

Blanton Museum of Art to Showcase Transformative Gifts of Art in 2027 Exhibition



Opening March 2027, *Shaping the Future* will celebrate collectors and the significant works of art they have generously donated to the Blanton.

AUSTIN, TX — November 6, 2025 — The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin announces the upcoming exhibition, *Shaping the Future: Transformative Gifts to the Blanton Collection*, opening in March 2027. This landmark presentation will feature significant works of art donated by alumni, Austinites, and other collectors from across the country, celebrating their generosity and the enduring impact of their investment in the museum’s future.

These transformative gifts strengthen the Blanton’s collection and advance its role as a vital cultural and educational resource for the University and community, reflecting the vision and commitment of the museum’s passionate supporters. Following the renovation of the museum grounds, record-setting visitation, and new levels of national recognition, the exhibition reflects the next moment of pivotal growth for the Blanton.

Shaping the Future will debut at the 2027 Blanton Gala on Saturday, March 6, 2027. The fundraising event will honor the donors whose visionary gifts have made this milestone possible and raise essential funds to support new exhibitions, programs, and collection care. The exhibition will subsequently open to the public on Sunday, March 14, 2027.

“Great universities, like The University of Texas at Austin, and great cities, like Austin, deserve great art collections,” said **Blanton Director Simone Wicha**. “My vision for *Shaping the Future* was to celebrate the impact of transformative artworks—investments that continue to elevate the Blanton as a cultural leader and affirm its place as a world-class museum for our

community. We are deeply grateful to the donors who have entrusted the museum by gifting these artworks that they love.”

Since its founding, the Blanton’s collection has grown through the continued generosity of individuals, including many longtime supporters. Today, the museum’s holdings span centuries and geographies, with depth in modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and prints and drawings. The Blanton is committed to making its collection accessible—through regular rotations in its galleries and by providing online resources that support research and scholarship. *Shaping the Future* builds on this legacy by inviting singular gifts from individual collectors that strategically address gaps in the collection or expand existing strengths. These works will spark new research, support teaching, broaden perspectives for visitors, and inspire future programming.

From early 20th-century modernism to groundbreaking contemporary practices, the works in *Shaping the Future* reflect the breadth of the Blanton’s evolving collection. Donors who have already contributed to this exhibition include UT distinguished alumni and Latin American art collectors Judy and Charles Tate; UT distinguished alumnus and former President of the Ford Foundation Darren Walker; artist and President of the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation Jack Shear; and UT alumna and Houston philanthropist Kathryn Ketelsen.



“I chose to support *Shaping the Future* by including John Singer Sargent’s *The Countess of Essex* as a planned gift in my estate,” said **donor Kathryn Ketelsen**. “It is a cherished work of art that will meaningfully expand the museum’s collection of early twentieth-century American artists. I am pleased to be an early contributor, as I believe this is the best way to strengthen the Blanton’s collection. I hope others will join me in helping to shape the museum’s future.”

Presented in the Butler Gallery, the museum's principal space for large-scale exhibitions, *Shaping the Future* will include historic and contemporary works across media. The exhibition will also extend into the Paper Vault galleries with a special focus on works on paper—a strength of the Blanton's collection, used extensively in teaching and research. Selections there will range from European old masters and Japanese prints to modern and contemporary drawings and photographs.

“Every artwork in *Shaping the Future* tells two stories—the artist's and the collector's,” said **Blanton Chief Curator Carter Foster**. Together, these stunning works will expand the collection in new ways and honor the shared commitment that defines the Blanton's growth and legacy.”

Foster and Wicha have worked closely to spearhead the project and engage collectors. Foster has also worked with the Blanton's curatorial team to identify collection areas to strengthen and to develop a cohesive exhibition that tells the stories behind both the collectors and the artworks.

The Blanton's curatorial team will continue to consider significant gifts of art for possible inclusion in the exhibition. To express interest in participating and learn more, please contact transforming@blantonmuseum.org.

About the Blanton Museum of Art:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with more than 22,000 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 is committed to creating a museum experience that inspires visitors to discover the unexpected about the world and themselves.

Images:

Ellsworth Kelly, *Green Blue Black*, 1963, acrylic on canvas, 97 × 144 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Gift of Jack Shear and Ellsworth Kelly Studio, 2022, © The Ellsworth Kelly Foundation

John Singer Sargent, *The Countess of Essex*, 1906–07, oil on canvas, 49 1/2 x 36 1/4 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Promised gift of Kathryn Ketelsen