

The Blanton

Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Kathleen Brady Stimpert 512-475-6784, kathleen.bradystimpert@blantonmuseum.org

Stacey Ingram Kaleh 512-471-8433, stacey.kaleh@blantonmuseum.org

BLANTON MUSEUM RECEIVES ICONIC SCULPTURES BY LUIS JIMÉNEZ

Monumental Fiberglass Works Now on View



AUSTIN, Texas — December 19, 2012 — The Blanton Museum of Art announces the addition of two important works to its permanent collection by sculptor and distinguished University of Texas alumnus, Luis Jiménez. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, *Progress II* underwent comprehensive restoration and was placed on view at the museum in the second floor collection galleries earlier this fall. Now *Border Crossing*, a gift from Jeanne and Michael Klein, has just been installed on the museum's mezzanine. The two vibrant and monumental works expand the Blanton's collection of contemporary sculpture, art of the American West, and works by Mexican-American artists, and complement other works by Jiménez in the museum's collection.

“Over the past several months, *Progress II* has become one of the most visited works in the Blanton collection. *Border Crossing* is sure to draw similar attention.

The works' scale and dramatic sculptural forms make them uniquely compelling for visitors of all ages and backgrounds,” comments Annette DiMeo Carlozzi, the Blanton's curator at large.

Luis Jiménez (1940-2006) grew up in El Paso, Texas. At the age of six, he began working at his father's neon sign shop, where he was exposed to welding and spray-painting techniques. As a young adult, Jiménez moved to Austin to begin his formal study of art at The University of Texas, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, '64. Never straying far from his roots, Jiménez continued to work with industrial materials, seeking to create “a publicly accessible American art.” With colorful illustrations of working-class heroes and larger-than-life sculptures that borrow freely from popular culture, Jiménez championed the everyman throughout his career.



Progress II, a massive sculpture cast in fiberglass and finished with car paint, belongs to the artist's 1976 series that critically examines mythologies of the West. Rectifying traditional cowboy imagery, the work features a Mexican *vaquero* – the original cowboy – closing in on his prey: a snarling, red-eyed longhorn hopelessly attempting to evade defeat. Beneath the larger components of the sculpture, an owl stalks a mouse, while other small living creatures fight for their survival. An overarching theme of pursuit is

revealed as Jiménez uses relationships between predator and prey to allude to the concept of Manifest Destiny, America's road to "progress."

Border Crossing, 1989, also made of polychrome fiberglass, illustrates an act of emigration. Totem-like in stature, the sculpture depicts a man carrying a woman clutching an infant on his back as he crosses the Rio Grande River in search of a better life. *Border Crossing* is dedicated to Jiménez's grandfather, who crossed the Mexico/U.S. border with Jiménez's grandmother almost a century ago, and celebrates the determination of all immigrant peoples.

The addition of these large-scale sculptures to the Blanton's collection of lithographs, etchings, and maquettes, or model-sized sculptures, by Jiménez provides a unique opportunity for University of Texas students and Austinites alike to enjoy and study the dynamic scope of this celebrated Texas artist. Carlozzi remarks, "Through these two works and their layered portrayals of individual moments acutely observed, each representative of larger narratives, Jiménez demonstrates how artists can help us better understand our history as well as the role we play as central figures in the dramas of our own time and place."

###

The Blanton Museum of Art

The Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and has the largest and most comprehensive collection of art in Central Texas. The Blanton's permanent collection of more than 17,000 works is recognized for its European paintings, an encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, and modern and contemporary American and Latin American 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.

For more information or high-resolution images, contact:

Kathleen Brady Stimpert, 512-475-6784 or kathleen.bradystimpert@blantonmuseum.org

Samantha Youngblood, 512-232-5171 or samantha.youngblood@blantonmuseum.org

Stacey Ingram Kaleh 512-471-8433, stacey.kaleh@blantonmuseum.org

Image Captions:

Luis Jiménez

Cruzando El Rio Bravo [Border Crossing], 1989

Painted fiberglass, edition 2/5

Gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein, 2012

Luis Jiménez

Progress II, 1976/1999

Fiberglass, resin and acrylic paint, edition 3/5

319.4 cm x 662.94 cm x 346 cm

Anonymous gift, 2011