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Dallas-based Marcus Foundation honors Austin museum with its final grant



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Officials for the Dallas-based Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation announced Monday that it will be awarding its last gift, a \$9 million grant, to The Contemporary Austin.

Richard Marcus, son of the late Stanley Marcus and nephew of Stanley's brother, Edward, and his wife, Betty, said the board on which he has served for more than 20 years "came to our decision following a time of thinking through what would be the best way to honor Betty and Eddie."

The board invited visual arts institutions throughout Texas, Richard Marcus said, to tell them how "they would use such funds to do something transformational in their institution." In the past, the Marcus Foundation has awarded grants to the Dallas Museum of Art and to KERA, among other institutions statewide.

Since its inception in 1994, the Marcus Foundation has provided more than 125 grants to support the visual arts throughout Texas, with the majority of this funding dedicated to visual arts education.

The board, Marcus said, was most intrigued by the presentation put forth by Louis Grachos, executive director of The Contemporary Austin, for a contemporary sculpture park on the grounds of Laguna Gloria, one of the venues it operates.

Marcus praised the Austin museum for "a very compelling and exciting idea that we think would be unique not just for Austin but for the whole state of Texas."

"It truly is a transformative grant for this organization as we move forward," said Grachos, who hopes to establish "a very strong contemporary program around our two venues, Laguna Gloria and the Jones Center, which is our downtown [Austin] facility."

The \$9 million grant "will empower us and help us create a new and dynamic program of both temporary exhibitions and permanent commissioned works for the grounds of Laguna Gloria. So the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park will actually be realized with some outstanding artworks that will be specifically commissioned and site-specific to the grounds as we move forward into the future.

"The grant really empowers us to realize our vision, which is to create a dynamic art and nature experience for not just the Austin community but we hope the Texas-wide community and a national audience."



The villa at Laguna Gloria