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THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF 33-FOOT STAINLESS STEEL SCULPTURE BY ARTIST TOM FRIEDMAN

Acquisition made possible by a \$9 million Marcus Foundation grant awarded in 2013 to establish The Contemporary Austin – Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria.

FEBRUARY 21, 2015, AUSTIN, TEXAS – The Contemporary Austin announces the acquisition of Tom Friedman’s monumental sculpture *Looking Up* (2015). The sculpture will be unveiled on May 9, 2015, at the museum’s Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria, 3809 West 35th Street, Austin, Texas. Towering over thirty-three feet tall, the highly polished stainless steel sculpture will be a striking addition to the growing sculpture park, which includes both works acquired for the collection and long-term loans by artists such as Liam Gillick, John Grade, Paul McCarthy, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Tom Sachs, and Marianne Vitale, along with a dynamic and rotating series of shorter-term, site-specific exhibitions and installations, including, to date, projects by Orly Genger, Charles Long, Lucky Dragons, Do Ho Suh, and others.

In a career spanning nearly thirty years, the conceptual artist Tom Friedman has been known for his use of everyday materials, his wide range of subject matter, and his painstaking replicas of banal or unremarkable objects, often rendered in nontraditional materials. Among the most celebrated recent works in this grouping are the artist’s crushed aluminum foil roasting-pan figures, sculptural objects that seem to be contemporary hybrids evoking classic modernist sculpture—in particular the great modernist



Alberto Giacometti's slender walking figures—blended with a young child's playful craft constructions.

In early 2013, Louis Grachos, the Ernest and Sarah Butler Executive Director of The Contemporary Austin, invited Friedman for a site visit to the museum's fourteen-acre Laguna Gloria grounds to discuss the potential for a future project. During this and a subsequent visit, the artist conceived of a sculpture based on his past aluminum foil figures, but imagined at a newly monumental scale at over thirty-three feet tall. The Contemporary Austin commissioned Friedman to create *Looking Up*, the first in an edition of three, which will be on view at The Contemporary Austin's Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria beginning in May 2015. The sculpture—which is constructed of crushed aluminum foil roasting pans, then cast in stainless steel with a polished finish—depicts a single figure standing with feet firmly planted, arms thrown down and back, and face gazing upward. The installation in Austin will mark the first time a Friedman figure from this series will be on view at such a spectacular scale.

"The figure in *Looking Up* stands as if in sudden wonder at something perceived above and perhaps beyond our view," Grachos stated. "Situated near the entrance, in one of the most prominent places in the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, I expect it will encourage the same sense of wonder among those who encounter the sculpture—from local visitors and tourists to the more than twenty thousand children who visit the sculpture park each year. One of the largest works ever realized by Friedman and the largest sculpture installed at our museum, *Looking Up* will be a thought-provoking and, I believe, inspirational landmark for the city of Austin. It was a pleasure to work with Tom Friedman and with Luhring Augustine Gallery, without which we could not have achieved this ambitious project."

BETTY AND EDWARD MARCUS SCULPTURE PARK AT LAGUNA GLORIA

In 2013, The Contemporary Austin was awarded a \$9 million grant by the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation to help create an unparalleled arts destination at Laguna Gloria, with the majority of the funds committed to commissioning and acquiring sculpture and permanent outdoor installations by some of today's leading artists.

Already well-known for its historic significance, natural surroundings, and the Art School, Laguna Gloria now continues to grow into an exceptional art-in-nature experience with exhibitions, commissions, and vibrant community engagement through public programming and educational initiatives. In April 2014, after a year-long international search, the museum announced the selection of landscape architecture firm Reed Hilderbrand to design a new master plan for the Laguna Gloria site. Local Austin collaborators including Urban Design Group and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center will ensure that this precious reserve of natural beauty in the heart of the city will become even more resilient, diverse, and welcoming for art and nature lovers alike.

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

The Contemporary Austin reflects the spectrum of contemporary art through exhibitions, commissions, education, and the collection. The museum has two distinct yet complementary locations, the Jones Center in downtown Austin at 700 Congress Avenue, and Laguna Gloria, a fourteen-acre site on Lake Austin at 3809 W. 35th Street, which is home to the Driscoll Villa, the Art School, the Gatehouse Gallery, and the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park at Laguna Gloria.

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Image:

Tom Friedman, production maquette for *Looking Up*, 2015. Stainless steel. 33 feet 4 inches. Edition 1 of 3, 1 AP. © Tom Friedman. Courtesy the artist; Luhring Augustine, New York; and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. Image courtesy Walla Walla Foundry.