

LANDMARKS
THE AMERICAN
CAMPUS IDEAL

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THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



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The campus of The University of Texas at Austin is among the most distinctive and beautiful in the country, a realization of architect Paul Cret's vision. The Tower stands at the center of his grand design, forming, in Cret's words, "the image carried in our memory when we think of the place."

The Cret master plan of 1933 organized the campus symmetrically with four malls extending from the Main Building and Tower. Cret continued to design campus buildings into the early 1940s; he incorporated the style of earlier architects Cass Gilbert and Herbert Greene into a coherent ensemble that reflects the University's strength and academic purpose. Modern demands and ambitions, however, eventually led to expansion that deviated from Cret's early ideals.

To restore the intent of the original Cret plan, Cesar Pelli and Associates drafted a campus master plan in 1999 that outlined a vision for the campus in the next century. This plan built upon the successful spaces of the historical academic core, and it proposed future development in the spirit of the original Cret plan. In 2004 the Commission of 125, a group of dedicated UT alumni and supporters, added specific objectives that included strengthening campus identity, reuniting the campus, and enhancing public perceptions.

To meet those goals and build on its existing collection of public art, the University is pursuing an opportunity to take a giant leap forward. That opportunity is Landmarks: a strategic long-term initiative to bring the finest works of public art to the main campus.



LANDMARKS

Landmarks is the first initiative in the University's history to develop a collection of public art with a clear curatorial vision. By presenting works of the highest artistic and intellectual merit, Landmarks not only enhances the aesthetic character of campus but also conveys the University's identity, ideals, and standards of excellence. Landmarks focuses on four principal audiences: the campus community; students and scholars of the visual arts and related disciplines; regional, national, and international arts communities; and the general public.

An effective public art presence requires much more than collecting works and placing them throughout campus. Rather, each piece must contribute to a cohesive vision that provides a continuing source of knowledge, inspiration, and pride. By bringing great works of public art to the main campus, Landmarks records our history, builds community, and creates a sense of place — now and for future generations. It represents the innovation, creativity, and rigor that make the University one of the world's best.

Those goals, combined with established campus plans, have shaped the University's first public art master plan. In 2007 the firm Peter Walker Partners Landscape Architects created a plan that guides public art acquisition and placement and takes into consideration the physical orientation and visual character of campus. The plan calls for improving visitors' aesthetic experience by visually anchoring gateways, accentuating main axis corridors, and clarifying patchy architectural edges.

INITIATIVES

Three Landmarks initiatives are under way to beautify and unify the campus, support the University's role as a leading research institution, and provide a source of civic pride and welfare. Two of the initiatives are already funded, demonstrating the commitment of major stakeholders to the Landmarks vision.

The first is a long-term loan from one of the world's greatest museums, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The University has borrowed 28 mid- to late-twentieth-century sculptures, an extraordinary collection that would be impossible to replicate. Located throughout the main campus, the sculptures and their role in art history form a basis for Landmarks' curatorial vision and provide a context for the University's own public art collection. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has loaned the sculptures to the University indefinitely in five-year renewable periods.

The loan includes the works of such internationally renowned contemporary artists as Magdalena Abakanowicz, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Anthony Caro,

Jim Dine, Donald Lipski, Beverly Pepper, Antoine Pevsner, Tony Smith, and Ursula von Rydingsvard. Several education programs accompany the loan, including a free audio tour podcast and educational resource guides.

Landmarks' second initiative brings new public art to campus with major building renovation and new construction projects. Funding for this initiative comes from a 2005 University policy that sets aside 1–2 percent of each project's costs for public art. Projects funded by this percent-for-art allocation enhance the area surrounding the construction, such as the concept to create a James Turrell *Skyspace* for the new student activity center.

Landmarks' third initiative draws upon philanthropic gifts to enhance shared public spaces. Private support will cover such campus-wide priorities as gateways, medians, malls, corridors, and other areas not associated with specific building projects. Public art in these shared spaces creates focal points and highlights overlooked areas on campus. The corner of Speedway and Dean Keeton, with the heroic sculpture *Clock Knot* by Mark di Suvero, exemplifies the power of art to transform public places.

The Landmarks vision realized

The success of Landmarks depends on strong leadership and generous philanthropy. Through the support of President William Powers, Jr., the Metropolitan sculpture loan has been funded in its entirety. Landmarks also receives significant institutional support and guidance from Dean Douglas Dempster in the College of Fine Arts and from Vice President Pat Clubb of Employee and Campus Services.

Landmarks' success depends on its ability to reflect a variety of viewpoints about the nature and purpose of public art. Andrée Bober, the founding director of Landmarks, provides that leadership. Bober has been a curator and arts administrator since 1991. A native Texan, she received a BA in art history at The University of Texas at Austin, studied painting conservation in Vienna, Austria, and earned an MA in arts administration from Columbia University/Teachers College in New York. She has led curatorial and administrative projects for such organizations as the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati.

In addition to strong leadership, private investment is key to success. To fully realize the Landmarks vision, The University of Texas at Austin is seeking private support for Landmarks to acquire new works, maintain existing works, and support public outreach and education.

For more information about investing in Landmarks, please contact Sondra Lomax at lomax@austin.utexas.edu or 512.471.6468.



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