

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

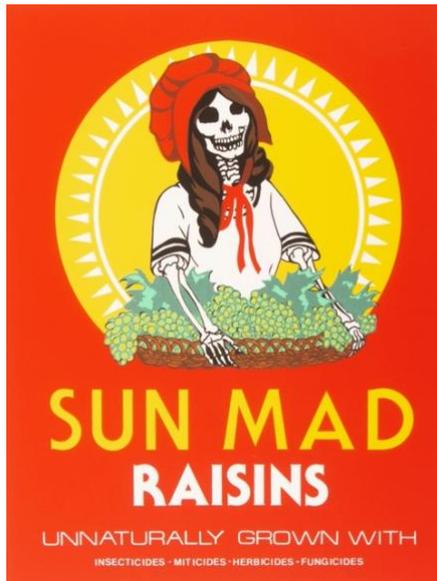
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Blanton Museum Announces Latino Art Initiative



Ester Hernandez, *Sun Mad*, 1982

Connie Arismendi, *La Morena*, 1990s

Supported by the gift and purchase of more than 5,000 works from the Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia Collection, the launch of a new Latino art curatorial position, and the opening of Latino art galleries

AUSTIN, TX—February 15, 2023—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin is launching a Latino art initiative, supported by the gift and purchase of 5,650 individual artworks from the Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia Collection, one of the largest private collections of Chicano and Latino art in the world. The artworks will serve as a driving force behind the museum’s multi-pronged, institution-wide initiative to expand its focus on Latino art, as part of its longtime commitment to modern and contemporary art of the Americas—both North and South.

In tandem with obtaining the Cárdenas/Garcia Collection, the Blanton also has instituted a new curatorial position, Associate Curator of Latino Art, funded by *Advancing Latinx Art in Museums*, a new initiative to nurture and prioritize US Latino art supported by the Ford Foundation, the Getty Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Terra Foundation for American Art. In addition, two new gallery spaces dedicated to Latino art will open at the Blanton in March 2023.

“For decades, Dr. Gilberto Cárdenas has supported and championed Latino and Chicano artists, built an important collection, and consistently encouraged museums to feature Latino art,” said director Simone Wicha. “Latino culture is an essential part of US culture, especially here in the Southwest, and our shared commitment to representing and amplifying Latino history and voices through art prompted me to begin this collaboration with Gilberto and Dolores. The new initiative is an important next step for the Blanton, which has been a leader in American contemporary art and holds one of the oldest and most distinguished collections of Latin American art in this country. Now, with our collective efforts realized, I want to extend my gratitude to Gilberto and Dolores for their trust in the Blanton; to the *Advancing Latinx Art in Museums* funders for selecting and investing in the Blanton; and to UT leadership, with a special thanks to executive vice president and provost Sharon L. Wood, for supporting the museum’s commitment to this field.”

The Blanton notably serves both The University of Texas at Austin campus, which was designated a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2020, and the city of Austin, where nearly one-third of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.



Carmen Lomas Garza, *Ofrenda para Antonio Lomas*, 1995

The Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia Collection

Printmaking is the central strength of the collection, with particular focus on Chicano prints since the 1960s, although almost all mediums are represented. Over the past six decades, Cárdenas and Garcia have rooted their collecting practice in telling the story of the origins, history, and advancement of the Latino communities in the United States, with the overarching mission of ensuring that these communities’ diverse artistic output is recognized as a foundational component of American society and its culture.

A former professor at The University of Texas in Austin, Dr. Cárdenas has been a pioneer in collecting, studying, and supporting Latino artists; he has promoted and shared their work with museums nationwide. Cárdenas and Garcia selected the Blanton to receive the collection because of the museum’s history of exhibitions, programs, and scholarship in the field of Latino art—a demonstrated

commitment to this area long before such efforts became more prevalent. “As part of a public research university, providing first-class education to more than 60,000 students, and a Hispanic Serving Institution, the Blanton plays a critical role in the educational and research work of this community,” Cárdenas and Garcia said in a statement. “The Cárdenas/Garcia collection at the museum will provide access to Latino art for the student body and faculty for discovery and research, in addition to serving as a resource for the Austin community. We are confident that the research undertaken by the curatorial staff and the exhibitions and publications that result will represent a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge and understanding of this aspect of American art.”



Gaspar Enriquez, *María de los Ángeles y los angelitos negros*, 1994

Over the next five years, the Blanton will research and digitize all the artworks. In keeping with Dr. Cárdenas’ efforts to encourage greater representation in museum collections across the country, the Blanton will select works to donate to institutions nationwide, though the majority will stay at the Blanton, maintaining the narrative thread of the thoughtfully assembled collection. The museum undertook a similar dispersion in 2018, after The Contemporary Austin transferred more than 700 artworks from its collection to the care of the Blanton in 2017. Seventeen Texas museums received works during the multi-phase project coordinated by the two Austin institutions.

The Blanton’s focus on Latino art already received a significant boost from Dr. Cárdenas in 2017 with a donation of 356 prints from Self Help Graphics & Art, the printmaking workshop and cultural institution that has been a mainstay in Los Angeles’ arts community since 1972. The works were presented in the Blanton’s major exhibition *Arte Sin Fronteras: Prints from the Self-Help Graphics Studio*, which was curated by Florencia Bazzano, Assistant Curator, Latin American Art, and former curatorial assistant Christian Wurst.



Maceo Montoya, *Dawn (Or Despair)*, 2003
César A. Martínez, *Untitled*, 1980s–90s

New Curator of Latino Art and New Dedicated Galleries

In anticipation of a deepened emphasis on Latino art, the museum sought funding to hire an associate curator of Latino art. The Blanton received a grant to support the position from *Advancing Latinx Art in Museums*, an initiative to nurture and prioritize US Latino art that is supported by the Ford Foundation, the Getty Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

This new curatorial position will be fundamental in documenting and exhibiting the works from the Cárdenas/García collection, ensuring they receive the proper research, study, and curatorial context as they are presented to audiences in Texas and seen by visitors from around the world. The associate curator of Latino art will work directly with the Blanton's curator of Latin American art, Vanessa Davidson; however, just as Latino artists straddle many worlds, this position will engage with all curatorial areas at the museum. The new curator will also help advance Latino studies across the UT campus by supporting faculty, helping to train the next generation of historians of Chicano and Latino art, developing educational and exhibition programming, and more. *Advancing Latinx Art in Museums* will fund this role for five years, as the Blanton works toward endowing the position into the future.

"Importantly positioned within the first Latin American art department to be founded in this country, this new curatorial position will expand the study and presentation of Chicano and Latino art, working closely with the Cárdenas/García Collection," said Davidson. "The Blanton's new dedicated gallery spaces will ensure that these artworks, as well Latino art more generally, have a constant, dedicated presence for museum visitors and for scholars who come from far and wide to research this landmark collection."



Judithe Hernández, *Reina de la Primavera*, from the *Mechicano 1977 Calendario*, 1977

Dulce Pinzón, *Minerva Valencia*, from *Puebla*, works as a nanny in New York. She sends 400 dollars a week, from the series, *The Real Story of the Superheroes*, 2005

The new gallery spaces dedicated to Latino art in the Blanton's collection will open in March 2023. The first rotation, titled *Cara a Cara / Face to Face: Chicano Portraits from the Gilberto and Dolores Cárdenas Collection*, will feature a selection of paintings by Chicano artists who use portraiture as a form of personal, cultural, or political affirmation. Working innovatively in a variety of media ranging from traditional printmaking to digital photography, these artists portray people from all walks of life while also addressing issues of social justice. Among the artists featured are Claudio Dicochea, Gaspar Enriquez, Esperanza Gama, Carmen Lomas Garza, Yolanda López, Delilah Montoya, Malaquías Montoya, Dulce Pinzón, Linda Vallejo, and John Valadez. This inaugural exhibition is organized by curators Davidson and Bazzano.

Opening in spring 2024, an exhibition in the museum's Paper Vault gallery will highlight the works on paper which represent the core of the Cárdenas/Garcia collection and reflect the importance of printmaking and photography for Latino artists. They span several art historical periods and a number of communities that today are described in academic circles with the umbrella term of *Latinx*, with a special emphasis on examples produced by Chicano artists. Whether produced collectively or individually, these artworks illustrate the great diversity of techniques and subjects adopted by these artists as they seek to maximize the expressive potential of their chosen media.

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About the Blanton

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with more than 21,000 objects. Recognized as the home of Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*, its major collecting areas are modern and contemporary U.S. and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

About Gilberto Cárdenas

A celebrated professor in the field of sociology, Gilberto Cárdenas (b. 1947, Los Angeles, California) has spent his career examining the intersections of art and the Latino immigrant experience. In 1987, Cárdenas initiated the formation of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, a national consortium of university-based research centers for which he later served as Director for 14 years. He helped launch the Bill and Melinda Gates Fellows Program, which received more than \$1.5 billion from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support approximately 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students in universities across the United States.

Cárdenas has served on many boards for art centers and museums throughout the United States, including the Smithsonian Institution's Latino Center, the first Smithsonian National Capital Campaign Committee, and the SI Archives of American Art. He was a longtime member of the Board of Directors of Self-Help Graphics, Inc. (Los Angeles), Museo del Barrio (New York), National Hispanic Cultural Center (Albuquerque), the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago), and the South Bend Museum of Art (South Bend), among others. Cárdenas worked to help facilitate the formation of the Consejo Gráfico Nacional, a national consortium of Latino print studios, and was the founding Executive Producer of Latino USA, a national NPR radio program. He also was the owner of Galería Sin Fronteras, a commercial gallery in Austin.

Cárdenas has worked in the area of immigration for more than 50 years and has gained international recognition as a scholar in Mexican immigration. Named three times by *Hispanic Business Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential Latinos in the United States, Cárdenas has authored and edited numerous books, articles, monographs, and reports on topics covering several fields of sociology, including international migration, economy and society, and race and ethnic relations. He served as Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies at The University of Texas Austin and was the founding Director of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

About Dolores Garcia

Dolores Garcia (b. 1955, Lubbock, Texas) is an alumna of The University of Texas at Austin, from which she retired in 2008, after 30 years of advancing academic and cultural programs supporting Latina/o studies. Throughout her tenure at UT, she supported and curated Latino arts programming at the Center for Mexican American Studies, the Mexican American Cultural Arts Center, and the Dougherty Arts Center. Her work expanded relationships between the university and the local and national Latino communities, including an internship with the Smithsonian Latino Center. While working with the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, she spearheaded the first biennial National Conference on Latino Arts and Culture, held in Austin. She continued her commitment to Latino Art after moving to South Bend where she organized several fundraising events for arts and community organizations, including La Casa de Amistad, the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture, and the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Garcia is still very active in several non-profit arts organizations in Austin, including curatorial projects for La Peña Gallery where she collaborates with members from Consejo Gráfico Nacional, local artists, and the Coronado's Serie Project.

About Advancing Latinx Art in Museums

Advancing Latinx Art in Museums represents the second phase of a multi-year funding collaboration seeking to nurture and prioritize US Latinx art (phase one supported the [Latinx Artist Fellowship](#)). A partnership between the Mellon, Ford, Getty, and Terra Foundations, the initiative bolsters museums that have shown a commitment to collecting, studying, exhibiting, and engaging with Latinx art and artists by ensuring they have the capacity to employ specialist curators. *Advancing Latinx Art in*

Museums supports the creation or formalization of permanent early and mid-career curatorial positions with a specialization in Latinx art.

Image Captions

Ester Hernandez, *Sun Mad*, 1982, screenprint, 26 x 20 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Connie Arismendi, *La Morena*, mixed media, pencil on fabric attached to canvas, 1990s, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Carmen Lomas Garza, *Ofrenda para Antonio Lomas*, 1995, laser cut steel, 58 1/2 x 99 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Gaspar Enriquez, *María de los Ángeles y los angelitos negros*, 1994, acrylic on board, 48 x 32 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Maceo Montoya, *Dawn (Or Despair)*, 2003, acrylic on canvas, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

César A. Martínez, *Untitled*, 1980s–90s, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Judithe Hernández, *Reina de la Primavera*, from the *Mexicano 1977 Calendario*, 1977, screenprint, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, Museum Acquisition Fund, 2022

Dulce Pinzón, *Minerva Valencia*, from *Puebla, works as a nanny in New York. She sends 400 dollars a week*, from the series, *The Real Story of the Superheroes*, 2005, photographs, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gilberto Cárdenas Collection, gift of Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia, 2023