



# CONNECTIONS Blanton Volunteer News

AUGUST 2007

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Volunteers gather at the Recognition Party  
Photo: Claude van Lingen

## Volunteers Rule

The Volunteer Recognition Party was a lively affair that included a docent-guided tour of the galleries, a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception, and a short ceremony where the Blanton Museum staff expressed their heartfelt thanks. We were welcomed by Martha Bradshaw, Head of Visitor and Volunteer Services, and Ann Wilson, Associate Director, who reminded us that exactly one year to the date, extensive preparations

where taking place for the Blanton's 24-hour opening extravaganza. It was so much fun to volunteer on opening weekend. I was stationed on the second floor, and I'll never forget how much the children loved the George Sugarman sculpture.

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to several volunteers who began volunteering since the opening weekend and have now contributed over 100 hours. Among them were Cindy Dollar and Janet Fleckman who are now in the process of becoming docents. The lucky *B scene* volunteers received as gifts the Blanton Museum of Art's *Guide to the Collection*. Others were thanked for their involvement in the development of new programs such as Articulate Volunteers and the *Connections* newsletter. Furthermore, Kristina Elizondo, Manager of University Programs, made a special point to acknowledge the student volunteers who make a commitment at such a busy time in their lives.

What a wonderful way to mark a one-year anniversary for our dedicated volunteers! At the end of this lovely party, all of the volunteers took home a beautiful "Art is hot." coffee mug.

*Tatiana Reinoza, Graduate Student in Art History, University of Texas at Austin*

## Martha's Letter

Hello! I'm thrilled we are launching the first *Connections* newsletter for our volunteers to read and enjoy. This e-news is meant to give you details about volunteer events, both what's coming up and what's happened in the past. Our newsletter team has worked hard for months to bring you this first issue. Please thank them when you see them.

In addition to thank you's, my message will include updates on volunteer issues. This fall we will be recruiting new volunteers and hope you will help us by "asking a friend." Think about someone you know who would enjoy coming to the Blanton on a regular basis and helping visitors or staff.

Those of you who made it to the volunteer party in April have heard that we need everyone to sign in when you volunteer,



Martha Bradshaw,  
Head of Visitor and  
Volunteer Services  
Photo: Charla Wood



Blanton staff members:  
Stephanie Niemeyer, Kristina  
Elizondo, Jennifer Garner, and  
Laura Barnett. Photo: Rick Hall



Photo: Rick Hall

Ann Wilson, Associate Director, applauds volunteers who received honors for giving over 100 hours of service to the Blanton.

even for events. We use these hours for many of our grant applications and museum documentation forms. One last important detail is the change to our daily volunteer schedule. The morning shift is now from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, and there is a new shift from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Volunteers from 2:00 to 5:00 pm can stay at that time slot or come in at 3:00 pm if they prefer.

### **Transactions: an Interview With Dr. Kelly Baum**

In our interview Dr. Kelly Baum said that the *Transactions* exhibition she curated grew out of her dissertation on the Situationist International (1957-1972), a group of European artists who developed alternative ways of presenting art. In answer to the question of why artists would want to circumvent the gallery scene, Kelly said that each had his or her own reasons. Some wish to create direct relationships with viewers who do not frequent galleries and museums, others do it for political reasons, to be subversive, or to resist commodification.

Historical precedents for anti-establishment art, she pointed out, go back to Gustav Courbet's exhibiting his paintings in a pavilion he had built outside the *Exposition universelle* in 1855. This radical move was followed by the Impressionists, who founded a cooperative and started mounting exhibitions of their own work in 1874. During WWI and its horrors it was the Dada group who showed their disgust—with what they considered money grabbing war mongers—by creating performances and anti-art works that mocked and insulted the establishment. Dada's ideas resurfaced during the Vietnam War when conceptual artists voiced their displeasure and refused to be part of the commercialism of the gallery scene.

For those not familiar with the type of work exhibited in *Transactions*, Kelly suggests coming to it with an open mind and not seeing it within the context of traditional painting or sculpture. This entails accepting each artist's questioning the role of art in and its relationship to the political and socio-economic structure of the contemporary establishment and the art market. Taking these criteria into consideration allows for coming to an understanding of the artists' thinking, searching out the implications of their work, and enjoying the fun that some of it embodies.

The exhibition will take place from September 11 – November 18

Claude van Lingen



Christine Hill  
*Care Package*, 2003  
Installation, Dimensions variable  
Courtesy of Galerie EIGEN + ART  
Leipzig/Berlin



Adolphe Jourdan and Alexandre Cabanel  
*Birth of Venus*, circa 1864

### **A Century of Grace and Master Drawings from Yale**

Our summer exhibitions were huge hits with visitors, volunteers, docents, and members. With *A Century of Grace*, visitors have an unusual opportunity to better understand “academic” art, which is often overshadowed by avant-garde movements. We enjoyed gallery talks and lectures by conservators, preservationists, and curators, including the Blanton's Cheryl Snay. A special four-session course, “The Academic Century,” focused on painting, sculpture, architecture and prints from 1800 to 1900 with invited speakers Cheryl Snay, Scott Sustek, Richard Cleary, and Karen Pope. Be sure to see the shows before they close August 5 and August 12 respectively. After that, you'll have to go to San Antonio, Houston, or Dallas/Ft. Worth to see any Bouguereaus, Gérômes, Cabanels, or Alma-Tademas!

And for those of you who liked the *Rembrandt's Etchings* exhibition last spring, don't forget that *Albrecht Dürer: Prints from the Foundation of Lower Saxony and the Konrad Liebmann Foundation, Germany* opens September 8. Over 100 examples of the master's woodcuts, engravings, etchings and book illustrations will be on display in the Glickman Galleries on the second floor.



Laraine Lasdon,  
first Articulate Volunteer.  
Photo: Rick Hall

## Articulate Volunteers

Join the ranks of fifteen volunteers who are training to answer questions in the galleries and help connect visitors with the art. We have a handful of bright, interested folks who will be coming to lectures, tours and walk-throughs this summer as a way of getting familiar with our exhibits. They will take one hour of time away from their regular shift to help visitors in the galleries and eLounge. In a way, its another opportunity to listen to a visitor and try to help them understand the art in our collections. Ask Martha if you think you would be interested in this too.

## Students at the Blanton

First of all, not only has it been a pleasure working as a student volunteer at the Blanton, but it has also been an exciting and valuable learning experience. Having just started working here in June, I may not have had a chance to meet many of the volunteers. But so far, I've seen that it's everyone's positive and enthusiastic attitude that make the Blanton an awesome place to be. This summer I have been working in various areas of the museum, helping Visitor and Volunteer Services, Membership, and PR/Marketing. I have also volunteered at some of this summer's events including June's *B scene*, *Hot Art Hip Kids*, and Starbucks Game Night. Being here has allowed me to understand many of the pieces that make a museum like the Blanton a success. After I complete my undergraduate degree within the next year, I know my experiences this summer will prepare me for wherever my future career takes me. I may not be lounging by the pool much this summer; however, I'm gaining something much more important by working as a student volunteer here at the museum.



Student volunteers Mashaal Ahmed,  
Ana Coronell and Jenifer Wilde.  
Photo Rick Hall

*Crystal Markowski, Visitor and Volunteer Services Intern,  
BBA candidate, McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin*

## Blanton Volunteer Spotlight

*Call your mother, and take her to the Blanton!* —Janet Fleckman

Janet Fleckman began volunteering at the Blanton in April 2006. Since then, she has been involved in many volunteer activities such as meeting and greeting, audio orientation, *B scene*, and arranging education events, to mention but a few. She holds a B.A. and M.A. in English, and as an "older" student, took all the art history courses offered at her neighborhood college.

Janet is enthusiastic, curious, practical, and for her, volunteering at the Blanton is a great opportunity to see and learn about a wide range of art and share that enthusiasm with others. In her free time she enjoys researching family history and traveling in conjunction with that interest, and also birdwatching, doing the Texas Two-Step and reading. Her favorite piece of art at the Blanton is Richard Tuttle's *Light Pink Octagon* because it challenges the viewer on many levels and for its simplicity, which is utterly charming and beguiling.

When we asked her: **If someone were to ask you why they should come to the Blanton, what would you tell them?** She said: Come see some extraordinary works of art that are guaranteed to spark discussion and provoke ideas.



Janet Fleckman,  
Volunteer.  
Photo: Rick Hall



Martha Bradshaw and  
Kim Theel, Manager of Membership  
Photo: Rick Hall

#### CONNECTIONS

A quarterly newsletter published by staff and  
volunteers of the Blanton Museum of Art

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College of Fine Arts

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## Membership Update

As you know, the Blanton now has over 10,000 members! We are pleased that so many Austinites are supporting our efforts and giving us their yearly commitment. During our recent Membership Month at the Blanton, we sold over 100 memberships in April and crowned the 10,000th member at *B scene* in May. Whenever you volunteer, be sure to encourage visitors to consider joining, especially when they tell you they enjoyed their visit. The perks they receive may seem minor, but their membership represents support for us, making a huge wave that ripples for months and years.

## Are You Inspiring, Engaging, Welcoming and Austinesque?

If you believe that the Blanton has a way of making people feel differently than they do when they've visited any other world-class art museum, perhaps it's the brand promise we have chosen to give our visitors. Every volunteer, staff member and vendor who comes into contact with a Blanton visitor is meant to fulfill the promise of connecting people with art and ideas. So, if you are being yourself, that's Austinesque. If you are smiling, that's welcoming and warm. If you ask people what they thought about an exhibit or a work of art, that's engaging. Next time you volunteer, see if you can pass the Blanton brand challenge and connect personally with the visitors.



Dan Boehl,  
Admissions Manager  
Photo: Dan Boehl

## Selling Tickets by Dan Boehl

John Malkovich wore seersucker shorts and one sock. He paid from a wad as thick as a steak. There was the queen of Egypt and her retinue of bodyguards. Or Liberia, I can't remember. Once, there was a woman dressed in a man's suit. Usually it's the other way, a man wearing a chiffon dress as dirty as a tablecloth. But this woman, a girl really, wore an Armani suite, alerting me to the disparity of our situations. She had the slightest wisp of mustache, yellow like a coffee stain on her porcelain face. I handed her an admissions decal like a wound and she stuck it to her chest. Right under the gallery cameras. Then she belonged.