

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

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BLANTON MUSEUM PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ART OF THE 1990s

Come as You Are: Art of the 1990s

February 21–May 15, 2016

Exhibition to feature works by Janine Antoni, Matthew Barney, Andrea Fraser, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Glenn Ligon, Kara Walker, and Fred Wilson, among others



AUSTIN, TX—November 13, 2015—The Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin presents ***Come as You Are: Art of the 1990s***, the first major museum survey to examine, within an historical context, art that emerged in this pivotal decade. The exhibition showcases approximately 45 artists born or practicing in the United States—including **Doug Aitken, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Glenn Ligon, Donald Moffett, Shirin Neshat, Catherine Opie, Gabriel Orozco, Shahzia Sikander, Frances Stark, and Kara Walker**—and features installation, video, painting, sculpture, drawing, prints, photography, and early Internet art. Organized by the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey, the survey includes works created from 1989 to 2001, and explores a range of social and political issues as diverse as the decade from which they emerged.

“The 1990s irrevocably changed the way we function as a society and reshaped the arts in critical ways,” remarked Blanton director Simone Wicha. “The shifts caused by the digital revolution and globalization made the world feel like a smaller place and put artists of diverse backgrounds on a more level playing field. *Come As You Are* will illuminate this revolutionary period in art making, the social and political issues these artists addressed, and the impact of the decade on our lives today.”

Exhibition Themes and Highlights

Titled after the 1992 anthem by Nirvana, *Come as You Are* speaks to the issues of identity that were shaped by the effects of digital technologies and global migration. The artists in the exhibition made their initial “point of entry” into the art historical discourse during the 1990s and reflect the increasingly heterogeneous nature of the art world during this time, when many women artists and artists of color attained unprecedented prominence. The 1990s was a decade of tremendous social, political, and economic change. The period’s defining event was the digital revolution, which altered everything from everyday communication, to international commerce, to global geopolitics. In particular, the rise of the

Internet dramatically increased the volume of visual stimuli and information circulating throughout the world, which people struggled to navigate and process.

Contemporary artists grappled with the effects of the digital age, further shaped by events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the first Gulf War, and the Los Angeles riots following the Rodney King verdict (1992). Artists of the decade often addressed these events specifically in their work, but also situated them within the context of changes particular to the art world, such as the “culture wars” surrounding artistic freedom and censorship; the impact of new media (video, sound, and digital art) on artistic practice; and the expansion of the global art market, with its explosion of art fairs and art markets.

The Blanton’s presentation will be complemented by a unique selection of works that focus on the AIDS crisis and its impact on the art of the 1990s. Other significant highlights of the exhibition include:

- **Nikki S. Lee** – Practically synonymous with 1990s art making, the work of Nikki S. Lee is part performance, part photography. Documenting the artist’s immersion in various American communities, from street punk scenes to the country backwoods of Ohio, it reflects the malleable nature and personal significance of identity.
- **Janine Antoni** – *Lick and Lather* (1993), two of the artist’s famous self-portrait busts which depict and deface her likeness. One made of chocolate and the other of soap, the works riff on classical portraiture and are “re-sculpted” through tasting and rubbing. They were first exhibited in the 1993 Venice Biennale.
- **Mark Dion’s** *Department of Marine Animal Identification of the City of San Francisco (Chinatown Division)* (1998), an installation based on the artist’s research on the biological and geographic origins of the fish sold in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Taking the form of a laboratory, the installation features fish samples, research files, and furniture.
- **Felix Gonzalez-Torres** – “*Untitled*” (*Placebo*) (1991), a monumental installation of silver cellophane-wrapped candy. Viewers are invited to take a piece, and in doing so, contribute to the slow disappearance of the work over the course of the exhibition. The work was produced just before the death of Ross Laycock, the artist’s partner, from an AIDS-related illness.
- **Julie Mehretu** – *Untitled* (2000), a set of layered, complex images that evoke cities and cultures around the globe, and combine elements of geometric abstraction with references to maps, landscapes, and aspects of popular culture. These drawings are some of the artist’s earliest such works, and serve as prime examples of how, at the turn of the 21st century, artists began integrating new media technologies—in Mehretu’s case, digital rendering technologies—into traditional fine art practices.



Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Blanton will screen The *CREMASTER* Cycle, a series of five visually arresting films that artist Matthew Barney created and produced. Considered to be some of the most significant and elaborate artworks of the 1990s, the films were made out of sequence (*CREMASTER 4* in

1994, *CREMASTER 1* in 1995, followed by 5, 2, and finally *CREMASTER 3* in 2002) and the content of each touches on biological models, mythological and historical paradigms, and Barney's unique symbology. The Blanton will screen The *CREMASTER* Cycle films individually throughout the duration of *Come as You Are*, and will screen the complete suite of five works together in their entirety during the week of the SXSW Festival in Austin, March 15–20, 2016. Free with museum admission.



Come As You Are is accompanied by the most definitive catalogue on the art of the 1990s to date. Co-published by the University of California Press and the Montclair Art Museum, it includes four essays by exhibition curator Alexandra Schwartz and seven short, thematic essays by some of today's foremost contemporary art historians. Additionally, the catalogue contains a comprehensive chronology of the decade's key artistic, political, and cultural events and an extensive bibliography.

This exhibition is organized by the Montclair Art Museum and made possible with generous support from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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Image Captions:

Catherine Opie
Jo, 1993
Chromogenic print, 16 x 20 in.
Montclair Art Museum, Gift of Patricia A. Bell
2003.9.2
Courtesy of Regen Projects, Los Angeles
© Catherine Opie

Nikki S. Lee (born 1970, South Korea)
Hispanic Project (25), 1998
Fujiflex print, edition 4 of 5
21 1/4 x 28 1/4 in. (54 x 71.8 cm)
Ann and Mel Schaffer Family Collection
© Nikki S. Lee
Images are courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

Matthew Barney
CREMASTER 4, 1994
Production still
©1994 Matthew Barney
Photo: Michael James O'Brien
Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels
For high-resolution images, and additional information, please contact:

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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