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February 2011: Art Matters



Three decades ago, 36,000 people connected with a venturesome university that was only six years old when it hosted a controversial art exhibition—Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party." Despite its youth, the university encouraged a lot of people to experience art that made a bold statement. Likewise, the university was making a statement. Thirty years later, University of Houston-Clear Lake still proclaims, "Art matters" and continues to encourage people to experience art.

From Feb. 25 to April 30, 2011, the university will host Judy Chicago's "Setting the Table," an exhibit of test plates and drawings used by the artist to develop and create the acclaimed "Dinner Party" exhibition. "Setting the Table" will showcase the historical process from start to finish and also update the material and philosophical concepts. Alongside the exhibition will be artist Margarita Cabrera's 2010 video titled "Space in Between," a collaborative project involving sewing and embroidery workshops for women across U.S. border cultures. The exhibitions will be located at UHCL's Neumann Library. Again, the university will engage thousands to grow their ideas, perceptions and worlds through art.

Because of a commitment to art since its inception, the university has developed a reputation built on activities focused on academic excellence and audience access. Those efforts paid off with the recent funding by Houston Endowment of a three-year grant for art audience development. Thanks to the foundation's largesse, UHCL will bring art to audiences of all ages via events, the internet, social media, exhibitions and more. These are, indeed, exciting times for art at UHCL. And art connects people, many of whom will proclaim UHCL as their own source for art, inspiration and affirmation of the potential of creativity.

On a personal note, I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge the university's support of staff involvement in art, as practitioners, volunteers and leaders. As of January 2011, I began my one-year term as the president of the board of The Arts Alliance Center at Clear Lake. TAACCL has been a partner of the university for more than a decade, working with art faculty members on exhibitions and other activities. I look forward to serving art and Bay Area Houston in this role, too.

Art matters; art connects. UHCL brings it all together. I hope you can join in the fun and growth.



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