

See what art can do.

Impact Report 2023

**BLANTON
MUSEUM
& ART**

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From the Director

This Blanton Museum of Art Impact Report covers calendar year 2023, which marked a significant milestone in our journey—the Blanton’s 60th anniversary—and also was a moment of historic transition as we unveiled our new grounds. This year we went from being partially closed and under construction to having a more robust program than ever before.

Big, bold, and immersive, the Blanton is now unmistakable and unmissable. We not only have a vastly improved landscape, but also a beautiful, lively space for our community to gather. From the “petals” that have become a favorite place for visitors to linger in the shade, to great works by artists Carmen Herrera, Gabriel Dawe, Kay Rosen, and Bill Fontana that join *Austin* by Ellsworth Kelly in greeting visitors from every angle, our grounds have become a new landmark in Austin.

Central to this redesign and energy is the Moody Patio, which has hosted everything from live music and family picnics on Second Saturdays to countless groups of UT students, who flock here throughout the day for friend meet-ups, studying, and looking at art. All of these activities reflect how our museum serves as a beloved front porch for campus and Austin. A wide range of programs have also returned inside the museum, including our longstanding B Scene art party and new series like Art with an Expert, Curator’s Choice, and Blanton Live: Conversations for Now.

In 2023, we continued to create and present nationally-recognized exhibitions—ranging from the rehangings of our European galleries to contemporary artists looking at the important issues of the day—and meaningful educational experiences for K–12 and university students. At the heart of these efforts is our belief in the power of art to connect, challenge, and inspire us.

The story of the Blanton continues to unfold, and we are committed to growth as a leader in the arts nationally. On the horizon in 2024 and beyond is a new website, the opening of the reimagined Blanton café, a digital publishing initiative, and a special campaign to strategically elevate and transform our collection, as well as ensure that our programs that have been the most impactful are endowed and safeguarded for future generations. I am excited at what 2024 will bring and cannot wait to report on a full year of impact at your “new” Blanton.

Join us as we continue to create powerful art experiences and lasting museum memories for our community.

Simone J. Wicha
Director



Art can surprise.

Each year, the museum's line-up of exhibitions—created by Blanton curators or traveling from other institutions—invites visitors to discover the unexpected about themselves and the world.



Day Jobs

This acclaimed exhibition of modern and contemporary art illuminated how day jobs ranging from dishwasher to ICU nurse can fuel creative growth, upending the myth of the artist sequestered in their studio, awaiting inspiration.

February 19–July 23, 2023

Day Jobs was organized by the Blanton Museum of Art. Presenting Partner: Indeed.

Generous funding for this exhibition was provided in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, John H. Baker and Christine Ogata, Ellen and David Berman, and Anthony and Celeste Meier; with additional support from Nicole and George Jeffords, Jeanne and Michael Klein, the Robert Lehman Foundation, and Kathleen Irvin Loughlin and Christopher Loughlin. Support was also provided by Leah Bennett, Carol LeWitt, and Lea Weingarten.



“...for the artists featured in *Day Jobs*, these lived experiences give the works meaning. Without day jobs, their work may never have seen the light of an exhibition hall. —TEXAS MONTHLY



If the Sky Were Orange: Art in the Time of Climate Change

Featuring text by internationally-known climate scientists and writers responding to contemporary works on view, this innovative exhibition used contemporary and historical art from the Blanton's collection to examine climate-related issues.

September 9, 2023–February 11, 2024

If the Sky Were Orange: Art in the Time of Climate Change was organized by the Blanton Museum of Art. Generous funding for this exhibition was provided in part by Suzanne Deal Booth, Alice Kleberg Reynolds Foundation, Jay Hodges and Katya Jestin, and Ellen and David Berman.

“...the interdisciplinary nature of the show goes deeper with its engagement, presenting several points of entry—the artwork, the writers' interpretations and didactics with historical and scientific context... —THE NEW YORK TIMES



Forces of Nature: Ancient Maya Art from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Visitors enjoyed this trip back in time to explore the rich world of the supernatural in art of the ancient Maya.

August 27, 2023 – January 7, 2024

Forces of Nature: Ancient Maya Art from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Support for this exhibition at the Blanton was provided in part by Bettye Nowlin.



Spectacular and out of this world. —**BLANTON VISITOR**



Paper Vault: Medieval X Modern

The intriguing exhibition demonstrated how modern artists from Europe and the Americas created prints, drawings, paintings, illustrated books, sculptures, and decorative objects informed by the Middle Ages.

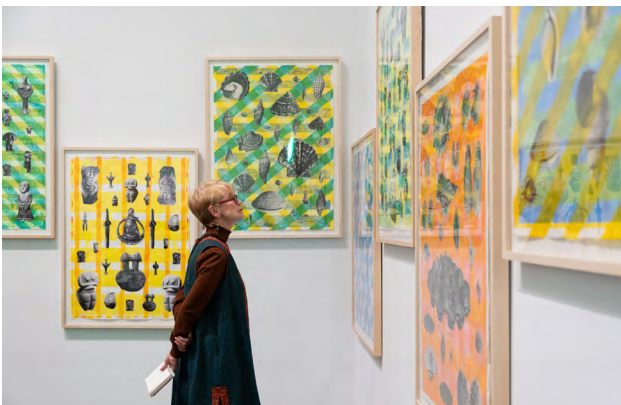
December 10, 2022 – August 23, 2023

Medieval X Modern was organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.



...takes visitors on a journey through the revival of interest in medieval art.

— **THE ALCALDE, UT ALUMNI MAGAZINE**



Contemporary Project #11: Las Hermanas Iglesias

Sisters Lisa and Janelle Iglesias debuted collaborative work inspired by their own navigations of fertility, pregnancy, loss, and birth.

December 17, 2022 – July 9, 2023

Las Hermanas Iglesias was organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.



As someone who loves looking at tiny details and conducting research, I was immediately drawn to [the artworks]. — **ITZA, UT ART HISTORY STUDENT**



“The most Austin-like place in Austin. An art museum that combines old tradition and newness. —BLANTON VISITOR





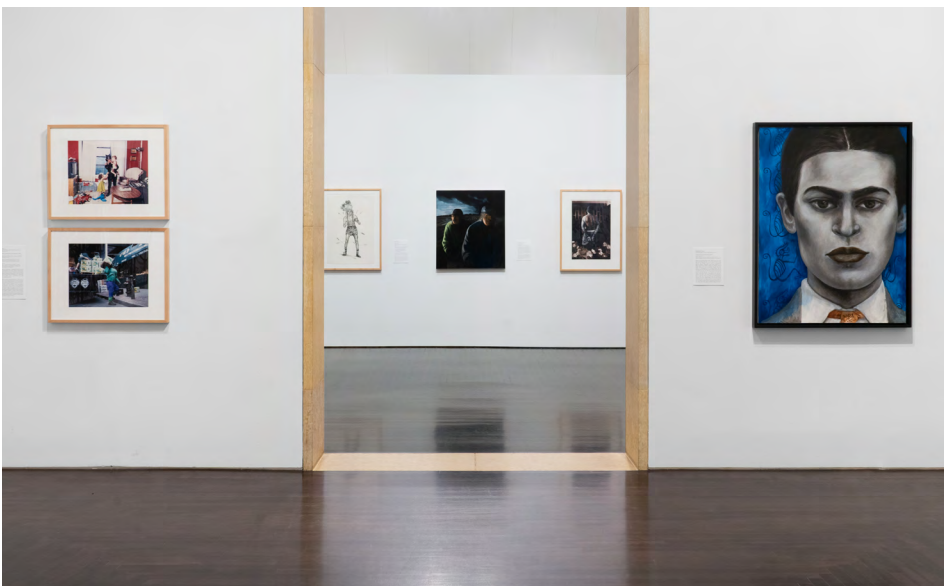
Art can connect.

While studying, caring for, displaying, and teaching from its collection, the Blanton has continued to shape it strategically—building upon strengths, filling gaps, and creating opportunities for teaching and community connection. Recent highlights include:

- In 2023, the Blanton acquired **62 artworks** by 19th- to 21st-century artists, ranging from icons such as Leonora Carrington to contemporary innovators like Gajin Fujita.
- By reinstalling its **European collection galleries** in the fall of 2023—an initiative involving new gallery layouts, wall colors, and labels—the Blanton has provided visitors with a fresh context for experiencing and understanding artworks ranging from 5th-century BCE Greek vases to late 19th-century sculpture and paintings.
- From July–August 2023, **Recent Acquisitions in Contemporary Art** showcased 15 artworks acquired since 2020 and, notably, all created since 2000. The gallery feature included works in various mediums by artists such as Ana Teresa Fernández, Jeffery Dell, and Julia Wachtel.



- In 2023 the Blanton furthered its commitment to Latino art by acquiring the **Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia Collection**. Research and digitization of approximately 5,000 artworks has begun under the direction of Claudia Zapata, the Blanton’s inaugural Associate Curator of Latino Art—a position funded by the Advancing Latinx Art in Museums initiative.
- ***Cara a cara/Face to Face: Portraits by Chicano Artists from the Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores Garcia Collection***, on view from March 25– September 10, 2023, was the first presentation from this landmark acquisition; it showcased portraiture as a form of personal, cultural, or political affirmation.





Carmen Herrera, *Verde que te quiero verde (Green How I Want You Green)*, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Commission through funds provided by the Kahng Foundation.



Gabriel Dawe, *Plexus No. 44*, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Commission through generous funds provided by Sally and Tom Dunning, with additional support from Mary Beth and Phil Canfield, Suzanne McFayden, Janet and Wilson Allen, Aubrey and Bobby Epstein, and Zarmeena Vendal. Support is also provided by Clayton and Andrew Maebius.

Art can wow.

Several large-scale, immersive works of art were unveiled on the grounds, joining *Austin* by Ellsworth Kelly, and providing a unique museum experience that now begins the moment visitors arrive.

- ***Verde que te quiero verde (Green How I Want You Green)*** is the first major public mural commission by renowned Cuban-American abstract painter Carmen Herrera, and spans the length of the Michener Gallery Building's loggia.
- ***HI*** by Kay Rosen is the colorful mural that greets visitors emerging from the Brazos Garage, playfully inviting them to reconsider the magic in everyday speech—while clearly marking the Blanton's gallery building.
- ***Plexus No. 44*** by Gabriel Dawe, the thread-based artwork in the Check-In lobby of the Smith Building, welcomes visitors with an immersive dance of light and color.
- ***The Butler Sound Gallery*** is a parklike, permanent space dedicated to sound art, with new works to be commissioned every few years. The first site-specific installation is recordings of Central Texas wildlife taken over the course of four seasons by sound art pioneer Bill Fontana.

Art can open minds.



Teaching and learning are central to the Blanton’s mission and we continued to engage local K–12 students and courses from across UT campus this year. We believe that art matters in people’s lives, and that skills associated with close looking and interpretation contribute to creativity, critical analysis, and community.

- **K–12 student groups** from across Austin and the growing Central Texas Metroplex visit the museum to participate in interactive, inquiry-based gallery experiences. Schools can choose from a range of innovative lessons designed by the Blanton that use the collection and special exhibitions to support classroom learning and help students build connections to art.

A special pilot in fall 2023 brought **900 Bastrop ISD fourth graders** to the Blanton from this neighboring community for a gallery tour and art-making experience. An unexpected, wonderful outcome of this collaboration was that the drawings the students created were on special view in a gallery at the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in spring 2024.

- **UT students** representing all 19 colleges and schools on campus visited the Blanton for guided and self-guided experiences led by Blanton educators and customized to support professors’ course goals and extend classroom learning. In 2023, students came to the Blanton from the College of Natural Sciences, Moody College of Communications, the Dell Medical School, the School of Social Work, and more. The Blanton also served university students by offering a number of fellowships and internships to provide professional development and training.
- **Austin Museum Day** welcomed 6,000 visitors of all ages, including many families, to the Blanton on September 17, 2023, as part of this city-wide free celebration of art, culture, history, music, nature, and science. In addition to free Blanton admission, attendees could participate in a “campus crawl” scavenger hunt of art activities.



“The Blanton isn’t just a museum; it’s an experience that leaves an indelible mark on the soul. — THEODORA, UT AUSTIN STUDENT





Art can draw a crowd.

When the Blanton relaunched in-person public programs in 2023, the community showed up. From young professionals to retirees, new Austinites to longtimers, art aficionados to the art-curious, visitors came back to enjoy it all.

- **Second Saturdays** make the most of the Blanton's new "late till 8" Saturday hours, offering visitors a day of music, picnicking on the Moody Patio, and art programs like Art with an Expert, Curator's Choice, and Pop-Up print exhibitions.

Support for Second Saturdays at the Blanton is generously provided by H-E-B. Media Sponsor: The Austin Chronicle.



HelpingHere CHRONICLE

- **Morninglight in Austin** offered visitors a way to honor Ellsworth Kelly's centennial year and experience the iconic artwork like never before. One morning a month December through March, small groups enjoyed early viewing hours, guided reflections, poetry, and quiet contemplation.

- **Blanton Live: Conversations for Now** is the new speaker series that brings artists and other creative minds together to tackle today’s most compelling ideas and issues. October’s inaugural program hosted climate writers and artists exploring themes from the exhibition *If the Sky Were Orange: Art in the Time of Climate Change*.



Excellent speakers, and educational but fun! — **BLANTON LIVE ATTENDEE**

- **B Scene**, Austin’s favorite art party, returned in July and September, featuring live music by Money Chicha, DJ sets by Adrian Quesada and Chulita Vinyl Club, a tour of our growing Latino art collection, artist talks, “slow looking” in the galleries, and more.



9,145
Second
Saturday
attendees

checked out our new
monthly event in 2023

156
public tours
of exhibition
& collection
works

offered in Spanish
and English

1,519
B Scene
attendees

enjoyed the museum’s
late-night art party

Blanton by the Numbers

January 1–December 31, 2023

7,942
K-12 students

participated in gallery
experiences at the Blanton

13,412
UT students

participated in guided and
self-guided curricular visits
to the museum

1,822 visitors

to the H-E-B Study Room,
located within the Wilkinson
Center for Prints and Drawings

166,520
people

visited the
Blanton's galleries

4,674 member
households

supported the museum

421 works

displayed in our upstairs
collection galleries

465 artists

presented in exhibitions
and collection rotations

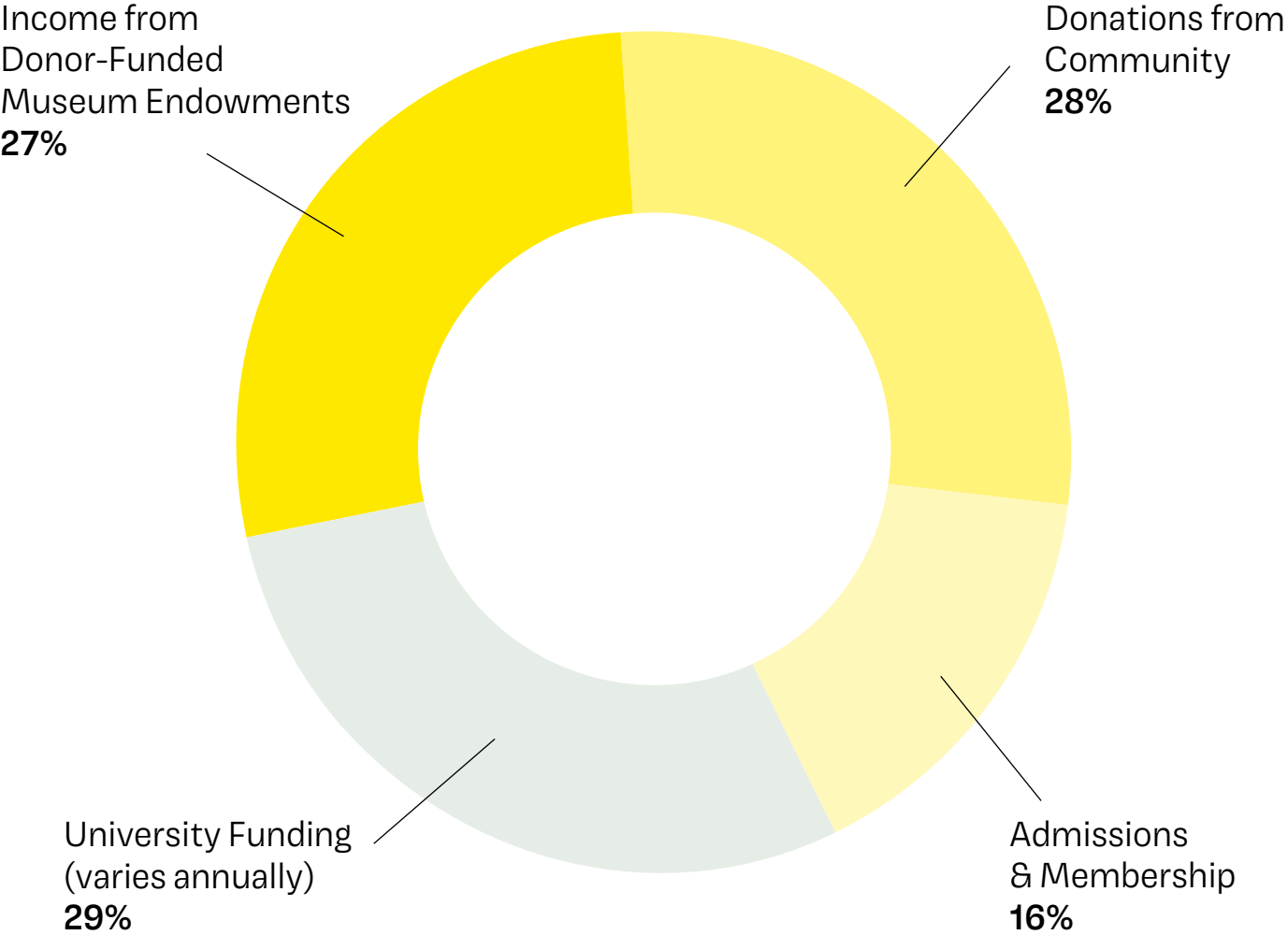
more than
21,000 objects

cared for in the collection

25,000
native plants

planted on the grounds

FY23 Blanton Operating Budget: \$8.5 million





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