

New York museum lending sculptures for UT to display

By Jeanne Claire van Ryzin

AMERICAN-STATESMAN ARTS WRITER

More than two dozen contemporary sculptures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art are headed to the University of Texas campus for long-term exhibit as part of a new public art program, UT announced Friday.

The New York museum is lending 28 sculptures by such noted artists as Louise Bourgeois, Jim Dine and Tony Smith, among others, for installation across campus. The loan agreement is for five years and is renewable, a university spokesperson said. UT and museum officials would not disclose the value of the art.

Other initiatives in UT's new public art program include a percent-for-art policy that sets a goal of earmarking 1 percent to 2 percent of costs for new construction and major building renovation for acquisition of public art, similar to the City of Austin's Art in Public Places program. The university is also establishing a fund for buying and commissioning art for the

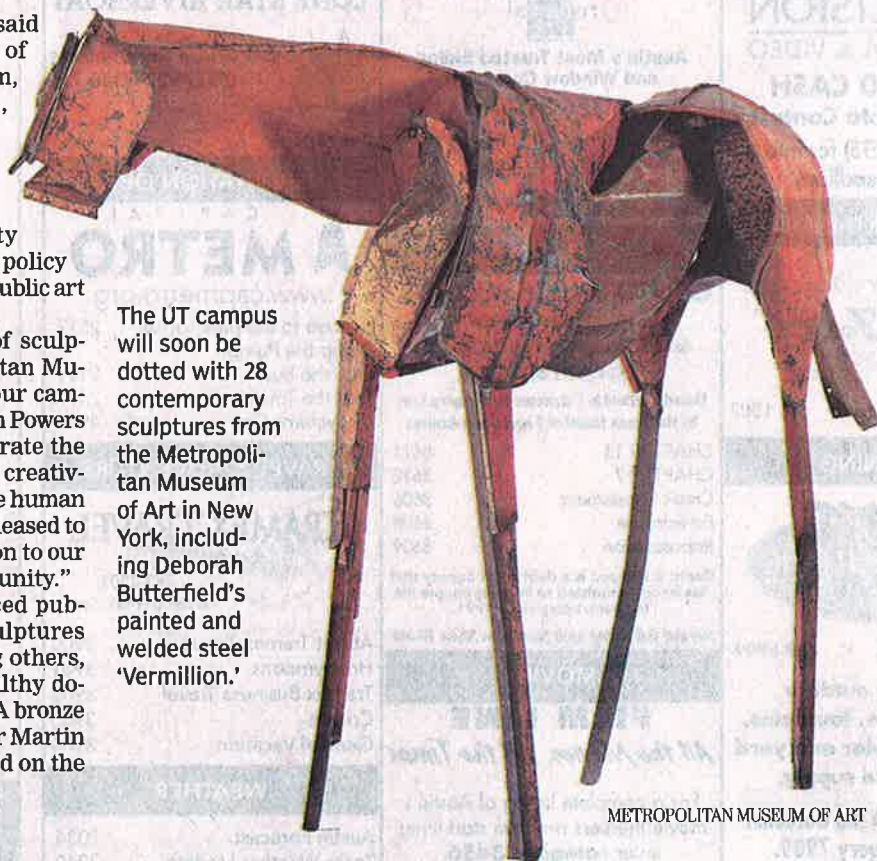
campus's public spaces, said Andrée Bober, director of the UT public art program, known as Landmarks, which will include educational opportunities for students.

"For the first time in its history, the university adopted a comprehensive policy with ongoing support for public art acquisitions," Bober said.

"This important loan of sculptures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art will enrich our campus," UT President William Powers Jr. said. "It will demonstrate the value we place on art and creativity as manifestations of the human spirit. We are extremely pleased to bring this superb collection to our university and our community."

The university has faced public criticism because sculptures on campus honor, among others, Confederate leaders, wealthy donors and a football coach. A bronze statue of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was placed on the

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The UT campus will soon be dotted with 28 contemporary sculptures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, including Deborah Butterfield's painted and welded steel 'Vermillion.'

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

ART: Museum waiving fee for long-term loan

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East Mall in 1999. Last fall, a bronze likeness of labor activist César Chávez was unveiled on the West Mall, and a sculpture Barbara Jordan, the first African American from Texas to serve in the U.S. House, is set for unveiling in 2009.

The Chávez and Jordan sculptures were student initiatives.

The Metropolitan Museum is waiving its fee for the long-term loan. UT is covering shipping and installation costs. UT officials would not reveal the shipping costs. A spokesperson for the Metropolitan Museum said it does not reveal information on loan costs.

Most of the large-scale pieces headed to UT have been in

storage at the Metropolitan Museum and not on permanent exhibit.

Long-term loans of works from the Metropolitan Museum's storage are at other institutions, including Emory University in Atlanta.

The art will be installed in two stages, with 17 sculptures headed to outdoor public spaces and inside several campus buildings beginning next week. The first installation will be unveiled Sept. 12.

When the Bass Concert Hall opens in January after undergoing renovations, 11 sculptures will be exhibited in its lobbies.

A free audio tour podcast on the sculptures will be available for campus visitors.

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Arts writer Jeanne Claire van Ryzin follows the local arts scene in her Austin Arts: Seeing Things blog.