

Student Service Fee FY2024 Request Questionnaire, Blaffer Art Museum, Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts

- 1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**



The mission of the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston is to create meaningful experiences with contemporary art that ignite curiosity, challenge pre-conceptions, and expand ways of seeing and thinking. In so doing, we endeavor to enrich the human condition and inspire rigorous engagement with the world today.

As a non-collecting museum that strives to be timely and topical, the Blaffer presents a continually changing schedule of exhibitions, performances, catalogs, public programs, and opportunities for learning that promote a relationship to contemporary art and the many socio-cultural issues it confronts. The Blaffer serves the university community by cultivating partnerships with academic and non-academic units to offer UH students a unique platform for learning, making, networking, and career-building. Throughout the pandemic the Blaffer retained an active program and expanded its online activities to offer additional avenues of engagement. In September 2020, the museum was re-opened to the public and continued its exhibition programming, including two marquee student exhibitions in Spring 2021. At the same time, the museum launched a new initiative offering public programs and resources through a rich virtual platform including a new (and continually archived) YouTube channel, as well as a revamped website. In the still tentative post-pandemic conditions of FY22 the Blaffer has emerged stronger, and more vital than ever. As you will read, our yearly attendance was the highest it has been in the last 10 years, and we have realized a multitude of projects that expand the reach and student-driven activity of the Museum.

To benefit the UH student population, the Blaffer Art Museum accomplishes the following on a yearly basis:

- Presents nationally recognized exhibitions and programs (on par with CAMH and the Moody Center at Rice University) that consistently integrate student participation.
- Showcases UH student art in the *UH School of Art Annual Student Exhibition* and *UH School of Art Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition*, both developed and presented in collaboration with students and faculty.
- Produces lively, collaborative programming for, and by students via the Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA), established in 2005.
- Develops virtual and/or on-site interdisciplinary programs such as *Convergence Research* and *Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.) 2.0*, that support and promote student work in a public arena.

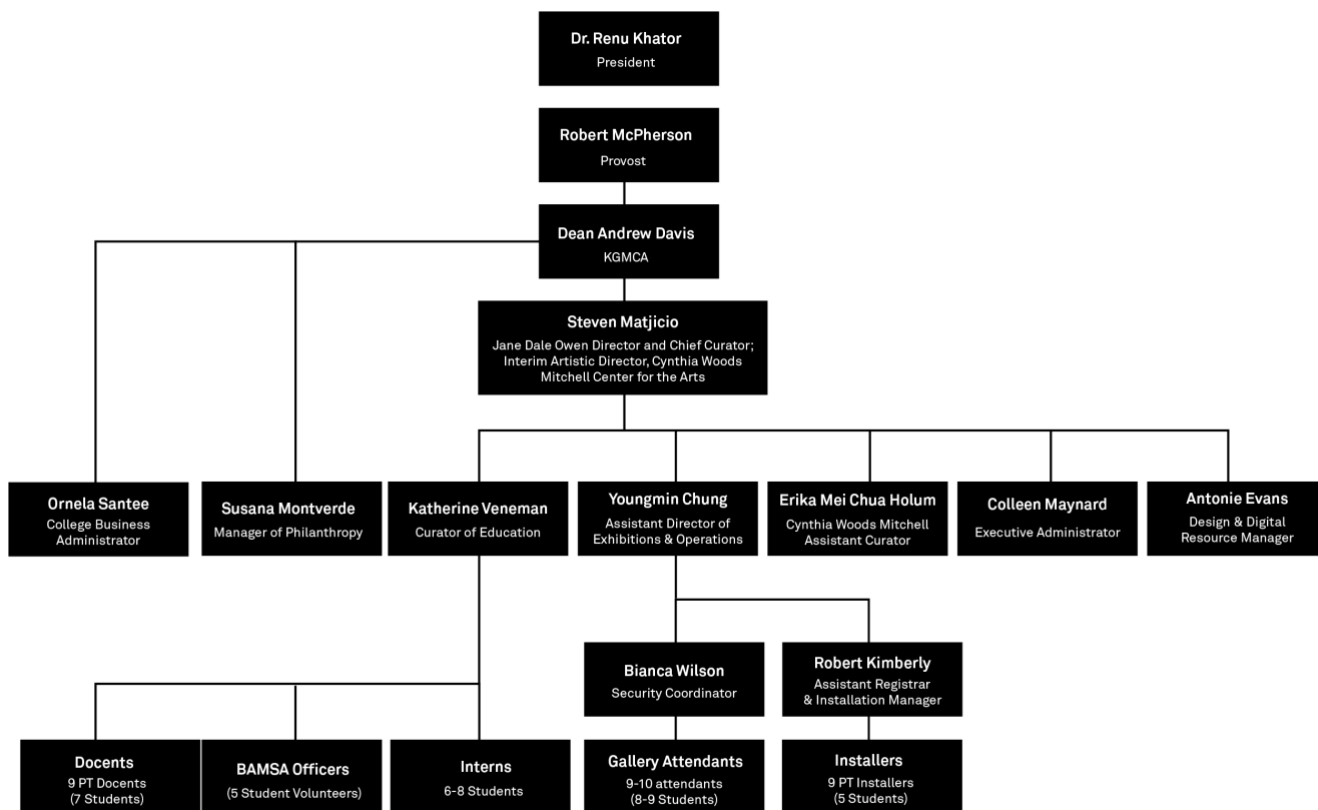
- Provides free guided tours of exhibitions for UH classes and groups often led by our advanced undergraduate and graduate students in art, art history, and arts education.
- Hosts a successful academic internship program where both undergraduate and graduate students receive course credit while learning important professional skills.
- Employs students in both Visitor Service/Security roles as well as our Exhibition installation crew
- Designs special opportunities for students to engage with museum professionals and exhibiting artists via class visits, critiques, and academic assignments.
- Organizes free public lectures and presentations that bring world-renowned artists, scholars, and arts professionals to campus and to classrooms. SFAC funds are essential to the most significant and long-standing services the Blaffer provides to the UH student community: the UH School of Art's *Annual Student Exhibition* and *Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition*. Each year the Blaffer hosts these expansive exhibitions (and accompanying events, including student artist talks) to gather students, friends, family, and our campus community to celebrate the next generation of rising stars. Since the reputation of the UH School of Arts graduates is local and national in scope, these high-profile exhibitions generate some of the Blaffer's largest audiences year after year. In 2022, the museum's yearly attendance reached a seven-year high. Key factors in this success were the two student exhibitions, which garnered 22% percent of the museum's yearly in-person audience. The MFA show was made further accessible to off-campus audiences through the presentation of hybrid, livestreamed Artist Talks.

In addition to the student exhibitions, the Blaffer serves the UH campus community through programs designed specifically for students. **The Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)** creates career-building opportunities for students and makes substantial contributions to cultural life on the UH campus. Their semi-annual Red Block bash creates a hub for student organizations to meet and share their missions with the larger student population, and the BAMSA Biennial Art Show invites students from all disciplines to present art in a public forum. The **Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D) 2.0** program further extends these efforts, providing the resources and stewardship for students in Industrial Design, Graphic Design and the School of Art to conceive, produce, and sell original objects at the Museum. **Convergence Research** is co-produced by the Blaffer and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts to promote experimental inter-disciplinary performances by current and recently graduated UH students spanning theatre, music, dance, spoken word, and visual art.

Our base level of support has been \$21,500 since 2017, and since then, the Blaffer has significantly expanded and extended our commitment to student-centered programs. To sustain this trajectory and add further student-driven activity, the Blaffer Art Museum respectfully requests a Base Increase of \$37,000 to fund the annual student exhibitions, the Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA), Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.), and other student programming we will outline in this packet.

2. Organizational Chart:

In addition to nine full-time staff members, the museum works closely with students in the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts to conduct best practices as a museum. The Blaffer currently engages between 31-34 students per year as docents, installation crew members, interns, BAMSA officers, and museum attendants/guards. Student employees and volunteers gain employment and professional development experience while connecting the Blaffer with the student community.



3. List your unit’s strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2021-2022 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

DSA Plan: (<http://uh.edu/dsa/about/strategic-planning/>) **UH Goals:** (<http://uh.edu/about/mission>) The Blaffer takes pride in building and supporting the creative capabilities of students, and we prioritize UH Goals as well as Division of Student Affairs Strategies to do so. Our key objectives outlined below align with UH Goal One, **Student Success** (Provide a Top Tier, Inclusive Educational Experience to All); UH Goal Two, **National Competitiveness** (Build a Research Powerhouse that Impacts our Region & the World); and UH Goal Three, **Social Responsibility** (support freedom of expression and diversity of views). The Blaffer’s goals also align with DSA’s strategies to develop leadership qualities, critical thinking, communication skills and to “expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our students through supportive, inclusive environments.”

FY 2022 Goals and Outcomes demonstrated a renewed commitment to in-person engagement while increasing accessibility via a strong virtual platform.

Goal 1: Developed opportunities for student exhibitions and engagement (Aligned with UH Goal One, and Goal Three, DSA initiative to for personal growth” and to “expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our student population through supportive, inclusive, environments”).

In FY22, the Blaffer hosted the high-profile *UH School of Art 44th Annual Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* and *UH School of Art Student Exhibition*, which together brought 2854 visitors to the Museum, comprising 22% of our annual attendance in roughly a four-week period. More than half of the attendees were UH affiliated, demonstrating the strong reputation of the exhibitions on and off campus. **The Blaffer exceeded its goal to increase the pre-pandemic attendance average by 10%, accomplishing almost a 20% gain from its 2016-2019 average of 2,379 visitors.**

The MFA (Master of Fine Arts) exhibition featured the works of fifteen artists and included a full color exhibition catalog produced in collaboration with the UH School of Art. The show was also accompanied by well-attended public programs that included online artist talks and performances. It is important to note that a graduate Art History Intern wrote extended wall labels for each artist’s work after an extensive process of studio visits and interviews. The processes used to install these exhibitions met the museum’s standards for professional practice as used in shows of national and internationally known artists. In the case of the MFA exhibition, each student’s experience was customized as they work one-on-one with professional staff members to plan, implement, and realize their respective installations. For the first time, MFA students gave gallery talks to in-person audiences (129 total) while also livestreaming to friends, family, and arts professionals. Many students gave positive feedback about the skills learned while installing their works and delivering lively and well-attended artist talks.

The **Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)** continues to be a point of pride for the Blaffer. The longstanding student organization fosters a creative community of like-minded peers who are dedicated to positioning art as catalyst to gather, engage, and enjoy. BAMSA organized seven events in the past academic year, including their hallmark Red Block Bash and Biannual Student Art Exhibition. BAMSA also partnered with the Blaffer to present additional events, altogether drawing 803 participants to the museum, and another 1100 students at the Student Center and Transfer Student Orientation.

Goal 2: Developed opportunities for student engagement (UH Goal One and UH Goal Three; DSA initiative for personal growth” and to “expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our student population through supportive, inclusive, environments”):

- a. **Exhibited art and campus presence beyond the museum.** To increase student engagement with museum exhibitions, the Blaffer again extended its exhibition program across the campus. From July 15—October 9, 2022, *Nick Vaughan and Jake Margolin: Wayfinding* included works exhibited at the Student Center and the Jenkins Library of Architecture, Design, and Art, as well as a related exhibition in Special Collections, UH Libraries. Furthermore, two free performance lectures were presented at Rockwell Pavilion and Wilhelmina’s Grove, and cross-campus tours were organized in partnership with UH Libraries. Nick & Jake also presented a new public spray painting performance for the UH Introduction to Theatre class, and spoke with the students afterwards. This painting was subsequently installed in the UH Wortham Theatre Lobby, where it transformed

the space until the conclusion of the exhibition. This expanded footprint followed a strategy we modelled in Fall 2020, during the *Stephanie Syjuco: The Visible Invisible* exhibition which featured installations in the M.D. Anderson Library (adjacent to the Honors College), the UH Student Center, and the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design.

Strengthened **Convergence Research**, a creative, cross-disciplinary laboratory for interdisciplinary art students at UH. This free program is presented six times per year, and features UH student artists, singers, musicians, dancers, and actors crafting interdisciplinary collaborations that frequently draw upon museum exhibitions for inspiration.

- b. Re-designed Studio Sessions**, a series of free events offering students guided exhibition tours and hands-on art making activities in a welcoming environment. The goal of this program to go off-site and engage students outside the museum was accomplished with important assistance from the Jenkins Design, Architecture, and Art Pop Up Library. In fall 2021, three in-person *Studio Sessions* events were conducted and were not as well attended as hoped, prompting the Blaffer to change our strategy. Firstly, Studio Sessions were incorporated as part of popular fall and spring semester student events, such as Stress Free Finals in the Student Center. Second, Studio Sessions and the PopUp Library were regularly included in student programs at the museum such as the BAMSA Red Block Bash and Public Art UHS Workshop with artist Taye Butler. The Blaffer also pivoted to create self-guided artmaking activities in the museum that could be done anytime during museum hours. To further raise the profile of the museum on campus, Blaffer and UH Public Art teamed up for ten Transfer Student Orientation sessions over the summer. Some funding was shifted from docents and art supplies to cover marketing materials such as buttons, stickers, and gallery guides. In so doing, Studio Sessions reached about 659 students, or 843 students when BAMSA and other student events are included. In the future, Studio Sessions will be incorporated into campus tours, as complementary art-making activities in the museum café, and as part of student programs and offsite events.
- c. Grew Blaffer Art & Design (B.A.D.) 2.0.** This program is a collaboration with UH students and faculty from Industrial Design (Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture & Design) and Graphic Design (School of Art, KGMCA), as well as the UH School of Art. B.A.D. has continued steady progress in the FY22 and early FY23 fiscal years, with a full public launch planned for December 2022. In this program, students design and produce functional art objects that will be displayed and sold at the Blaffer. Speaking to its success and applicability, faculty leaders now integrate the project into their curriculum annually (FY24 and beyond), identifying it as a unique opportunity for art and design students to participate in all stages of creating a commissioned series of works for a real-world museum client.

B.A.D. 2.0 Timeline: In December 2021, 23 Graphic Design students presented individual calendar prototypes to a jury panel. Eight GD student finalists were selected to fabricate a limited-edition series of their calendars. Each one was uniquely conceptualized with themes spanning astronomy, agriculture, and Greek mythology. In Spring 2022, presentations were conducted from 25 Industrial Design students to a professional juried panel. Eight ID student finalists were selected to fabricate a limited edition of their unique prototypes which include coat hooks, chopstick rests, napkin holders and a trivet set. Finalists from both disciplines carefully researched material and fabrication choices and highlighted the impact they hoped each object would provide in the design world.

Graphic Design finalists completed prototype revisions, calculated a bill of materials, and provided biographies and headshots for future marketing. As of Fall 2022 they are beginning fabrication of multiples. Industrial Design finalists completed prototype revisions, calculated a bill of materials, provided marketing materials, and as of Fall 2022 are completing fabrication and delivering final editions, matching the original timeline. Finalists from both disciplines who complete fabrication receive an honorarium and keep full intellectual ownership of their product. The Blaffer pays for the associated materials, fabrication and marketing costs.

The first limited-edition objects will be premiered at the Blaffer in in December 2022. A designated showcase is currently being fabricated at the museum to best highlight and promote the objects and their designers.

Cougar Initiative to Engage (CITE) has also provided financial and professional development support toward Blaffer Art and Design. From surveys CITE conducted during the project, students indicated their overall expectations for anticipated growth were very high—spanning areas of problem solving and cultural competency, as well as teamwork, communication, social responsibility, and ethical decision making. One student designer wrote “This is the first time we have this kind of project where we have to design for an actual client in a short amount of time. [I] have a better understanding of the full process from research and ideation to finalizing.” Other students echoed the opportunity to improve crucial skillsets in their career and field: “I expect to gain experience in product research and production, as well as client and user interaction and communication skills”; “it would allow me to develop my network of connections and improve marketing skills.”

Currently \$2970 has been spent toward the Blaffer Art and Design 2.0 project in FY22-FY23. \$1600 of this total were scholarships awarded to 8 individual Industrial Design finalists (\$200 honorarium per student). \$1370 was spent on materials, one-time tooling, equipment and fabrication costs. An additional \$2600 toward combined scholarships and fabrication will go toward 8 individual Graphic Design finalists (\$1600 in Student Designer scholarships, approximately \$1000 in materials/equipment).

An additional \$200+ in promotional costs is estimated, including advertising and printing. No promotion or sales have yet been incurred as fabrication is ongoing. An additional \$2500 is estimated toward a state-of-the-art shelving display produced for the museum in Fall/Winter 2022 .

<i>Expenses</i>	Industrial Design finalists	Graphic Design finalists	Actual	Total <i>estimate</i>
Student scholarships	\$1600.00	\$1600.00	\$1600.00	\$3200
Materials/equipment	\$1370	\$1000	\$1370	\$2370
Promotional	-	-	0	\$200
Shelving display	-	-	-	\$2500
Total expenses	\$2970	\$2600	\$2970	\$8270
Total revenue (expected sales)	\$3905	\$2600	-	\$6505
Total (Total expenses – Income)	\$935	0	-	\$935

- d. The Blaffer’s mutually beneficial partnership with the **UH Bauer School of Business** has been continued as we work with Business students to conduct a twice-yearly analysis of the Blaffer communications strategy, which encompasses the website, social media, and advertising. Through continual feedback from student surveys, the class projects provides invaluable market research and recommendations, such as leading the Blaffer to introduce a TikTok channel.

Goal 3: Produce a national and international exhibition program and create learning opportunities for students and the public. (UH Goal Two, National Competitiveness, UH Goal One, Student Success):

In addition to the two student exhibitions, the Blaffer originates 6-10 exhibitions of today’s most innovative and compelling artists, locally, nationally and worldwide. The Blaffer strives to break new ground, organizing artists’ first major museum show in the United States. Always free, the museum staggers its exhibition dates to maximize opening hours for the campus community.

The 2021-2022 exhibition program included the following:

Jamal Cyrus: *The End of My Beginning*

June 5 – September 26, 2021

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio in partnership with Dr. Alvia wardlaw and the University Art Museum, Texas Southern University

Jamal Cyrus and his influence reverberate throughout his native city of Houston. And while he has participated in a number of biennials, Cyrus’ work had not yet had the platform to be comprehensively celebrated on a national scale. The Blaffer addressed this overdue need and partnered with Texas Southern University to present Cyrus’ first museum survey and catalog. ***As both a graduate of UH and a professor at TSU, Cyrus and his work brought together the two major universities located in Houston’s predominantly African American Third Ward to co-present an exhibition for the first time.*** *The End of My Beginning* spanned 15 formative years of Cyrus’s practice from 2005-2020, and the show will travel to Los Angeles, California and Jackson, Mississippi in 2022.

Martine Gutierrez: *Radiant Cut*

June 26—October 24, 2021

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Martine Gutierrez is a chameleon-like artist whose photos, performances, and videos deconstruct glittery conventions of fashion, beauty, advertising and glamour. She instigates a similar re-invention of gender, race, and identity – translating her Mayan heritage and Guatemalan-American ethnicity into an evocative platform to (re)discover, embellish, and amplify bodies “outside of the binary.” Inspired by ancient Aztec deities that embody historical models of duality and gender-fluidity, Gutierrez explains, “My authenticity has never been to exist singularly, whether in regard to my gender, my ethnicity, or sexual orientation. My truth thrives in the gray area...”

Jagdeep Raina: *Bonds*

June 26—October 24, 2021

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

Sikh-Canadian artist Jagdeep Raina illustrates and re-imagines stories and scenes from across the Kashmiri and Punjabi diasporas. Through drawings, writings, paintings, weavings, and videos, Raina examines diverse histories of transnational migration and mobility and their effects on contemporary life. The artist often draws upon anecdotal histories as well as personal and public archives as source material for his figurative works—blending familial narratives with historical accounts to illuminate the socioeconomic and political structures that have shaped South Asian communities in both his native Canada and across the globe.

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung: Comic Relief

October 31, 2021—March 13, 2022

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

Comic Relief was the first major museum survey devoted to this iconoclastic American artist, writer, professor, and former Riot Grrrl. Featuring over 100 artworks made across the past 20 years, this exhibition celebrated multiple dimensions of Zuckerman-Hartung's punk-influenced aesthetic—tracing an expansive practice that spans assemblage, paintings and sculptures, drawings and prints, photographs, and writing. Her densely cobbled objects evocatively draw on references to feminist theory, pop culture, literature, psychoanalysis, art history, current events, comedy, and her own life.

Caroline Mesquita: Noctambules

November 13, 2021—March 13, 2022

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Mesquita is one of the most intriguing young sculptors working in France today, and the Blaffer was excited **to present her first solo museum exhibition in the United States**. A jubilant disquiet presides over Mesquita's sculptural work, which navigates the increasing intimacy between man and machine. Her combinatory practice marries the physicality of oxidized and painted copper with theatrical playfulness and socio-cultural meditation. Mesquita's ensuing experiments in metallurgy and materiality result in life-size figures interacting with one another in carnivalesque vignettes that slide between baroque ballet and melancholic parade. For this exhibition, she produced a newly commissioned, site-specific installation at the Blaffer Art Museum.

Maryam Jafri: A Broad and Narrow Point

November 13, 2021—January 9, 2022

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Jafri is known for her wry explorations of the alternative economies that circulate within the branding of products and people. Her exhibition at the Blaffer addressed pointed cultural questions around the relationship between identity, authenticity, and commerce. Her newest series, *Everyday Model*, illuminates the chameleon-esque fluidity of commercial actors and how the spokesmodel mutates according to campaign and context. In combination with two previous artworks, *Home Office* and *Hi Maryam*, the exhibition delved into how therapy has become imbued with celebrity aesthetics. The added presentation of work from Jafri's *Disappearance Online* and *Getty vs Ghana* series will navigate the politics of visibility within an archival context.

Maya Stovall: *Razon/Reason*

February 4 – March 13, 2022

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

In collaboration with the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, the Blaffer commissioned a new performance-based work by American artist, choreographer, professor, and anthropologist Maya Stovall. She is highly regarded for her unconventional amalgams of dance, urbanism, and choreography, as evidenced by her celebrated work *Liquor Store Theatre*—in which she organized performances in front of Detroit strip malls as a vessel to conduct interviews with residents. ***In Houston, Stovall congregated a cross-disciplinary working group of UH students to plan and perform a community-driven project that explored micro-histories of Houston and the present state of voting rights in Texas.***

Hugh Hayden: *Boogey Men*

June 11 – September 4, 2022

Organized by: ICA Miami and curated by Alex Gartenfeld, Artistic Director

Boogey Men features a suite of monumental new works by the Dallas-born, New York-based artist Hugh Hayden. Renowned for his virtuosic use of wood materials, Hayden examines the Black American experience by delving into complex personal and political themes. In *Nude*, he fashions a gargantuan skeletal figure made of bald cypress trees inundated with bifurcating branches - crafting surreal metaphors for American social institutions and identity, as well as our relationship with the natural world.

Nick Vaughn & Jake Margolin: *Wayfinding*

July 15 – October 9, 2022

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

The Blaffer was proud to present the first solo museum exhibition in Texas of Houston-based artistic and life partners Nick Vaughan and Jake Margolin, whose interdisciplinary practice marries art, theatre, performance, archival research, and spoken word. As part of this select survey that spans multiple years of activity, the Blaffer commissioned a precedent-setting number of new works that included two monumental drawings, intimate cartographic mappings of pioneering community members, and a pair of new performative lectures. The artists also orchestrated a new performance-based “cloud” painting that was presented at the UH Wortham Theatre, and a newly assembled compilation of their seminal video works was displayed at the UH Student Center.

Maria Guzman Capron: *Forma Seductora*

July 15 – September 18, 2022

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

Capron was born in Italy to Peruvian and Colombian parents, before relocating with her family to Texas as a teenager. **She graduated in 2004 from the University of Houston School of Art, and this was her first solo museum exhibition in the United States.** Capron’s multiple, simultaneous, and sometimes conflicting identities (and geographical locales) inform the artist’s life and process. The layered textiles seen in Capron’s exuberant assemblies also speak to her interest in the ways clothing can signify one’s history, class, gender, and/or cultural identity. For the artist, fabrics can point to specific socioeconomic associations as well as aesthetic narratives.

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data.

In Person Attendance: a seven year high, September shatters monthly record, strong public and educational programs

The Blaffer Art Museum uses in-person attendance numbers, social media analytics (FB, IG, Twitter), and YouTube views to assess audience reach and engagement, especially as it relates to the UH campus community. Last year’s SFAC report noted that our September 2021 attendance of 1,178 was almost 15% greater than the pre-pandemic September average (1,010) from past years, indicating pent-up demand. **This trend continued throughout FY22 and in September 2022, shattering September 2021’s number with the highest recorded attendance for any single month on record since at least 2016.**

Moreover, in FY22 the Blaffer’s attendance not only recovered from the shortfalls caused by COVID, but reached a seven year high, with 12,936 visitors to the museum. 2016’s attendance of 12,691 attendees was the closest to that number in the past decade. This increase exceeded our ambitious goal of a 15% increase from the 2019 figure of 11,051, which was up 17%. More than 50% of all visitors were UH affiliated, demonstrating renewed campus participation.

	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY 16 - FY 19 avg	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23
September	667	1,577	781	1,013	1,010	890	262	1,178	2,236
October	1,002	1,416	547	1,357	1,081	1837	174	949	
November	777	957	837	851	856	1811	434	1,115	
December	562	423	328	320	408	739	210	626	
January	984	637	528	977	782	760	1,112	502	
February	1,274	860	414	1301	962	1007	185	1,056	
March	810	655	528	1275	817	871	522	2,409	
April	2,054	2,182	2,029	1674	1,985	n/a	450	1,263	
May	414	322	349	408	373	n/a	601	823	
June	1,823	999	515	508	961	n/a	446	945	
July	1,401	504	269	325	625	n/a	506	694	
August	923	426	233	1042	656	n/a	422	1,376	
Total FY sum	12,691	10,958	7,358	11,051		7915	5324	12,936	

As mentioned, the Blaffer is starting out FY23 with a 90% attendance increase in September 2022. Additionally, in that same month, the public and educational programming attendance total is 809, comprising more than one third of total museum attendance and underscoring the value of opportunities for engagement.

Furthermore, throughout FY22, Blaffer steadily increased its public and educational programs, **offering a record-breaking 60 public educational programs to 2,217 participants** spanning artist talks, student activities, performances, workshops, and scholarly lectures. This is an increase of 20% from pre-pandemic levels, and a 150% increase from

FY21's total of 24 programs. Nearly all programs were held in person. Of FY22's programs, about 15 were held offsite at other campus venues such as the Student Center, Student Center Plaza, and College of Architecture. Throughout, the Blaffer made an investment in accessibility. While only two of the programs were offered exclusively online, many more programs were designed as hybrid (either livestreamed or presented via the Blaffer's flourishing YouTube channel). A prime example was the trio of Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition talks, attended in person by 129, and with YouTube views (as of October 10, 2022), nearly 550. Additionally, in FY22 a total of 50 docent guided tours of museum exhibitions (in person and virtual) were given free of charge to about 550 youth and adults in University, School, and Community groups.

The Blaffer's YouTube page was started in 2022, and views of museum programs have now increased to a total number of 8,632. Viewership peaked in 2022 to an all-time high coinciding with the UH MFA Exhibition Artist Talks in April 2022, demonstrating strong demand for a robust YouTube presence among student audiences. While most viewership is centered in the United States, the channel maintains a following in the United Kingdom, India, Philippines, Germany, and Canada.

A robust social media platform supports both the exhibition and educational programs at the Blaffer. In FY22, analytics showed that Instagram gained a total of over 1,500 new followers with an average of 41 likes per post. There were approx. 247,000 content interactions (this number combines reach, profile visits and new followers for FB, IG and Twitter). Twitter on average garnered 2,580 impressions and nearly 120 mentions. These stats represent an increase of nearly 75% (impressions) and 150% (mentions) respectively. Within this larger aggregate, we were happy to see that student-related social media projects on Instagram totaled about 1000 content interactions.

To highlight a successful engagement, we look at a March 22 carousel post featuring UH MFA Student Thesis candidate Douglas Welsh. The first in a series of posts celebrating the exhibition, the post reached 1,158 accounts, had 172 likes and 14 comments (186 total interactions). <https://www.instagram.com/p/CbaZXfoAAUL/>

Finally, in FY22 our website gained more than 82,353 page views from 32,261 visitors. This represents approximately 6,862 page views per month and an increase of 107% from August 2020.

In person museum attendance is calculated by a twofold system: visitors are registered upon entry into the museum through a sticker and/or clicker, and the data is collected in a spreadsheet. This system is also employed during outdoor events, off-site programs, and large-scale openings. By always being free of charge, and prioritizing friendly, inclusive interactions with our guests, the Blaffer cultivates return visits and ongoing patronage. Students often make repeat visits to coincide with class assignments or public programming. Attendance data is gathered into a comprehensive spreadsheet that delineates programming and daily attendance into categories such as tours, off-site events, and student organization events. These monthly spreadsheets are organized by fiscal year (and fiscal quarters), which makes it possible to review how many people were in attendance for a category in any given week, month, quarter and/or year. Additionally, the education staff regularly consults visitor relations staff to ensure accurate counts at public and education programs. The practice of verified documentation and analysis of visitor attendance at the Blaffer is comparable to state institutions such as the Blanton Museum at UT and the University Museum at Texas Southern University.

Looking Ahead: The Blaffer will use this data to address and maximize current attendance trends. We expect in-person attendance to rise in FY23 and have set an attendance goal of an additional 10% increase with 50% of attendees as UH affiliated.

- 5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2023) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.**

With programming re-energized as pandemic restrictions eased post-COVID, the Blaffer has met or exceeded almost all of its attendance and programmatic goals. Funding has remained consistent, but the sources are always being reformulated as the Blaffer creates a mixed portfolio of grants, foundation gifts, Board contributions, and individual patronage. SFAC remains an essential stream of funding to support our many student-driven activities, and we continue to improve the collaborative working model with the UH School of Art to make the MFA and SoA shows highlights of the year.

The Blaffer has remained stable in staff organization. Over the summer, two major staff changes led to a seamless transition for each position: departing were Cynthia Woods Mitchell Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell and Designer and Digital Resources Manager Amanda Powers. This fall, **Erika Mei Chua Holum** has joined the Blaffer as the **Cynthia Woods Mitchell Assistant Curator**. Her research focuses on intimacies and interconnected (hi)stories revealed through artistic practices, ways of gathering, and archival methods following forms of historical displacements. She has contributed to projects and exhibitions worldwide, such as *makibaka! Fifty Years of Filipino-American Youth Activism* at Alief Art House (2021), *Duro Olowu: Seeing Chicago* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2020), the Second Edition of the Lagos Biennial in Nigeria (2019), and *Obscura Festival of Photography* in Malaysia (2018). Holum holds an MA in Museum and Exhibition Studies from the University of Illinois, Chicago and is completing a Masters in Library and Information Science in 2023 at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Also new to the Blaffer staff is **A.C. Evans, Designer and Digital Resource Manager**. He is a Houston-based digital designer, artist, and curator who marries multiple streams of creativity into artistically driven design, organization, and outreach.

- 6. If your unit concluded FY2022 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).**

Not Applicable.

- 7. Please list your 2023-2024 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Values and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.**

In FY24, the Blaffer will continue to practice both UH Goals and DSAES strategies. As a hub between UH and the City of Houston, the Blaffer is both an incubator and intersection between students and cultural professionals – providing opportunities for mentorship, collaboration, and the practice of real-world creativity in support of UH’s Goal 1, Student Success (Provide a Top Tier Inclusive Educational Experience to All).

To best meet these goals the Blaffer requests an increase in Base funding, raising the level from \$21,500 to \$37,000 .

The expenses are as follows:

Expense	Amount
Current Support	\$21,500
Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.)	\$4,000
Graduate Instructional Assistant (Exhibitions + Visitor Services)	\$7000
Internship support (undergrad, Education department)	\$3,000
Increased resources (parking, installation costs)	\$1,500
Total:	\$37000

In brief, these funds will support:

- Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.), as outlined before, is a successful and innovative program that benefits students, and the museum wishes to permanently add it to our program (\$4000).
- The Instructional Assistant for the Exhibitions and Visitor Services department will learn firsthand about museum operations. The position will gain experience to help coordinate logistical details involved in installing complex museum exhibitions and coordinating day-to-day visitor relations (\$7000)
- Additional funding will support two paid summer or semester-long Internships for the Education and Curatorial Departments. Currently, the Blaffer receives funding to offer support for Internships at the Graduate level only. This support will allow undergraduate students the opportunity to gain academic credit and be compensated for their projects (\$3000).
- Finally, the additional requested amount will cover increasing costs for essential expenses such as installation materials, student catalog printing, wall vinyls, promotions, and visitor parking, which the Blaffer offers to guests at free public programs. In addition this amount will contribute to the costs of video documentation of student programs (\$1500).

1). Develop opportunities for student exhibitions, engagement, and learning. Funding from SFAC allows us to build partnerships and advance the artistic skills in students that are increasingly coveted in a 21st century workplace. At the same time, all museum programs focused upon students— exhibitions, BAMSA, internships, etc. — directly address the Division of Student Affairs goal to develop leadership skills, personal growth, and “Expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our student population through supportive, inclusive, environments.”

This initiative will be accomplished through the following:

- a. Realize two spring student exhibitions, the ***UH School of Art Annual MFA Thesis Exhibition*** and the ***UH School of Art Annual School of Art Student Exhibition***.
- b. Sponsor and mentor the **Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)** and its programs.
- c. Incorporate **Blaffer Art & Design (B.A.D.) 2.0.** as a permanent museum program. Please see Q3 for an ongoing progress report.
- d. Prioritize **student-focused programs** such as **Convergence Research**, a creative, cross-disciplinary laboratory and the more integrated evolution of **Studio Sessions**.
- e. Steward **Internships** for both undergraduate and graduate students with academic and professional knowledge and skills.
- f. Provide professional experience to student **docents**, **art installers**, and **gallery attendants**.
- g. **Begin a sustainable school and community outreach program; offered in person to HISD schools, community groups as well as UH units.** The Blaffer extended its commitment to local school communities by joining two area arts education advocacy and support groups, Arts Connect and Houston Arts Partners (HAP). The Blaffer helped organize an annual conference for HAP and participated in events for both Arts Connect and Houston Independent School District. A highlight was working with UH units Public Art UHS and Community Arts Academy to host a series of six cross-disciplinary arts and museum tours for HISD Summer Arts Intensive students.
- h. **Present Public and educational programs designed the university community** For each upcoming exhibition the museum will position visiting artists and scholars as resources for students, and will orchestrate student-driven public programs, class visits, and workshops. Students, faculty, and community members gain access to leading practitioners in the fields of art, art history, and other disciplines that actively contribute to the contemporary cultural landscape. **Increased Student Resources for Accessibility through Video Creation, Documentation, and Livestreaming.** Since its inception in August 2020, the Blaffer YouTube channel has served as both an archive for past performances and lectures as well as a resource for new content. The Blaffer has produced artist interviews, virtual museum tours, and exhibition-related art making activities. Additionally, the Blaffer's website hosted new virtual resources such as My Virtual Blaffer and two exhibitions designed by BAMSA, and subscriptions to our social media channels have grown significantly. To maintain this momentum, additional resources are needed. For example, producing livestreamed artist talks for the MFA exhibition required planning, videographers with multiple cameras and other equipment, and post-production costs.

Goal 2: Develop national and international exhibition programs and create complementary learning opportunities for students. (UH's Goal Two, National Competitiveness). With its nationally recognized exhibition program – connecting the student community with nationally and internationally recognized artists. Blaffer originates between 6-10 exhibitions and programs annually that have a national and international profile, contributing to broadly recognized research in the art museum field and the production of original publications and digital resources.

The Blaffer will continue to develop innovative exhibitions of contemporary art that connect students and the UH campus community with the global arts community. Additionally, the museum plans to increase the impact of exhibitions on campus by expanding and enriching campus partnerships to develop cross-disciplinary programs. UH students will be woven into the architecture of these efforts and will be activated as participants in shows that consistently celebrate ethnic diversity. This initiative will be accomplished through the following exhibitions:

Monira Al Qadiri: *Refined Vision*

September 23, 2022—January 8, 2023

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

In partnership with the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center, the Blaffer commissioned Kuwaiti artist Monira Al Qadiri to create a new exhibition exploring the “petro-culture” shared between the Texas Gulf Coast and the Persian Gulf. Considered one of the most important artists to emerge from this region in recent years, Al Qadiri came of age during the rapid transformation of her native Kuwait—from its status as one of the world’s oldest civilizations, through its dominance of the oil industry, to its current role as a battleground in geopolitics. Her work serves as a seismograph for this world, examining the flux caused by competing ideas of prosperity, religion, and globalization.

Paul Anthony Smith: *Standing In*

October 22, 2022—March 12, 2023

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Jamaica-born, New York-based artist Paul Anthony Smith makes photo-based works that push back against the medium’s inherently colonial dimensions while simultaneously introducing a network of added layers to navigate. He does so by employing his previous training in ceramics to disturb and modify the pictorial surface, using a series of sculptural picks to simultaneously dismantle the image and thicken its meaning. This ritualistic process of what Smith calls “picotage” is performed upon diary-like photos of people, places, and events he has encountered upon his travels through the Caribbean and UK – mixing vibrant scenes of carnivals and sober images of funerals with casual views of friends and family gathering.

Jacolby Satterwhite: *We Are in Hell When We Hurt Each Other*

January 20 —March 12, 2023

Organized by: Former Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

At the onset of 2023, the Blaffer will present two solo exhibitions in dialogue—exploring the hallucinatory performance of utopia and desire as both relic and projection. The high ceiling gallery will be dedicated to Jacolby Satterwhite’s 2020 virtual reality video installation, *We Are in Hell When We Hurt Each Other*, which translates the artist’s dance movements (transcribed through digital bodysuits) into animated fembot form. The ensuing environment marries the aesthetics of video gaming and CGI with drag, music videos, and Afro-futurism to imagine a post-pandemic world where Black female figures use ritual and gesture as tools of resistance.

Leslie Martinez

January 20 —March 12, 2023

Organized by: Former Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

In the gallery adjacent to Satterwhite's video, the Blaffer will present a series of vibrant, textured paintings by Dallas-based transgender artist Leslie Martinez, who was raised in the Rio Grande Valley of the South Texas-Mexican border. Using a dayglo spectrum of paints in combination with cast-off textiles such as shirts, rags, and failed attempts for other works, Martinez cobbles handmade cosmologies and imagines a transformative state of being. Through their unique painting techniques and aggregation of materials, Martinez's canvases emulate skin recombined into organic compositional shapes of radiating lines and swirls.

Christopher Myers: *A Story Falls into the Ocean*

May 13 — August 20, 2023

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

In the Spring/Summer of 2023 the Blaffer will once again position solo shows by innovative interdisciplinary artists into dialogue. The work of American artist and playwright Christopher Myers will span the entire first floor of the Museum, bringing together epic appliqué tapestries with stained glass lightboxes, sculptural objects, and elements of Myers' work in performance. Myers will also visit UH to elaborate his recent television work for the 1619 Project as well as opera productions, gathering a multitude of voices and techniques to colorfully navigate the porous terrain between archive, history, and mythology.

Tania Candiani: *vías fluviales*

June - September, 2023

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

On the 2nd floor of the Museum, histories embedded in the land – and particularly the water that has both connected and divided the United States from Mexico – will be the subject of a newly commissioned, multi-faceted work by Mexican artist Tania Candiani. Developed out of an intermittent eight-month residency she will conduct in Houston, Candiani will convene both collaborators and media to listen to the sounds and stories embedded in contested geography. Her projects are related to crafts, labor, tradition, sound, synesthesia, rhythm, and translation.

Goal 3: Increase Accessibility of Programs through Partnerships. (UH Goal 1, Student Success; UH Goal 3, Social Responsibility). The Blaffer plans to increase accessibility and expand the reach of museum programs through two developing partnerships: campus and community. The Blaffer will build upon our already burgeoning partnership with UH Public Art and the McGovern College's Community Arts Academy to conduct joint outreach efforts to both school communities and UH student populations. The Blaffer will amplify a new initiative to better serve K-12 schools through involvement in the Houston Arts Partners and Art Access.

Looking Ahead: In FY 24, The Blaffer will capitalize on the current expansions of program and attendance numbers. We expect in-person attendance to rise in FY23 and have set an attendance goal of an additional 10% increase with 50% of attendees as UH affiliated.

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2024 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 3.5, 5.0 or 7.5% in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made. A spreadsheet has been created to assist in this process. Please include a copy of the spreadsheet with your questionnaire submission.

Name of Unit: Blaffer Art Museum
Dept#:

	FY 2024	FY 2024	FY 2024	FY 2024
Funding Sources	Base Budget	Amount of 3.5% Reduction	Amount of 5.0% Reduction	Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Student Service Fees- Base Budget	37,000	1295	1850	2775

Expenses		Amount of 3.5% Reduction	Amount of 5.0% Reduction	Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Salaries and Wages				
Full-time Employee Salaries				
Student Workers Wages				
Graduate (GA/IA) Students Wages				
Fringes		-	-	-
Salaries/Fringes Total		0	0	0

Other Expenses				
MFA Thesis Catalog Production			550	1475
MFA Thesis Exhibition Materials		1295	1300	1300

Admin Charge Enter %	6%	-	-	-
Other Expenses Total		0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENSE		0	0	0
Amount left to allocate		753	1,075	1,613

In FY23 and beyond, the Blaffer anticipates spending approximately \$15,000 on the two on-site student exhibitions, \$4,000 for BAMSA programming, and \$2,500 on other student-related programming such as Convergence Research. The Blaffer is planning to expand its student-oriented programming on a long-term basis with the permanent incorporation of Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.), expanded online resources, and the expansion of virtual tours. Our goal is to provide enhanced student professional development experiences through a new position of Instructional Assistant (IA) to the Assistant Director of Operations and Exhibitions, as well as a funded undergraduate internship in two semesters. Additionally, the Blaffer is planning to increase its efforts to reach the student population by developing partnerships with Admissions and providing resources for new students. The current budget covers fixed costs essential to the installation and promotion of the shows and programs, including wall painting, construction, furniture for the display of artwork, catalog printing, as well as publicity costs. Dedicated funds for student-centric programs are critical to the larger funding portfolio of the Blaffer, which spans a spectrum of grants, foundations, individual patrons, and endowments.

If there were a 3.5%, 5%, or 7.5% budget reduction to our proposed FY24 base fee of \$37,000, the reduced amounts of \$1295, \$1820, and \$2775 could—with difficulty—be absorbed in the installation costs of the two student exhibitions. This will be a challenge because all costs incurred with these exhibitions are fixed expenses including building and painting walls, constructing exhibition display furniture, and purchasing the miscellaneous hardware required to present the work. The Blaffer could downsize these shows by re-allocating the modestly sized Saleri Gallery (located on the Museum’s 2nd Floor) as storage space for an upcoming exhibition. This accommodation would reduce installation costs, but also the amount of artwork on display.

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.

The Blaffer raises all funds needed to produce exhibitions, performances, educational programs, and publications. University support is limited to facility operations and partial salary and benefit support. As such, the Blaffer actively works to gather outside resources such as grants from public agencies, private foundations, and individual supporters to continue operations and present our ambitious program. In the past two years these sources have included the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. These funds are systematically pursued throughout the year via grant applications, direct mail campaigns, and with the support of our Advisory Board and colleagues in the KGMCA. **However, these funds are often marked as restricted use for exhibitions and are unavailable for student exhibitions and programs.** External funding from charitable foundations for exhibitions of student work is not available either. SFAC funding is the only resource

devoted specifically to UH student programming and exhibitions. The Blaffer staff prioritizes the importance of the School of Art's student exhibitions and is committed to providing a professional level of service and expertise. There is a significant amount of time and effort spent to achieve the high standard of presentation expected.

10. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Blaffer Art Museum is the only professional art museum on the main campus at the University of Houston and is open to all without an admission fee. We present innovative exhibitions of contemporary art and educational programs that are relevant and intellectually stimulating to the university community. By curating a program that brings together national and international artists with the work of UH students, the Blaffer creates a vital bridge that is unique to this campus and a catalyst for future success. The Blaffer works in a dedicated manner to provide high quality programs for the entire student body, from student social events to working with professors incorporating museum exhibitions into their respective syllabi. The Blaffer regularly collaborates with other UH units to create or enhance programs for maximum impact on campus. Past academic collaborators have included: School of Art, School of Theatre and Dance, School of Music, and The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, as well as various departments in the College of Education, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, and the Bauer College of Business. Recent or current non-academic collaborators have included the UH Public Art Collection, Jenkins Art and Architecture Library, UH Libraries (Special Collections), , and the Student Center.

Galvanized by new energy and challenged to expand programs and resources in FY24, the Blaffer expects to strengthen student success. With the benefit of resources from SFAC to anchor its programs, the Blaffer will continue to provide impactful student exhibitions, a strong BAMSA network, and professional development opportunities both from Blaffer Art and Design and opportunities for student learning, employment, and volunteerism. The Blaffer will continue to grow in its role in the campus community, cultivating innovative programs and enriching the arts amongst students. We are proud of our place as an educational and socio-cultural resource for all UH students, connecting the student community to exhibitions at the vanguard of artistic innovation. The Blaffer is thrilled to act as a means for curriculum enhancement, to showcase student exhibitions and artistic accomplishments, and to inspire creative practice in today's world.