

TACOMA ART MUSEUM

1701 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402

MEDIA RELEASE

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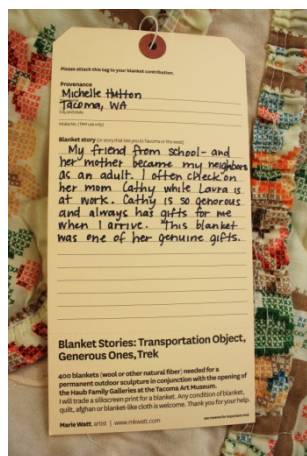
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Clint Eastwood and Marie Watt Enhance Art Experiences at TAM through Technology

Tacoma, WA – Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) is using technology to enhance and support art experiences. The museum introduced a new audio tour on Saturday, November 22, with guest narration for six stops provided by film legend Clint Eastwood. Gail Tremblay, who teaches at Evergreen State College in Olympia and is a member of the Onandaga and Micmac nations, and Laura Fry, TAM's Haub Curator of Western American Art, are also guest narrators. There are over 40 stops on the audio tour, providing roughly an hour of interesting observations highlighting works in TAM's Northwest collection and the new Haub Family Collection of Western American Art. Several stops were written and recorded specifically for young listeners with fun sound effects – for example, a slurping dog in the audio stop for Scott Fife's *Leroy the Big Pup*.

"After keeping it a secret during production, I am excited to announce that Clint Eastwood contributed his vocal talent to the audio tour. For me and so many others, he is inextricably linked to the American West through the iconic characters he has portrayed," says Samantha Kelly, TAM's Director of Education. "I can think of no better way to present the new Western American art collection than through his welcoming narration. He shares his love of the West by introducing the land and characters depicted in these incredible artworks. It has been a thrilling opportunity for TAM."



There are many ways to learn about art. Why would museum-goers use an audio tour? The audio guide is designed to help visitors look more closely at works of art and see things they may not have otherwise noticed, through listening while looking. The content offers points for consideration and draws attention to details. Free with admission, each guest is given a hand-held wand for the audio tour. Visitors can simply punch in an audio stop number when they see a label featuring a headphones icon near an artwork. Visitors can also check out a printed version of the content on the audio guide, and a list of audio tour stops.

“Museums are educational institutions at their core. TAM offers an ever-growing range of accessible arts education moments for visitors, including artist’s lectures, thoughtful interpretive labels in the galleries, audio and video guides, and art-making experiences. We are even creating apps,” says TAM’s Director, Stephanie Stebich. “We are working with established experts to develop multisensory tools, including Seattle’s [Gigantic Planet](#), who created the video currently showing in our new Orientation Space, and [Antenna International](#) for our dynamic audio tour.”

The museum also shared a new [app](#) containing a whopping 306 short stories last week, developed by artist Marie Watt and her husband Adam. Watt’s sculpture *Blanket Stories: Transportation Object, Generous Ones, Trek* was recently installed in front of the museum’s new wing. TAM and the artist collected hundreds of blankets donated by people in the community to create the sculpture. Each person who donated a blanket wrote the story of its significance on a tag, comprising a series of poignant, funny, diverse tales that resonate with Watt’s premise that blankets are humble but significant objects in our lives.

You can find the *Blanket Stories* [app](#) by going to [Tacoma Art Museum’s website](#) (currently on the homepage). Once in the app, select ‘Browse blankets’ from the brief menu, and the app brings up a grid of colorful numbered images – blankets neatly folded into squares of texture and pattern – a dozen at a time. Blankets were numbered during the bronze casting process and the numbers on the images correspond with the sculpture. Click on a blanket to see the donor’s name and story. Searching for a specific blanket? Look it up through keyword search. Interested in specific types of stories, such as ‘fathers’ or ‘animal stories’? Read by category using the keywords already included in the app.

Katherine Dumont of Gig Harbor contributed a blanket to the sculpture. She has been to the museum to see the finished work, and also found her blanket in the app (#192). “This brings our community together. It is wonderful to be able to share the stories in the app like this. For this to be here for generations to come, to see these stories, it is part of Tacoma now and that is great! I love to be able to contribute to the culture of our city. The app is really easy to use too,” she said.

Further connecting with TAM fans, the museum launched a new website in November, created by Tacoma’s [SiteCrafting, Inc.](#) “The new site offers layers of functionality and a beautiful interface. We hope our on-line visitors will find the streamlined menu easy to use, and take advantage of the efficient calendar function to find out what is happening at the museum,” says Melissa Traver, Director of Marketing and Communication. “Our next goal is to implement on an improved on-line ticketing interface.”

The museum plans to continue incorporating technology to provide innovative visitor amenities and useful tools. The audio guide will be updated by March 1 for the upcoming exhibition *Eloquent Objects: Georgia O’Keeffe and Still-Life Art in New Mexico* and TAM will update the Chihuly Walking Tour soon as well.

For more information visit www.TacomaArtMuseum.org.



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Marie Watt’s bronze sculpture finished in blue patina, *Blanket Stories: Transportation Object, Generous Ones, Trek* was installed in front of TAM’s new Haub Family Galleries wing on November 10, 2014. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Art Museum.

The new audio guide wand is easy to operate and offers more than 40 audio stops highlighting works of art in TAM’s Northwest and Western American collections, including several stops with audio created for young audiences. Photo courtesy of Antenna International.

TAM launched a new app sharing 306 stories like the one pictured here, contributed along with blankets for the Marie Watt sculpture. Check TAM’s website to download the app. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Art Museum.

Easy-to-use audio guide wand and headset, with an audio guide tour featuring guest narrator Clint Eastwood. The audio tour highlights works of art in TAM’s Northwest and Western American collections, including several stops with audio created for young audiences. Photo courtesy of Antenna International.

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About Tacoma Art Museum

Founded by volunteers in 1935, Tacoma Art Museum has become an anchor in the city’s downtown and a gathering space for connecting people through art. TAM’s collection contains more than 4,500 works from around the world, with an emphasis on the art and artists of the Northwest and West. The collection includes the most comprehensive public retrospective collection of glass by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly, the world’s largest collection of jewelry by Northwest artists, key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art, and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. TAM recently welcomed a promised gift of 295 works of Western American art in the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier collections in the nation and the first major Western American museum collection in the Northwest. With the addition of the Haub Family Collection and a new wing that doubles TAM’s gallery space, the museum expects to serve over 100,000 visitors annually.

HOURS – Tuesdays–Sundays 10 am–5 pm, Third Thursday 10 am–8 pm.

ADMISSION – Adult \$14; Student age 6-17, Military, Senior (65+) \$12; Family \$35 (2 adults and up to 4 children under 18). Children 5 and under free. **Third Thursdays free from 5–8 pm.** Members always free.

CONTACT – 253.272.4258, <http://www.tacomaartmuseum.org/>