

BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FROM ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE TO WORKS BY GOYA, HOPPER, AND WEGMAN,
BLANTON EXHIBITION INVESTIGATES THE HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY
OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH CATS AND DOGS**



***In the Company of Cats and Dogs*
June 22 – September 21, 2014**

AUSTIN, TX – June 18, 2014 – *In the Company of Cats and Dogs* provides a multifaceted look at our relationship with felines and canines through the ages. On view at the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin from June 22 – September 21, 2014, the exhibition features over 150 works by masters such as Albrecht Dürer, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, William Blake, Francisco Goya, Paul Gauguin, Takahashi Hiroaki (Shotai), Pablo Picasso, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Edward Hopper, Louise Bourgeois, and others. Examining the ever-changing roles of cats and dogs and our enduring fascination with them, the presentation includes Egyptian sculpture, Chinese and pre-Columbian ceramics, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, and prints, books, photographs, and paintings from the Blanton's collection and those of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art; Dallas Museum of Art; the Menil Collection; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the San Antonio Museum of Art; Yale Center for British Art; the Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and of the private collections of UT alumni and others.

“This exhibition sheds new light on a subject artists have depicted throughout history – our relationships with cats and dogs,” states Blanton Director Simone Wicha. “It provides us an opportunity to collaborate with some of the best and brightest minds on the University of Texas campus – from psychologists to historians – in a presentation that offers new research and fresh perspectives, giving us a deeper understanding of our own identities and relationships. It also gives us a chance to connect with our pet-friendly community, who will undoubtedly enjoy these dynamic portrayals of well-loved animals. *In the Company of Cats and Dogs* serves as a model of what a great university art museum can do.”

Drawing on research from several disciplines in the humanities and sciences, *In the Company of Cats and Dogs* considers some of the inherent personalities and temperaments of these animals as well as those imposed or projected by humans onto them. Throughout history, these animals have been viewed and represented as family members, hunters of prey, strays, and as figures and symbols in mythological, religious, political, and moral images. The exhibition probes these characterizations through numerous lenses, including anthrozoology (a new discipline that studies the interactions between humans and other animals) and social histories concerned with animal welfare, child development, and hunting and land rights. Francesca Consagra, the Blanton's Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and European Paintings remarks, "Through especially beautiful and affecting works of art, we hope to make our visitors aware of some of the diverse and complex histories we have had with cats and dogs over a period of thirty-three centuries."



Highlights of the exhibition include ancient Egyptian sculptures of the gods Bast and Anubis on loan from the San Antonio Museum of Art, a folio from the *Tegernsee Miscellany* aka *Bede Compendium*— an eleventh-century manuscript depicting a zodiac dog from the Harry Ransom Center, and Thomas Sully's *Cinderella at the Kitchen Fire* from the Dallas Museum of Art, along with Albrecht Dürer's *St. Eustace*, a group of important and rare prints by Paul Gauguin, and contemporary works by Louise Bourgeois, William Wegman and Sandy Skoglund. Also included are Blanton visitor favorites such as Marco Benefial's *Portrait of a Lady with a Dog* and Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait's *Huntsman with Deer, Horse, and Rifle*.

In the Company of Cats and Dogs makes connections across centuries and genres and underscores our complex relationships to these animals, revealing the many ways in which they say as much about us as we do about them.

An ideal presentation for pet-friendly Austin, the exhibition will be accompanied by a curated display of popular cat videos culled from YouTube and a variety of public programs, including:

July 19, 2014 | 10am – 4pm

A day of cat and dog-themed activities begins with a **Pooch Parade** through the University of Texas at Austin campus at 10:00am, and continues with an 11:00am **Working Dog Demonstration**, showcasing service animals and police dogs led by expert trainers, a **Prison Pups** documentary film screening at 1:00pm, and a **Cat Video Screening** featuring feline flicks from Austin and around the world, projected onto the big screen in the Blanton Auditorium at 3:00pm.

August 16, 2014 | 1pm

Psychologist **Hal Herzog**, a leading researcher in the study of human-animal interactions and author of *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals*, will discuss a variety of ways people relate to cats and dogs.

August 21, 2014 | 6:30pm

Filmmaker **Nancy Schiesari** discusses her forthcoming documentary *Canine Soldiers* and shows excerpts from the film, which depicts the lives of dogs used in combat zones.

In the Company of Cats and Dogs is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art.

Generous funding for the exhibition is provided by Dana and Gene Powell, with additional support from Leslie and Jack Blanton, Jr., the Carl and Marilyn Thoma Foundation, Cornelia and Meredith Long, Alessandra Manning-Dolnier and Kurt Dolnier, Susan and Richard Marcus, the Scurlock Foundation Exhibition Endowment, and a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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About the Blanton Museum of Art:

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art is one of the foremost university art museums in the country and holds the largest public collection in Central Texas. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10 - 5, Saturday from 11-5, and Sunday from 1-5. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13-21) \$5. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471-7324 or visit www.blantonmuseum.org.

For more information and high-resolution images contact:

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Image Captions:

Marco Benefial

Portrait of a Lady with a Dog, 1730s

Oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 33 7/8 in.

Blanton Museum of Art

The Suida-Manning Collection

Takahashi Hiroaki (Shotei), Published by Fusui Gabo

Cat Prowling Around a Staked Tomato Plant, 1931

Woodblock print, 20 7/8 x 13 7/8 in.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Gift of Stephanie Hamilton in memory of Leslie A. Hamilton

Egyptian

Seated Cat, c.712 – 332 BCE

Bronze, 7 1/16 x 3 x 2 1/2 in.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Estate of Isabel B. Wilson