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## Blaffer Gallery Celebrates Regeneration in Style with RenGen Remix *Annual Benefit Gala Raises \$100,000*

HOUSTON, Texas (June 2, 2009) – Blaffer Gallery, the Art Museum of the University of Houston, hosted its annual benefit gala on Friday evening, May 15, 2009. RenGen Remix, inspired by the current *Existed: Leonardo Drew* exhibition, was successful, raising just over \$100,000. The resources brought in will further Blaffer’s mission to present intellectually stimulating exhibitions that promote a spirit of investigation, collaboration and dialogue.



Left to right: Russell Sherrill, Claudia Schmuckli and Leonardo Drew

Two hundred twenty-five supporters attended RenGen Remix. The evening was held at the New World Museum and began at 8 p.m. with margaritas, beer and wine and a buffet dinner catered by Armandos. Guests had their choice of main entrees – grilled barbecue ribs and chicken and steak fajitas – served with sweet fried plantains, shrimp cocktail and nachos topped with chili con queso. Dessert included cream-filled churros and other pastries. During the first two hours of the event, guests danced to the sounds of Houston Cuban band Siákara and bid on works in the silent auction. At 10 p.m., the evening spiced up when after-hours ticket holders arrived and DJ Patrick Drew began spinning energetic dance music.

In addition to gala hosts Judy and Scott Nyquist, Patrick Drew, Karen and Steve Farber, Ryan Gordon, Michelle Aviña, Steven Hempel, and José Solis, special guests included John Antel, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost for the University of Houston, and his wife Susan; honoree Leonardo Drew, exhibiting artist at Blaffer Gallery; honoree Claudia Schmuckli, director and chief curator of



Gordon Goodman

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the museum, with her husband Matthew Drutt; incoming board chair Gordon Goodman and his wife Gatsonia; outgoing board chair Russell Sherrill and his wife Lisa; and a host of other art world luminaries.



Patrick Drew

This year's theme was rebirth and regeneration, corresponding to topics found in Blaffer's current exhibition *Existed: Leonardo Drew*. The artist's first mid-career retrospective uses media like rust, wood and paper to suggest the cyclical nature of existence. Further conveying this idea, many of the works in the exhibition literally contain parts of earlier works. Yet, new beginnings are not limited to just Blaffer's art: Schmuckli assumed directorship of the museum within the last six months and Goodman begins his new role as board chair next fall.

"RenGen Remix was extremely successful in terms of both revenue raised and enjoyment had by guests," said Schmuckli. "It was fresh and fun, and our patrons were charmed by the change in format which included a sprawling buffet dinner, a silent auction, live entertainment, and discounted after-hours tickets for those looking to dance to the tunes of DJ Drew. It was the perfect event for these difficult economic times and we will look back on it as a model for future fundraisers."

Pictures from the event are available from the photographer's website. To view, go to <https://www.pwlstudio.com/webprints>, enter login information (registration is free), and then click on "Blaffer Gallery New World Museum 2009.05.15."

RenGen Remix was sponsored by PaperCity Magazine, Starbucks and Armandos. The summer exhibition, *Existed: Leonardo Drew*, is on view through Aug. 1.



Susan and John Antel

### **About Blaffer Gallery:**

Founded in 1973, Blaffer Gallery, the Art Museum of the University of Houston, was named in honor of the late Sarah Campbell Blaffer, a noted Houston arts patron and collector. Since its inception, the museum has been a vital force in the presentation and promotion of contemporary visual arts in Houston. Blaffer Gallery is located in the Fine Arts Building on the University of Houston's central campus, entrance 16 off Cullen Boulevard. It is free and open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed Sundays, Mondays and University holidays. The museum is ADA compliant. For general inquiries, please call 713.743.9530, or visit the museum online at [www.blaffergallery.org](http://www.blaffergallery.org).

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