

## **Blaffer Art Museum**

### **FY2027 Blaffer Art Museum One Time Request**

#### **Student Program Enhancement**

SFAC support will help the Blaffer Art Museum to increasingly prioritize the growth of our resources for student engagement that lead to student success and retention.

The One Time Request will enable the Blaffer to:

- Fortify museum educational staff serving the student community
- Mentor students through sustained, professionally focused internships that weave students into all aspects of museum operations
- Design student programming both at the museum and offsite in the campus community

As both an incubator and intersection between UH students and cultural professionals in Houston, Blaffer Art Museum provides opportunities for the development of professional creative skills through mentorship and collaboration. The FY27 One-Time Allocation Request furthers our ability to activate the College of the Arts Vision Element #2, to develop the next generation of artists, leaders and professionals.

**Blaffer respectfully requests \$48,670 to sustain this increased commitment to students, supporting the following:**

|                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Asst. Curator Edu (9 months) | \$18,000        |
| Student Programs             | \$8,000         |
| Interns (3 x 9 months)       | \$19,440        |
| Admin (6%)                   | \$2,726         |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$48,166</b> |

#### **Assistant Curator of Education**

A new position in FY25, the Assistant Curator of Education is a part-time staff member with a particular focus on UH student relations. The museum extended the SFAC support, which funded the position for seven months per year, to twelve months. To further increase impact, Blaffer requests funding for half time salary for this position for the full academic year, with the goal of matching to support a full-time position by FY28. The position has helped the museum accomplish its goals to serve UH Students: In its first year, the Assistant Curator: develops and maintains partnerships with campus units

such the Student Center, UH Libraries, Residential Life, Admissions, and our own BAMSA. Programs implemented and publicized: Thursdays @ Blaffer, Art in Residence. Participated in Orientation, Stress Free Finals, Weeks of Welcome. FY26 brings a collaboration with Public Art, Creative Ground.

### **Student Programs**

Since we estimate that public program participation accounts for at least a third of total museum attendance, SFAC funding will be invested in this area. The following programs can be accomplished with a meaningful ROI with small program costs; the biggest investment is time to create a sustainable network beyond the museum walls and across campus.

#### **Art in Residence (AiR)**

The new partnership with Residential Life brings hands-on art workshops to students living in on-campus residential halls, connecting students with the Blaffer Art Museum and the Blaffer Art Museum Student Association in a relaxed, collaborative setting. In FY25, AiR hosted five workshops across campus dorms, engaging 128 students through mixed-media activities with oil pastels and watercolor. Surveys showed that participants found the sessions fun, engaging, and stress-relieving, with many expressing interest in visiting the museum afterward.

This year, AiR focuses on reaching first- and second-year students who are less familiar with the museum, offering activities inspired by current exhibitions—such as creating collages based on *Saif Azzuz: Keet Hegehlpa' (The Water is Rising)*—to connect artmaking with themes of environment and community. The program also involves Blaffer Art Museum Student Association, whose members assist in workshops and gain hands-on experience in museum education and public programming. AiR strengthens connections between the Blaffer, the University of Houston campus, and its student community through meaningful creative engagement.

#### **Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.)**

B.A.D. is a successful and innovative program that benefits students who create, display, and sell their original designs. On pause in FY25 due to staff changes, B.A.D. now resumes creating an ongoing partnership with UH Graphic Design and Industrial Design faculty and students and is positioned as a permanent part of the museum program. Presented in a prominent, custom-made display in the museum lobby, B.A.D. sells student-designed objects. All funds made from sales go back into the program, but

SFAC is an essential support, allowing Blaffer to offer students honoraria and production support.

### **Thursdays @ Blaffer**

Blaffer Art Museum offers Studio Sessions on the first Thursday of every month during the fall and spring semesters. These events feature drop-in tours, hands-on activities, and free lunch, creating a welcoming environment where students can engage with the museum's exhibitions in fun, dynamic, and inclusive ways. Thursdays @Blaffer, often designed in partnership with the Blaffer Art Museum or other partners, are designed to spark creativity and connection—not only with the art on view, but also amongst museumgoers. In FY26, the program is held in tandem with a new partnership with Public Art UHS, **Creative Ground**. FY25 attendance averaged 20 per session; increased resources will enable us to increase our goal.

### **Internship Program**

This summer Blaffer launched an exciting pilot **Internship Program** which will have its first full year of implementation in FY26. Previous SFAC funding supported students in separate roles (visitor services, and internships), and the current OT request allows us to maximize impact through marrying these cohorts into an innovative experience. Modeled after a nationally acclaimed program at University of Texas, El Paso, the internships provide students with important continuity in the *whole* museum community. Interns learn about the museum field while gaining experience and knowledge of professional practices, learning from the full museum staff—administrative, curatorial, education and public programs, exhibitions, installation, public relations and communications and visitor services and security. Gaining knowledge that is specific and transferable to other fields, students complete individual projects with supervisors and group training sessions, as well as work as front line museum staff as gallery attendants.

The request includes a 6% **Administrative Fee**.