

CONNECTIONS Blanton Volunteer News

APRIL 2008

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Survey Says!

Blanton volunteers like talking to people. They like being knowledgeable about our collections so they can help answer questions. Volunteers also like working with our staff and think our gallery assistants are really helpful.

Reminder: always sign in at the desk for any hours you spend at the Blanton. This includes training, orientation, tours, events and info desk shifts. Always write down how many audio tours you hand out in the log book before you leave.

Volunteer Calendar

Volunteer Orientation	Friday, April 4	10:30 – 11:30 am
	Sunday, April 6	3:00 – 4:00 pm
Bach Cantata Project	Tuesday, April 29	12:00 noon
Art City Austin (downtown)	Saturday, April 12	10:00 am – 5:00 pm
	Sunday, April 13	11:00 am – 5:00 pm
Volunteer Recognition (at a private residence)	Sunday, May 25	5:00 – 7:00 pm

Third Thursdays

Volunteers are enjoying our new Third Thursday programming. We have yoga in the galleries, book club, artist talks and tours. Now that we have a cash bar brought to us by Catering by Rosemary, visitors can meet friends at the Blanton for wine or beer on Thursday evenings. Come check it out!



Angela Houdyshell, Jill Strandemo and Judy Farmer check out the new cash bar in the atrium on Third Thursday. Photo: Rick Hall

Volunteer for Family Days

Sign up to help with Family Day on July 19. We feature art activities and extra learning opportunities for the family visitor. Our free family days are Austin Museum Day and Explore UT. We also provide activities and connections to our collection at our booth at the Art City Austin festival every April. The festival is downtown and benefits the Blanton.



Family Day at the Blanton
Photo: Rick Hall



Kaveh Ahmadi

Photo: Ryosuke Okuno:

Volunteer Spotlight: Kaveh Ahmadi

By Paige Britt

1. Where are you from and how did you end up in Austin?

I'm an Iranian and I grew up in Tehran. I moved to Lawrence, Kansas in mid 2003 to do my Masters in Petroleum Engineering. After I finished it, I came to Austin to do my doctorate at UT.

2. What brought you to the Blanton the first time?

Curiosity. I was curious to understand the culture of art that I had none or little time to get exposed to. I see it as a different culture and I am not talking about Western culture versus Middle Eastern. I am talking about culture of physics and math that follows set of rules as opposed to a culture of creativity that has no rules.

3. What keeps bringing you back as a volunteer?

I'm still discovering. Not too long ago, I would have passed by most of the paintings in the Modern Art gallery, thinking to myself, "I don't get it".

Now I admit that it still happens time to time but it is less frequent. I call this progress (that I was hoping for). Add to that a relaxed and fun environment with super-friendly staff and you have good reasons to come back again.

4. If you could step inside any painting in the museum, which one would it be?

There are a few of them. For example, the painting in the American gallery showing a scene in which an Indian chief gazed out into the distance. You may see a sense of sorrow in the chief's face, but it is such a calm and serene scene that I would like step in, stand by the chief for a while and perhaps smoke a pipe afterward.

5. Do you have a favorite or most memorable temporary exhibit?

I have not been here long enough to see many exhibitions. So far I liked the thoughtful Macchi exhibition and detailed works of Dürer.

6. Any tips for new volunteers?

Put aside time to go to the tours. Try the very same tour with different docents. You get a lot more.

New Sculpture in Atrium

Raku Amends, 2000

Catherine Lee 2000

Glazed raku and nails, promised gift

This strong work by Catherine Lee is composed of 85 individual ceramic panels, each approximately 18"x 10" in a 5 x 17 foot array.

The panels feature textured grey tones offset with a smaller, angular area in a more matte finish and a stronger color. The palette of this piece is extremely controlled with the accents ranging from grey, brown and red to black. The mixed angular and curved borders of each panel relate to a shield-like shape but are very freeform. The arrangement within the array is far from random and sets up many echoes of accent colors and shapes. The whole viewed from a distance is remarkably cohesive but the individual panels deserve close inspection.

The atrium location frames the piece beneath the strong angle of the staircase. It works as a robust anchor in the solid white backdrop, and the ceramic material is stable enough to withstand the public contact and the continuous bright light.

Lee was born in Pampa, Texas in 1950. She now lives and works in the Austin and New York Area.



Guest curator, James Elaine of the Hammer Museum at UCLA, visits with Blanton Curator Annette Carozzi and new assistant curator, Risa Puleo, in front of the *Raku Amends* sculpture in the atrium. Photo: Martha Bradshaw

by Pat Boyt



Photo: Lynn Johnson

Explore UT

Every March, The University of Texas opens its doors to the entire Texas community. Explore UT offers the chance for each department on campus to show off what they have to offer. The Blanton played host to over 3,000 visitors this year, some of whom traveled almost 7 hours to be here. The students had the opportunity to see our new exhibition, *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels*, and also were able to participate in interactive activities and tours. Explore UT allowed each member of our staff to remember the excitement of being a 12 year old. Anticipating groups of anxious 6th graders and being prepared for them allowed us to turn down the stress meters, and everyone had a good time. Now, back to the rules. Remember, no touching the art!!!

By Chris Fernandez, UT Intern, Blanton Special Events

Welcome New Additions to the Blanton Staff

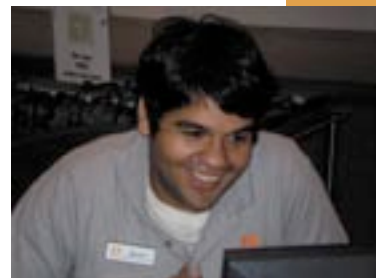
Jason Mendiola

Jason was recently hired by the administration of the Blanton to assist the Interim Director, Ann Wilson. Jason graduated from UT this December with a degree in Art History and Art Education. He has worked at the Blanton since March 2005 as a Visitor Services Assistant.

Kathleen Brady

Kathleen is also a new hire for the Blanton. She started this January as our new Head of Public Relations and Marketing. Kathleen worked for the City of Austin Art in Public Places program and before that handled the PR and Marketing for the National Academy Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

Next time you see them, please take the time to wish them well.



Jason Mendiola, Assistant to Ann Wilson
Photo: Martha Bradshaw



Kathleen Brady
Head of Public Relations and Marketing
Photo: courtesy of Milton Carter, NYC



Matthew Johnson hard at work carving the new Donor Wall.

Photo: Martha Bradshaw

Rock Concert at the Blanton

For the past six months visitors to the Blanton were met at the front door by the percussive sounds of Matthew Johnson. Was the museum hosting a site-specific sound art exhibition?

Actually, no. Matthew is a stone carver, hired to carve the names of donors onto the lobby wall. "There was a constant stream of people who stopped to watch me work, and they were all respectful and appreciative. I really enjoyed the public aspect of this job," said Matthew, who usually works on projects in his Georgetown studio. Matthew began

his apprenticeship as a stone carver in 1991 during his senior year as a philosophy student at Southwestern University. After completing his apprenticeship, Matthew managed the studio where he trained and then opened his own business, Bartlett Stone Company, in 2004.

What drew Matthew to the craft is the same thing that stops people to watch him work. "In this age when everything is digital and instantly replicable, it's deeply satisfying to see this work done by hand. I would typically carve five or six hours a day just to finish thirty letters!"

It's quieter in the museum since Matthew completed the project. But if you were lucky enough to have watched him work, walk up to the wall, pick a letter, and lean in closely. You might just hear a soft tap, tap, tapping.

By Paige Britt

Rent the Blanton

Tell all your friends and co-workers to consider having an event at the Blanton. We are encouraging private and corporate events. It makes a beautiful setting for a seated dinner for 200 or a reception for up to 400 people. Contact Stephanie Rice: 512-475-6516.



Photo: Marsha Miller

Coming this summer:
Exquisite Visions of Japan



Utagawa Hiroshige
Suijin Grove, the Uchi River and Sekiya Village from the Vicinity of Masaki, from the series "One Hundred Famous Views of Edo"

Gift of James A. Michener, 1991. Courtesy of the Honolulu Academy of the Arts

CONNECTIONS

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College of Fine Arts

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Dan's Corner

Dan Boehl

Dear Volunteers,

Thanks for all your hard work this winter. We had a very busy Holiday season followed by the *The Virgin, Saints, and Angels*, a very popular show. We have also transitioned to new opening hours. Thank you for being flexible and friendly while interacting with visitors and adjusting to our new schedule.

The Visitor and Volunteer staff, along with the rest of the museum staff, are preparing for the opening of the Edgar A. Smith building. The new building will increase volunteer opportunities as well adding valuable resources to our visitors.

The new Smith building will house the BMA offices, the Café, an expanded museum shop, classrooms, and a 300 seat amphitheater.

Remember to renew your memberships to receive the 10% discount in the cafe!

Dan

My Favorite Work of Art

A New Look at an Old Master

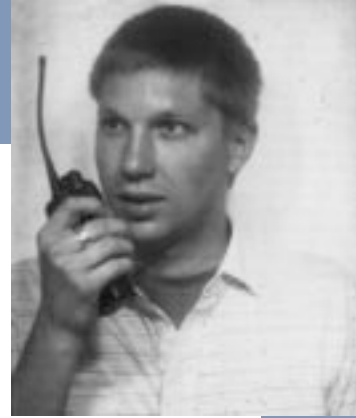
What a surprise to find a 16th-century painting that looks like a 1960s record jacket! *The Coronation of the Virgin*, by Giovanni Battista Della Cerva, features the brilliant, primary colors and generalized graphic forms of poster art.

Harkening back to the days of "Puff the Magic Dragon" is an iron-gray wreath that resembles puffs of smoke. Merry cherubs peek out of this smoky wreath that provides the frame for Christ as he places a crown on his mother Mary's head. The cherubs are not the garish pink, idealized heavenly bodies usually seen in religious works of old masters, but playful, worldly infants. Some of the heads look like pop-off parts of a baby doll.

The head of God the Father in an outstretched robe, who watches over the coronation, takes the form of a ribbon atop the wreath. Religious themes were not uncommon in the art and music of the 1960's, when a new generation sought new meanings to life and truth.

Of course, the creator of *The Coronation of the Virgin* never intended for his work to be viewed in a secular light. But, like so many of the works in the Suida-Manning collection, this one can be enjoyed on two levels. It appeals to our modern sensibilities, and it also speaks to us from a bygone time.

The Coronation of the Virgin is a fine example of an important school of 16th-century art in Northeastern Italy.



Dan Boehl
Photo: Dan Borhl



Giovanni Battista della Cerva
circa 1541

Anne Roussos