

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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2013 A Record Year for the Blanton Museum of Art



Visitors to the Blanton's Sand Mandala Project

AUSTIN, Texas — December 17, 2013—Calendar-year 2013 was a banner year for the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to hosting a 50th Anniversary celebration, the museum presented a range of world-class exhibitions and dynamic public programs, and launched a new brand and graphic identity. Attendance was at an all time high, with the Blanton welcoming its one-millionth visitor since opening its doors in 2006. Virtual visitation via the museum's website and engagement with its social media platforms was similarly high. This year offered many opportunities for the Blanton to deliver on the promise of its new brand— to provide thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving art experiences for every visitor.

Attendance

With over 158,000 visitors, 2013 was the Blanton's best-attended year to date. Highlights included 10,000 visitors to the museum's Fifty Fest celebration last April, over

9,000 attendees to January's Sand Mandala Project (where Tibetan monks created a sand mandala in the Blanton's atrium), 4,300 children and their families to the museum's summer family programming, and the Blanton's one-millionth visitor in September. Additionally, there were over 815,000 visits to the museum's website, and high engagement levels with its social media platforms. The Blanton's membership program also held strong in 2013 with over 5,300 member households, making it one of the largest membership programs of any university art museum in the country.

Exhibitions

Last February, the Blanton opened the critically acclaimed *Through the Eyes of Texas*, an exhibition that highlighted masterworks from the private collections of UT alumni. Featuring objects from around the globe, the presentation included a Roman bust from the 2nd century AD, a Monet *Water Lilies* painting, and modern and contemporary works from Picasso to Kehinde Wiley. Last summer's *Lifelike* showcased a range of contemporary artists who use unusual materials to create startlingly real-looking objects, from an 8-foot painted bronze milk carton to a life-size recreation of a 1970s kitchen. Organized by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the exhibition proved to be an audience favorite for young and old alike.

The Blanton rounded out the calendar year this fall with two dynamic and strikingly different exhibitions, *Imperial Augsburg: Renaissance Prints and Drawings from 1475-1540* and *The Nearest Air: A Survey of Works by Waltercio Caldas*. These exhibitions underscored the Blanton's ongoing partnerships with some of the most significant museums in the world. *Imperial Augsburg* brought to the Blanton prints and drawings from the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC and a 16th-century suit of armor from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Likewise, *The Nearest Air*, which showcased four decades of work from one of Brazil's leading contemporary artists, was developed in partnership with the Fundação Iberê Camargo in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Public Programs

The Blanton served over 26,000 visitors this year through a wide range of public programs. From lectures by nationally celebrated curators to a beer tasting with local brewers, there was something for everyone. The museum launched a revitalized film series, two new tour formats (*Art Gazes* and *Art Glimpses*), and a new music program, *Beat The Rush*, featuring curated "musical responses" to works in the Blanton's collection. The *Bach Cantata* music series, a longstanding collaboration between the Blanton and UT's Butler School of Music, was renamed *Midday Music Series* and expanded to include a variety of genres and accommodate a broader range of musical tastes. The museum's *SoundSpace* program, deemed "the most successful new music event in the city" by the *Austin American-Statesman*, continued, as did the Blanton's ever-popular *B scene* art parties, held quarterly.

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About the Blanton Museum of Art:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection in Central Texas. 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 www.blantonmuseum.org