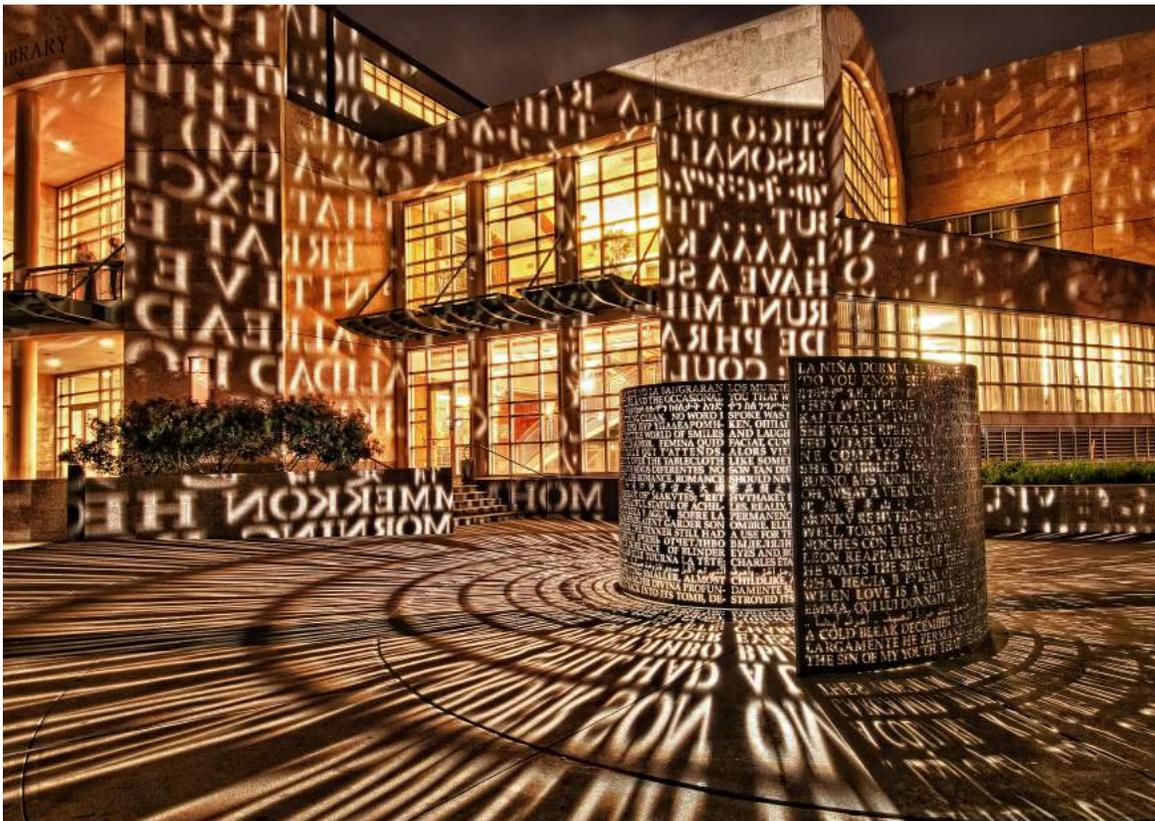


# I. Executive Summary

## Introduction

Historically, public art and museums on university campuses have been viewed as “teaching” opportunities - a means to experience and learn about art in a more personal manner. Increasingly, the function of public art on campus pushes the conversations across disciplines, from science to engineering to architecture and beyond. This renaissance of a more diverse dialogue has enriched campus culture and has birthed an awakening of intense collecting and programming open to all. Indeed, colleges and universities are increasingly becoming art tourist destinations.

The University of Houston System has recently reached a critical **pivot point** in its support of the Arts on its campuses. The Chancellor and the Board of Regents mandated in early 2016 a goal to put the “Public” back into Public Art – making the Collection and its activities a destination for the local and regional community, and for national arts enthusiasts.



Jim Sanborn, *A Comma, A*, UH Campus, MD Anderson Library

## UH Strategic Public Art Plan: The Goal

**This Plan is a roadmap to launch the University of Houston System Public Art Program (UHPA) toward a world-class arts destination.**

UHS' Public Art Program is uniquely poised to realize its new mission to:

- Engage academic and global communities in open forum to promote dialogue about the visual arts and its relevance to contemporary life.
- Enrich the cultural and intellectual character of UHS through distinguished works.
- Foster shared experiences and meaningful collaborations.

Weingarten Art Group has spent the past nine months conducting, analyzing, completing and now presenting extensive research, analysis and recommendations with regard to the following:

- Current physical condition and public profile of the University of Houston System Public Art Collection (the "Collection").
- Organizational structure and staffing maximization.
- The highlights, strengths and challenges of the Collection.
- Comparable collections across the United States.
- Strategic opportunities to expand dramatically the activities, reach and profile of the UH Public Art Program (UHPA).



Frank Stella, *Euphonia*, UH Campus, Moores School of Music

Our conclusion: The Collection has a strong foundation to serve as the perfect launching pad to distinguish itself not only as a visual arts destination, but also as a leading thinker among university public art collections nationally and internationally.

## Public Art Collection Today

UHPA was the first public university in Texas to enact a Percent-for-Arts program (1966) and has made prescient selections for its permanent collection. This curatorial rigor is the Collection's leading strength, and the Collection enjoys enthusiastic support at the highest-most administrative levels of the University.

### Highlights of the Collection:

Given the focus of this Strategic Plan, the most salient measurements in determining the Collection's leading highlights are:

- The stature of the artist;
- The suitability of the site selected; and
- The effectiveness of its presentation.

In public art, these factors are inextricably intertwined – a notable artist realizing a superior artwork that is poorly sited results in a sub-optimal experience, just as a below average artwork installed in a highly visible site is unfulfilling. For this reason, our methodology in assessing the Collection highlights gives equal weight to these variables.



Brian Tolle, *Origin*, UH Campus, Cemo Hall

Following are our “Top Artworks” from the Collection given the criteria above:

## **SUPERIOR WORKS**

### **CARLOS CRUZ DIEZ**

UH Campus, Welcome Center



### **JIM LOVE**

UH Campus, Engineering  
Courtyard



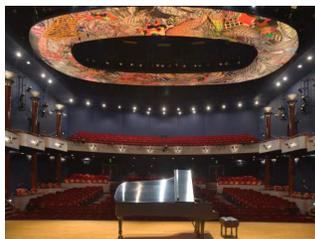
### **JACOB HASHIMOTO**

UH-Downtown, Shea Street Building



### **FRANK STELLA**

UH Campus, Moores School of  
Music



### **LUIS JIMENEZ**

UH Campus, Cullen & Wheeler



### **ANDY WARHOL**

UH Campus, Student Center  
South



## **IMPORTANT WORKS**

### **HELEN ALTMAN**

UH-Sugarland, Brazos Hall



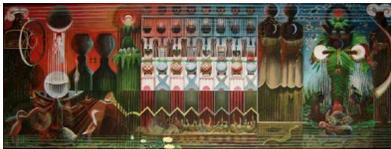
### **TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK**

UH-Downtown, Welcome Center



### **JOHN BIGGERS**

UH-Downtown, Academic Building



### **RACHEL HECKER**

UH-Downtown, Academic Building



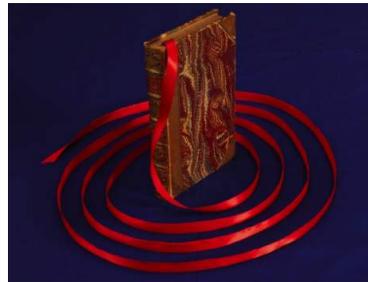
### **SCOTT BURTON**

UH Campus, College of Architecture



### **MANUAL (HILL/BLOOM)**

UH Campus, Roy G. Cullen Building



### **NATHAN CARTER**

UH Campus, Cougar Palace



### **GERHARD MARCKS**

UH Campus / Storage



**MARY MISS**

UH Campus, Elgin & Cullen



**MATT MULLICAN**

UH Campus, Science Center



**RICHARD MCDERMOTT MILLER**

UH Campus, Science and Research 1



**FLOYD NEWSUM**

UH-Downtown, Commerce Building



**AARON PARAZETTE**

UH Campus, Student Center South



**JIM SANBORN**

UH Campus, MD Anderson Library



**SALVATORE SCARPITTA**

UH Campus, Fine Arts Building



**ALYSON SHOTZ**

UH Campus, Wortham Theatre



## **AL SOUZA**

UH Campus, Wortham Theatre



## **GAEL STACK**

Storage



## **BRIAN TOLLE**

UH Campus, Cemo Hall



## **FRANCISCO ZUNIGA**

UH Campus, Charles F. McElhinney  
Hall



### **Current Challenges of the Collection:**

- Several important artworks require conservation due to Houston's climate and normal "wear and tear."
- A significant number of the outdoor sculptures call for reinforced footings and a more prominent presentation. Virtually all of the works could benefit from new signage that is prominent, attractive and didactic.
- A handful of the Collection's prominent artworks are in need of re-siting as the original installation locations are not optimal, for a variety of reasons.
- A tight, high-quality presentation of artworks in a concentrated physical area would improve greatly the impact of tours given of the Collection. The Main Campus "Arts Corridor" will serve this purpose.
- Not unlike many public art collections, this one is not optimal in its representation of women artists and artists of color.
- The ability to promote the Collection profile has been limited by staff resources.
- There is no one specific destination area for the UH Public Art Program to use as a nexus for tours, programming, and further place-making.

## Comparable University Collections

Our goal to accumulate the “best practices” of comparable university collections have taken us across the United States – from MIT’s List Center for the Arts (Boston), to the University of Texas at Austin’s Landmarks Program (Austin) to the University of California, San Diego’s Stuart Collection (San Diego).

Our goal was to understand:

- How the most successful university public art collections achieved their critically-acclaimed status;
- What they learned along the way; and
- What are the best takeaways for our own collection?

The journey revealed several strategic characteristics that correlate directly to superior reputation. Highest correlation characteristics to the most well-respected collections are:

- Curatorial autonomy/clear curatorial voice;
- Passion for the collection at the highest level of the university;
- Organizational reporting to the highest level of the university; and
- Presence of a singularly impressive Advisory Committee as a funding resource composed of individuals who are significant patrons of the university, internationally respected arts professionals (e.g. critics, artists, curators), knowledgeable arts patrons and university stakeholders (e.g. visual arts experts.)



SPAC outing to UC San Diego Stuart Collection  
California

## Why A Vigorous Public Art Program at UHS?

Experts internationally agree on several points as to what distinguishes the great universities of the world:

- A high concentration of talented educators, researchers and students.
- **Intriguing and accessible artistic and cultural experiences.**
- A healthy combination of freedom, autonomy and leadership, and
- Access to sizable and diverse financial resources.



Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Legends*, UH-Downtown, Welcome Center

### What we know about art in the public realm:

- **Public Art Attracts Financial Resources and Talent:** The public is hungry for public art, the best national and international talent is drawn to it, and today's most successful institutions and cities remain competitive by providing it.
- **Public Art (Done Well) Raises Any Institution's Profile:** Website traffic, foot traffic, social media traffic, artist recognition and inspired, active content is now the norm for a successful national program.
- **UHS Can Be a "First Mover":** Houston is increasingly more focused on its public art treasures. There unprecedented levels of requests to invigorate existing programs and to create exciting, new temporary engagements. As yet, there is no established, consistent, comprehensive outdoor and indoor temporary public art program present in any major Texas university today.

## Four Key Plan Components

- **Physical/Curatorial Plan:** Maximize the condition, curatorial rigor and siting of the current Collection.
- **Leadership/Administrative Plan:** Expand stewardship and standards policies and assessment mechanisms to best position the Collection for responsible growth.
- **Marketing and Engagement Plan:**
  - Brand and introduce the Collection to the world.
  - Create a world-class monograph of the Collection.
  - Enrich the public persona, cultural and intellectual character of the University via several new initiatives, including a Temporary Public Art Program and place making events and installations in the Arts Corridor.
- **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plan:** Mobilize our Action Items for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Initiatives.

Three Sub-Committees to the System-wide Public Art Committee (SPAC) have been formed and are working directly with the Curator to carry out the Action Items that follow.



Aaron Parazette, *Remembering Next Summer*, UH Campus, Student Center South

## **Short and Medium-Term Recommendations (through 2018)**

### **I. Curatorial and Physical Collection**

- Complete appraisal of entire Collection.
- Create and implement Conservation, Maintenance & Site Enhancements Plan in accordance with the industry best practices.
- Physical conservation of existing Collection and set conservation plan for future.
- Re-site Mary Miss and Jim Isermann installations to more optimal locations.
- Re-site Carlos Cruz-Diez to Arts Corridor to maximize tour impact.
- Resume anew Collection's commissioning/acquisitions strategy once conservation plan is complete, with priority given to projects currently on hold.



Carlos Cruz Diez, *Double Psychromie*, UH Campus, Welcome Center

### **II. Leadership and Administrative**

- Adopt new Mission Statement and Goals as approved by Special Sub-Committee.
- Review/Revamp/Create Program policies in accordance with industry best practices.
- Set measurable standards for this Plan's goals to gage progress and success.
- Detail Advancement strategy for implementation of this Plan, including naming the Collection.
- Explore staffing requirements to successfully realize this Plan.
- Expand SPAC membership to include nationally/internationally recognized critic and patron or academic.

### III. Marketing and Engagement Program

- Add media relations/marketing professional to create and implement branding strategy for UHPA.
- Aggressively advance progress of new branding strategy across all platforms (website, social media and print collateral).
- Explore concept of a patrons group, potentially collaborative with the Blaffer Art Museum's advancement efforts.
- Initiate Temporary Public Art Program for UHPA: High-profile pop-up events, short-term interactive installations and collaborative events with Mitchell Center for the Arts, UH Music, UH Dance, the Blaffer and other College of the Arts initiatives.



### IV. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recommendations

Richard McDermott Miller, *Sandy in Defined Space*, UH Campus, Science and Research 1

Hire 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project Manager to realize:

- Creation and publication of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Monograph of superior quality and content celebrating the University, the Collection, its history and its artists.
- Highly engaging and photogenic temporary art performances and installations leading up to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Generate frequent, fresh, and appealing content for website and all social media platforms to build momentum ahead of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Uniquely bold projects during our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year (see Temporary Public Art Program section of this Plan.)



JR, *Inside Out Project*, Tokyo, Japan

## Long-term Goals (beyond 2019)

- Refine and continue to build brand to maximize profile of the UHPA Program.
- Set targets for national and international art criticism coverage of the Collection and TPAP.
- Continue to collaborate with UHS Master Plan working group to maximize integration of Collection artworks and activities into UHS campuses.
- Hold firm to aspirational goals and highest standards of curatorial rigor for the entire program.
- Continue to realize temporary installations at Wilhelmina's Grove as an arts gathering place, and elsewhere in the UHS as exemplary of a dynamic, engaging arts community.
- Realize iconic Gateway Artwork to serve as beacon for UHS public art program.
- Seek optimal organizational and collaborative structure among the Collection, TPAP, the Blaffer Art Museum and the Mitchell Center for the Arts.
- Develop and nurture Advancement patrons, including Foundation support.

## In Conclusion

There is no question that UHPA has a unique opportunity to leverage its Collection and Program to a national and international level of dialogue: The framework exists to take a leadership role in public art: The support of the University at the highest levels, an enviable artist list and visionary leadership are the building blocks of success.

Further, UHS' influential arts organizations and diverse academic base maximize collaborative opportunities for inspirational programming and temporary art installations. "Pop-up" moments and diverse interactions will distinguish the Collection, providing meaningful and frequent content for a high public relations profile.

### Truths:

- **The influence of visual media has fundamentally changed our world.**
- **Creativity teaches science, engineering, business and liberal arts scholars to rethink what is possible in their fields and beyond.**
- **This Plan, properly executed, will serve to draw prospective students, attract notable faculty, feed arts publications, encourage philanthropy, and invite a national audience.**

**This is our Call to Action.**