Museum Grounds

AUSTIN, Texas—February 10, 2019—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin has announced a \$20 million gift from The Moody Foundation of Galveston, Texas, to reimagine and transform the museum's exterior spaces. The new Blanton master plan is in development by renowned architecture firm Snøhetta. The plan will create an iconic destination, facilitate the museum's vision for innovative outdoor programming, and form a dynamic connection between the university, the city of Austin, and the Texas State Capitol Complex.

Blanton Director Simone Wicha and Gregory L. Fenves, president of The University of Texas at Austin, announced the gift at the museum's 2019 Gala on Saturday, February 9.

Wicha stated, "I'm thrilled to share news of this historic gift from The Moody Foundation, which launches the next phase of growth for the Blanton. *Austin* by Ellsworth Kelly, already a treasured icon for our city, has accelerated the Blanton's evolution into an international arts destination, and the Snøhetta master plan will further our position as an Austin landmark and a vibrant cultural anchor for our community," she continued. "We are deeply grateful to Blanton National Leadership Board member Elle Moody for being an ardent champion of the museum and to the full board of the Foundation for their visionary investment in this transformative project."

"Today, The Moody Foundation strengthens its legacy of philanthropy by making an unparalleled investment in the future of UT's Blanton Museum of Art," said Fenves.

"I am sincerely grateful to the Foundation for this extraordinary gift. The Blanton collections inspire thousands of scholars, students, and art lovers from around the world to visit our city and university each year. With a beautifully reimagined exterior, the Blanton will continue to expand its reputation as one of the premier destinations for fine art in Texas," Fenves said. "Thank you to the Foundation's trustees, Elle Moody, Ross Moody, and Francie Moody-Dahlberg -- for their vision, generosity, and steadfast support for the arts."

"The Moody Foundation has a long history with the Blanton, and we are extremely pleased to contribute to such a significant project. As a young visitor growing up in Austin, this museum taught me that art is a vital social force to inspire and unite communities," said Elle Moody, trustee of The Moody Foundation. "The Blanton continues to make great strides in bringing world-class art experiences to visitors from Central Texas and beyond, and we are honored to support this exciting next chapter."

The Moody gift is one of the largest ever granted to benefit Austin's fine arts community, and the largest ever given in support of Austin's outdoor spaces. Details of the Blanton master plan are expected to be released this summer. The design will reshape much of the exterior area surrounding Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin* and the two buildings that comprise the Blanton: the Michener Gallery Building, opened in 2006 to house the collection and exhibition galleries, and the Edgar A. Smith Building, opened in 2008 to house the Blanton café, museum shop, auditorium, and administrative offices. The museum currently activates the outdoor space between the two buildings during its annual Blanton Block Party, a free day-to-night community festival each spring, as well as for other special events. The reconfiguration will enable the museum to use more versatile space for a variety of lively public programming, including the Blanton's monthly *Third Thursdays*, which, along with the museum's free admission every Thursday, are also made possible by The Moody Foundation.

The Blanton's master plan project will coincide with the State's development of the first phase of the Texas Capitol Complex Master Plan, which will create a pedestrian-oriented "Texas mall" on Congress Avenue between 16th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

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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 Moody Foundation was established by W.L. Moody, Jr. and Libbie Shearn Moody in 1942 to share their good fortune and make a difference in the lives of the people of Texas. Since then, The Moody Foundation has made more than \$1.5 billion in grants throughout the state to organizations that have educated, healed, nurtured, and inspired generations of Texans. The Moody Foundation continues with a board of three trustees: Frances Moody-Dahlberg, Ross Moody, and Elizabeth "Elle" Moody. Learn more at MoodyF.org.

Image Caption: Gregory L. Fenves, Elle Moody, and Simone Wicha at the 2019 Blanton Gala.