

# BLANTON MUSEUM 与 ART

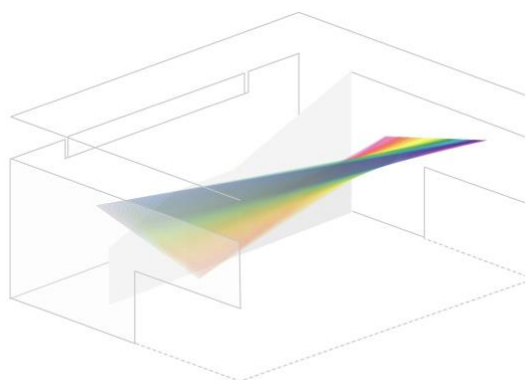
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### Blanton Museum Announces New Art Installations by Kay Rosen and Gabriel Dawe



Installation view of Kay Rosen, *HI*, 1997/2023, paint on exterior wall, 22.5 x 61.5 ft., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin ©Kay Rosen

Rendering of Gabriel Dawe, *Plexus No. 44*, 2023 (photo: ©Gabriel Dawe)

### ***The site-specific, permanent works will debut alongside the museum's major grounds redesign***

**AUSTIN, TX—March 16, 2023**—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin is pleased to announce a mural by Kay Rosen and new commission by artist Gabriel Dawe. Dawe's and Rosen's permanent installations will debut with the opening of the Blanton's comprehensive grounds redesign by acclaimed international design firm Snøhetta.

The two works by artists with Texas roots join the previously announced commissioned mural by the legendary Cuban-American artist Carmen Herrera (1915 - 2022), [Verde que te quiero verde \(Green How I Desire You Green\)](#), and the outdoor [Butler Sound Gallery](#), opening with a commission by sound art pioneer Bill Fontana.

"Extending the museum experience beyond the gallery space has been integral to the design of the new grounds," said Director Simone Wicha. "Gabriel Dawe has designed his artwork and Kay Rosen has adapted her mural with the Blanton's new architectural spaces in mind, in ways that encourage us to linger and wonder. Rosen's mural is a vibrant and playful greeting that will kick things off for our visitors

in true Austin style. And Dawe’s thread-based artwork, grounded in his childhood in Mexico and long-standing art practice in Texas, will turn the museum’s lobby into an immersive experience of color and light when visitors check in. I want to thank Sally and Tom Dunning for their generous support of the Dawe artwork, along with Mary Beth and Phil Canfield, Suzanne McFayden, Janet and Wilson Allen, Aubrey and Bobby Epstein, Zarmeena Vendal, and Clayton and Andrew Maebius. I also want to thank Lora Reynolds for her generous support of the Rosen mural, along with Kathleen and Chris Loughlin, as well as Sheri Henrickson. So many people have partnered with and supported the Blanton in realizing this vibrant new way for our community to connect around art, and we are grateful to them all.”

With a goal of transforming the museum experience for visitors, the new grounds design will unify and revitalize the museum campus, which consists of approximately 200,000 square feet and three buildings: the Mari and James A. Michener Gallery Building, the Edgar A. Smith Building, and *Austin* by Ellsworth Kelly. Like the Herrera mural, the large-scale works by Dawe and Rosen are set to become indelible features of the museum’s campus and visual identity.

“Rosen’s and Dawe’s visually powerful works complement strengths in the Blanton’s collection,” said Carter E. Foster, Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs. “Dawe’s investigation of color and light beautifully complements Ellsworth Kelly’s *Austin*, while Kay Rosen’s *HI* bridges U.S. conceptual art and Latin American concrete poetry as well as the general importance of language in Latin American art. Besides these striking connections, their works impart a lot of joy and playfulness. I cannot wait for visitors to experience them.”

### ***HI* by Kay Rosen**



Kay Rosen, *HI*, 1997/2012, in *Girl Talk: Women and Text*, Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh

On the east-facing exterior of the Blanton’s Michener Gallery Building, which will bear the work by Herrera on its west side, Kay Rosen presents a billboard-sized mural exemplifying her longstanding interest in aesthetic wordplay. *HI*, a mural first exhibited in 1997 in Dusseldorf, Germany, has been adapted in scale and shape for the museum façade. The mural portrays the first nine letters of the alphabet with “H” and

“I” rendered in a contrasting yellow typeface. With this work, Rosen asks us to consider the unexpected possibilities that can exist in common speech and, of course, offers a greeting to Blanton visitors, passersby, and drivers on Austin’s East Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

“I think of language as found material, and *HI* is an example of how meaning can be discovered in the raw material that is the alphabet,” the artist said. “A personal message emerges from an impersonal system.”

Artist and Texas native Rosen (b. 1943) has explored written language for over 50 years, having first become interested in it growing up in Corpus Christi and experiencing bilingualism from an early age. She then went on to study linguistics and Spanish before turning to art, where she chose to explore visual aspects of language. Often generating new meanings of words through scale, color, typography, and composition, Rosen was described by Ken Johnson of *The New York Times* as a “sly poet-magician” for her pictorial transformations of everyday language. Her large-scale paintings and murals have been shown at the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Gallery of Art, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, among many others. The Blanton will share *HI* this fall with the Weserburg Museum of Modern Art, Bremen, Germany, for the artist’s upcoming solo exhibition *NOW AND THEN*.

#### ***Plexus No. 44* by Gabriel Dawe**



Gabriel Dawe, *Plexus A1*, 2015, at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery

Dawe, originally from Mexico City (b. 1973), creates vibrant installations inspired by textiles, fashion, and architecture. Composed of embroidered threads in a spectrum of colors, Gabriel Dawe’s monumental installation at the Blanton will span from the balustrade on the second floor across the lobby in the museum’s Smith Building. With the opening of the reimagined grounds, this high-traffic, high-visibility area will house the new visitor check-in and Museum Store, plus a new café to come later in the year. Part of the artist’s *Plexus* series, the threads and colors interact in a way that creates the illusion of ever-shifting motion as the viewer moves around the artwork.

As Dawe explains, the color gradient in his *Plexus* weavings “alludes to a symbolic quest to materialize light, to give it density, so that I can offer the viewer an approximation of things otherwise inaccessible to us—a glimmer of hope that brings us closer to the transcendent.”

Like much of Dawe’s work, his *Plexus* series challenges notions of gender and identity in his native Mexico—informed by his childhood fascination with needlework, and his frustration with restrictive gender norms that forbade him access to the domestic craft as a young boy. Previous artworks in the series have been installed at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Renwick Gallery, among many others. Dawe has lived in Texas since 2008, and the new installation will be his first work to enter the Blanton’s collection.

Both works will be officially unveiled, alongside the Herrera mural and Fontana’s sound installation, at the Blanton Gala on April 29, 2023, which will inaugurate the new grounds and celebrate the museum’s 60th anniversary. Blanton Members will be among the first to tour the new grounds and art commissions at the Member Garden Party on May 3. The public grand opening celebration takes place on Saturday, May 13, starting at 2 p.m.; RSVP is available at [blantonmuseum.org/May13](https://blantonmuseum.org/May13).

*HI* by Kay Rosen, Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Purchased with funds provided by Lora Reynolds and Kathleen and Chris Loughlin, with additional support from Sheri Henrickson.

*Plexus No. 44* by Gabriel Dawe, 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.

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### **About the Blanton**

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with more than 21,000 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 offers thought-provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.