

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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**BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART GIFTED TWENTY-EIGHT VIDEO WORKS BY RENOWNED CONTEMPORARY
ART COLLECTORS,
JEANNE AND MICHAEL L. KLEIN**



***Collection includes works by Ana Mendieta, Isaac Julien,
and Javier Téllez, among others***

AUSTIN, Texas—February 2, 2017—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin has received a promised gift of 28 video artworks from Austin-based, internationally regarded collectors and Blanton National Leadership Board members Jeanne and Michael L. Klein, including works by Tania Bruguera, Isaac Julien, Pipilotti Rist, Javier Téllez, and others. The museum will share ownership of two of these works, Eve Sussman’s *89 Seconds at Alcázar* (2004) and Ana Mendieta’s *Alma Silueta en Fuego (Silueta de Cenizas), November 1975* (1975), with the Whitney Museum of American Art. The gift to the Blanton comprises nearly all of the Kleins’ video collection, which they began donating to the museum in the 1990s. Along with significantly enhancing the Blanton’s holdings in this area, the gift will allow the museum to better represent this crucial medium in contemporary art and build upon the Kleins’ prior investments in and gifts to the museum.

The Kleins will be honored at the 2017 Blanton Gala on February 11, where guests will preview the museum’s reinstalled permanent collection galleries, which open to the public on February 12, 2017. As part of the reinstallation, the Blanton has created a gallery dedicated to the ongoing display of video works. Its inaugural installation will be artist Javier Téllez’s *Letter on the Blind For the Use of Those Who See* (2007), one of the Kleins’ promised gifts to the Blanton.

“Film and video are key media within contemporary art practice. As we continue to build our collection it is critical that we represent them in our galleries and showcase the story of contemporary art in a

comprehensive way,” said Blanton Director Simone Wicha. “We are tremendously grateful to Jeanne and Mickey Klein for this transformative gift, which puts the Blanton on a path toward building a great film and video collection.”

Highlights of the Kleins’ gift include:

- Nina Katchadourian’s *Accent Elimination* (2005) is a six-channel video inspired by and featuring the artist’s foreign-born parents who have distinctive accents that she describes as like a “scrambled world map.” With the help of a professional “accent elimination” coach, Katchadourian works to transform her parents’ Finnish and Armenian accents into “standard” American English. At the same time, she attempts to emulate their speech in an exploration of identity and assimilation. The video was featured in the Armenian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, where it won the Golden Lion award and will be included in the Blanton’s forthcoming Nina Katchadourian exhibition, opening in March 2017.



- Javier Téllez’s *Letter on the Blind For the Use of Those Who See* (2007), is named after an essay by French philosopher Denis Diderot inspired by an Indian parable in which blind people touch different parts of an elephant’s anatomy and each comes to a radically different conclusion about what it is they’ve felt. Téllez’s video features footage of six blind people similarly engaging with a live elephant, and their varying accounts of that experience. Participants’ responses range from the physical to the emotional. In a [review](#) for *The Boston Globe*, critic Sebastian Smee writes, “what actually takes place in this series of extraordinary encounters between man and beast is so specific, so inimitable, so unpredictable, that it is impossible not to be moved.” The work was commissioned by Creative Time in 2007 and was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial.



- Two works by Kota Ezawa: *The Simpson Verdict* (2002) and *Lennon Sontag Beuys* (2004). In his video featuring the 1995 O.J. Simpson case, Ezawa animates, frame-by-frame, television footage of the last three minutes of the “trial of the century”—the reading of the verdict. Using a flat, stylized, Pop Art aesthetic, he pares down the footage to its most basic elements—hand gestures and facial movements. Complemented by audio footage from the proceedings, Ezawa’s animation underscores the drama and spectacle of the event, and explores the racial and judicial implications of the case. In *Lennon Sontag Beuys*, the artist animates snippets from John Lennon’s 1969 “bed-in,” Joseph Beuys’ 1974 lecture at the New School in New York, and Susan Sontag’s 2001 lecture at Columbia University. He positions the subjects as heroic figures, agents of change, and as representatives of England, Germany, and the United States, in a blending of music, art, and politics.



- Thomas Demand's *Rain/Regen* (2008) is a 16-mm film loop that features what appear to be hundreds of falling rain drops accompanied by a soundtrack of the pitter-patter of water hitting the ground. In fact, Demand painstakingly created the raindrops out of hundreds of cellophane candy wrappers and the sound of the storm is actually an audio track of eggs frying, in a work that demonstrates both technical mastery and a remarkable sleight-of-hand.

The Kleins' gift includes works by multigenerational artists from around the globe—from Cuba to Cologne—and represents many of the most renowned video artists practicing today. From James Drake's critique of immigration and the prison system, to Shahzia Sikander's homage to the Middle Eastern miniature painting tradition, to Brian Fridge's investigation of cosmology, the videos explore the wide range of artistic expression available within the medium, and how it may be harnessed to investigate many key concerns of contemporary society.

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About Jeanne and Michael Klein

Jeanne and Michael Klein are among the nation's foremost supporters and collectors of contemporary art. Michael is engaged in independent oil and gas exploration and production in Midland, Texas. He is the past Board Chair of Humanities Texas and also serves on the Development Board of The University of Texas at Austin, the Board of Trustees of The Contemporary Austin, the Board of Governors for the Austin Community Foundation, and chairs The University of Texas Press Advisory Council and the Blanton Museum of Art National Leadership Board. He is a member of the Longhorn Foundation and previously served as a member on the Board of Trustees of SITE Santa Fe, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Chinati Foundation, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Jeanne is Founding Chair Emeritus of Artpace in San Antonio and is on the Board of Directors for United States Artists and SITE Santa Fe. She is on the Advisory Council of the College of Education at UT, the Advisory Board of the Harry Ransom Center, the Development Board of The University of Texas at Austin, and the Blanton Museum of Art National Leadership Board. She was a founder of the Menil Contemporaries of Houston. The Kleins are also actively involved with UT Elementary School. They are both graduates of UT.

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 and all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471-7324 or visit www.blantonmuseum.org

Image captions:

Ana Mendieta

Alma Siueta en Fuego (Silueta de Cenizas), November 1975, 1975

3mm color film transferred to DVD

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,

Promised gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, 2015

Image courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London

Nina Katchadourian

Accent Elimination, 2005

Six-channel video with sound, six televisions, three pedestals, dimensions variable

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,

Promised gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, in honor of Director Simone Jamille Wicha's ten-year anniversary at the museum

Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, 2007

Image courtesy of the artist and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco

Javier Téllez

Still from *Letter on the Blind For the Use of Those Who See, 2007*

16mm film transferred to HD video, color, sound

27:36 minutes

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,

Promised gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, 2015

Image courtesy of the artist and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich

Kota Ezawa

Still from *The Simpson Verdict, 2002*

Video (DVD), single channel, color, sound

3 minutes, continuous loop

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,

Promised gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, 2015

Image courtesy of the artist and Haines Gallery, San Francisco

Thomas Demand

Still from *Rain/Regen, 2008*

Super-16mm film loop, stereo (6 channel sound)

Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin,

Promised gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, 2015

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