



CONNECTIONS Blanton Volunteer News

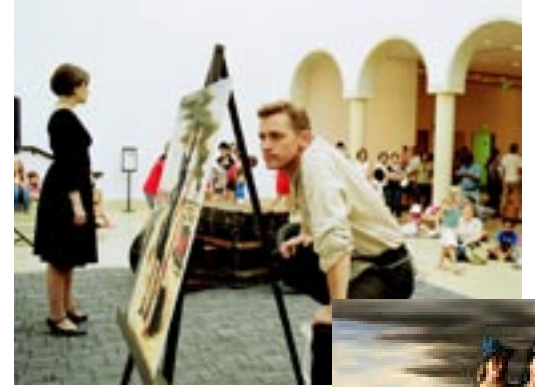
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Volunteers at Museum Day

Over 50 volunteers greeted visitors and assisted with art activities at Austin Museum Day this past fall. The Blanton hosted over 2700 art enthusiasts on this special Sunday, when 30 museums in Austin host free open houses for the community. Our new Gallery Go-to volunteers helped tremendously at their various locations throughout the museum. Activities during the four-hour period focused on art from our permanent collection, including a mime act in the atrium referring to Jerry Bywaters' painting *Oil Field Girls*. Art seems especially vibrant when the interpretations are so lively.



UT graduate drama students recreate a Blanton painting titled *Oil Field Girls* by Jerry Bywaters.
Photo: Andy Sieverman



Art Park with a View

Our new Larry and Mary Ann Faulkner Plaza finally opened along-side our new Edgar A. Smith Building with a week of activities including a public event in the grove of cedar elms between our two buildings. Now that the green space is not a construction site, more people are able to gather on the grass and enjoy the view of our state capitol.

Among the many opening week activities in November was a concert on the lawn known as "Jester Beach". If you have heard the Guy Forsythe Trio in Austin before, you know that they have a following. People showed up with lawn chairs and blankets, ready to enjoy the sounds echoing from the Sanchez Education Building over to Jester Dormitory. The weather was wonderful and our opening events were a success due in large part to the volunteers who hosted and greeted the visitors so warmly.

Message from Martha

Imagine the delight and excitement our staff feels at this time, in a new year full of hope and a new administrative office floor with such dazzling furniture and equipment. Many of you have volunteered for the Public Relations or Education department staff in the almost haunted quarters of the old Art Building. Be sure to come see the views from their offices now. We are all thrilled to be settling into such a beautiful new home. Wander up to the third floor space in the Smith Building and say hello the next time you volunteer. Everything feels fresh and inspiring.

See you soon, Martha.



Martha Bradshaw,
Head of Visitor and
Volunteer Services
Photo: Charla Wood



Blanton Registrar, Sue Ellen Jeffers, in front of her new filing system in the Edgar A. Smith Building.
Photo: Martha Bradshaw



Our wonderful volunteer president, Mimi Deaton

Volunteer Spotlight: President of Blanton Volunteers, Mimi Deaton, Visits New York City regularly to see Museums and visit family.

Mimi Deaton has been volunteering for the Blanton for quite a while – since the museum first opened, to be exact.

Today she works in the lobby and sometimes in the galleries as a Go-to person for visitors who have questions. In fact, Deaton is president of the museum volunteers. The three words she uses to describe herself might indicate how she came to be president of the Blanton volunteers: “School-teacher, creative, talkative.” All three are qualities that would help make a solid volunteer.

Her other hobbies include yoga, bunco, poker and traveling to New York City several times a year. She, in fact, does a little art herself – mostly large pastels of faces and figures. Deaton has taken several art courses through the university, as well as in the community.

Deaton says her favorite piece in the museum is an oil painting of Saint Cecilia by Simon Vouet. “I could look at those luminous folds of cloth over and over again,” she says. She also appreciates the Depression-era paintings, such as Thomas Hart Benton’s picture *Romance*, with its two lovers walking hand-in-hand in the moonlight. The work “has such a flowing, dreamlike quality,” she says.

Indeed, Deaton likes the Blanton itself overall. She appreciates its user-friendliness, its vast array of styles and eras. “It seems everyone finds a favorite group of paintings or prints to enjoy.” she says. “I see new things in the paintings every time I go to the galleries,” Deaton adds.

Her philosophy is, “Be nice to others and the world will be a better place.”

Find this Painting

The next time you’re up in the galleries, look for the painting by Stanton Macdonald-Wright, *Synchromy in Purple Minor*. The colors hit me first, and then, the shapes and overall form. My immediate thoughts registered the movement in the painting as a combination of modern and jazz dance, as well as the martial arts. As I enjoy all three forms of movement, I could hear music in my head as I looked closely at the shapes and colors. The artist created a place in my imagination where I could see free form dance expressing an assortment of moods. My ability to create art on canvas is limited to stick figures with smiling faces; however, this painting gave me the opportunity to be creative using my mind and spirit. Since art is an individual experience, you will probably see something different when you look at this painting. I hope it brings you as much as happiness as it did for me.

By Marcia Jinkins, Volunteer



Stanton Macdonald-Wright *Synchromy in Purple Minor* 1918
Oil on canvas 61 cm x 51 cm (24 in. x 20 1/16 in.)
Michener Acquisitions Fund, 1970

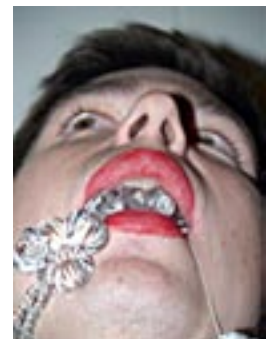
Art in Costume



Blanton GA, Shannon Crider, dressed as Jack Ruby in Peter Dean’s *Dallas Chaos, II*.



Luke Monfries wore his expression on his sleeve by becoming Franz Kline’s *Black & White, No. 2* as he patrolled the Blanton galleries on Halloween.



Minter’s *Crystal Swallow* look alike, Travis Cooper is a Blanton Gallery Assistant.



Cheryl Snay, Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings, Blanton Museum of Art
Photo: Martha Bradshaw

Blanton Staff Spotlight: Cheryl Snay

As the Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings, I share responsibility with Jonathan Bober in researching the collection of prints and drawings, recommending acquisitions, caring for the collection and organizing exhibitions, either in-house focus exhibitions, such as those in the Glickman Galleries, or larger, loan exhibitions in collaboration with outside institutions. Several shows I've organized since I began working here in November 2004 include *A Century of Grace: 19th-Century Masterworks from the Dahesh Museum of Art, New York*; *Exquisite Visions of Japan: Prints from the James A. Michener Collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts*; and *The Happiest Day: Wedding Customs in Transition* and most recently the three-part series of rotations on the etching revival, concluding with *Maxime Lalanne*, now on view. Curators are much like authors or directors of films: we tell stories

by arranging objects and images. I love to explore how art functions within society, how it reflects – or perhaps deflects – our cultural values.

I backed into art history. I earned my bachelor's degree in journalism from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. The program was so grueling and stressful that I began taking art history courses to relieve the tension. By the time I finished, I had enough credits to graduate with a minor in art history – and I discovered that I didn't have the temperament to be a journalist. I preferred to identify an issue and follow it to its logical conclusion. I wanted to spend time developing an idea, pursuing a problem through archives and the visual record to reconstruct history. I went on to get a Master's degree in art history from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. from Penn State. I later got a fellowship at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and worked on a joint project to research the combined collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Walters which culminated in an exhibition, catalogue and website. When my grant had ran out in Baltimore I applied for the position here. This is a fabulous collection, incredibly rich in works on paper and especially deep in French works—my first love.

My favorite work at the Blanton is Vouet's *St. Agnes*.

by Cheryl Snay



Simon Vouet
Saint Agnes, 1615
Oil on canvas
20 1/4 x 17 1/4 inches
Gift of Julia and Richard Rush
in memory of Dr. William E.
Suida and Bertina and
Robert Manning, 2004
2004.114

New works by Claude van Lingen

Many Blanton volunteers are professional artists. Our own Claude van Lingen has been a professional artist since the 1950s and has work in museums in South Africa, and has exhibited widely in the US and abroad including the São Paulo Biennial. He was chairman of the Fine Art Department at the Johannesburg College of Art, and taught at the School of Visual Arts, New York, Concordia University, Austin and currently teaches at Austin Community College. If you've seen the Austin City Hall exhibition, you may have seen some of his work. He is currently working on three entries for new shows in Austin. The van Lingen work which captured attention in New York City recently in the *Party Headquarters* exhibition was titled, *The Dead Don't Vote*. During the opening, he wrote the names of some of the Iraq War casualties directly on the wall. For the duration of the exhibition viewers continued writing names of the fallen.

It's not just Claude's art that we appreciate. He has volunteered here since before the grand opening in 2006 and we couldn't run the Blanton without him.

by Martha Bradshaw



The Dead Don't Vote. An ongoing project by Claude van Lingen

Larry Litt—who, together with Eleanor Heartney, curated *Party Headquarters*—writing some of the names of the Iraq War casualties during the opening.
Photo: Rogan McKnight



Coming this Spring: **Birth of the Cool**

Karl Benjamin,
Black Pillars,
1957, oil on canvas,
private collection.
© Karl Benjamin,
Courtesy Lewis Stern
Fine Arts, West Hol-
lywood.

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College of Fine Arts

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Volunteer orientation with Admissions Assistant
Maureen Schwartz (second from left) and new
2009 volunteers. Photo: Martha Bradshaw

Meet George West

Our new Assistant Manager of Visitor and
Volunteer Services is George West. A UT grad,
George spent several years in the fine arts
framing business and then became the first
Assistant Manager of Visitor Services at the
Texas State History Museum across the street
from the Blanton. After seven years there,
George was interested in returning to the arts
field, and we are thrilled to have him at the
Blanton. Be sure to introduce yourself the
next time you have a volunteer shift.



George West, new Assistant
Manager of Visitor and
Volunteer Services
Photo: Madeleine Bradshaw



Monty Rhodes
Photo: Martha Bradshaw

Gallery Go-to Volunteers

Monte Rhodes says he had wanted
to be a docent, but the museum
had all the docents it needed back
when he applied about a year ago.
So he did the next-best thing: He
became a gallery go-to about six
months ago.

It happened because Blanton
docent program leader Stephanie
Niemeyer contacted him, asking
if he was interested in such a position. As it turns out, Rhodes, a
retired salesman for Apple Computer, was interested.

“I’ve always been interested in art,” he says, though adding that
he has little if any formal training in it. The Blanton is in fact the
first museum where he’s ever volunteered. His
previous volunteer jobs have included mail-
ing assistance and other clerical work for the
nonprofit organization “Useful Wild Plants of
Texas.”

His favorite part of the permanent collection
is the medieval and Renaissance altar art.
His favorite exhibit so far has been the
“*Reimagining Space*,” which focused on
abstract artists in New York in the 1960s.

While volunteering in the Park Place galleries
he noticed a group of men walking around.
After determining what might interest them,
he showed them a large, untitled abstract ink
drawing by Mark Di Suvero, who usually does
modern sculpture.

“They loved it,” Rhodes says. The three of them started chatting
amicably about art and other topics. Rhodes describes himself
as outgoing. “I love interacting with people,” he says. And as a
Gallery Go-to guy, he gets to do that a lot.

For more information about the Go-to program, check with Martha
Bradshaw.

By Katie Burns



Gallery Go-to in action.
Photo: Mark Rosen