

THE MENIL COLLECTION PRESENTS *RONI HORN: WHEN I BREATHE, I DRAW*
AT MENIL DRAWING INSTITUTE

Two-part Exhibition is the First Museum Presentation of Horn's Drawings
in the United States



HOUSTON, TEXAS, January 24, 2019 – The Menil Collection proudly presents *Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw*, opening to the public at the Menil Drawing Institute with a preview reception on Thursday, February 14, 2019 at 7 p.m. This is the first museum exhibition devoted to Horn's drawings in the United States and the second exhibition held in the Menil Drawing Institute since the new building opened to critically-acclaimed reviews last fall. The exhibition is curated by Michelle White, Senior Curator.

For over thirty years, drawing has been fundamental to the practice of contemporary American artist Roni Horn (b. 1955), whose work revolves around the mutability of identity and the fragility of place, time, and language. *Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw*, an exhibition in two parts, presents a selected survey of the artist's drawings from the early 1980s to her most recent work on paper. The exhibition explores Horn's unique technical approach of mark-making with dense hues of pure pigment and dynamic process of cutting and reassembling images and language.

The exhibition's title, *When I Breathe, I Draw*, evokes the integral place of drawing within Horn's artistic practice. It is derived from the artist's understanding that drawing is akin to "a kind of breathing activity on a daily level."

The first part of the exhibition, on view through May 5, will feature Horn's encompassing drawings, some over ten feet tall. Undulating ribbons and strips and splinters of saturated, rich, intense color swell, swirl, crystallize, and dissipate within the frame. The dynamic pigment forms are matched by the artist's intricate passages of jotted notes in graphite. Marking time and consciousness, the personal notations maintain the intimacy of a whisper, pushing and pulling the viewer into and out of the large work.



Part two brings a selection of saturated cadmium red pigment drawings, and an extensive group of cut photography, text, and maps, series of drawing that exemplify Horn's innovative technique of cutting as a way of

drawing. In these works, the artist dismantles and reassembles accumulations of sliced and fragmented passages from well-known texts by Gertrude Stein and William Shakespeare.

Said Senior Curator Michelle White, "For Roni Horn, drawing is not static. It is a process: a way of thinking, a way of being, and a way of remembering her experience of place in and through the world. Her approach to the discipline is an allegory of discovery and invention. It is intuitive, improvisational, intimate, and so fundamental and necessary to her that she compares it to the life-sustaining act of breathing."

Wits' End Sampler, 2018

As a prelude to the exhibition and in connection with the building's opening this past November, Roni Horn was invited to install her recent wall drawing, *Wits' End Sampler, 2018*, in the central gathering space of the Menil Drawing Institute. The work consists of hundreds of hand-written idioms and clichés that the artist has collected over the years. "Elvis has left the building," "it takes two to tango," and "happy as a clam" are among the arcane and familiar phrases she has composed and silkscreened onto a thirty-foot wall in the naturally lit space.

Said Rebecca Rabinow, Director of the Menil Collection, "I am delighted that visitors have already had an opportunity to interact with Horn's work in the Menil Drawing Institute via 'Wits' End Sampler.' Challenging viewers' perceptions of the definition of drawing, it is the first in a series of wall drawings installed prominently in the new building. These humorous and idiosyncratic idioms and clichés are a reminder that at a fundamental level, drawing consists of highly personal autographic marks"

About the Artist

Roni Horn (b. 1955) lives and works in New York and Reykjavik, Iceland. Her work has been the subject of numerous major exhibitions, including *Roni Horn* at the Foundation Beyeler, Basel (2016); *Roni Horn a.k.a. Roni Horn*, co-organized by Tate Modern, London, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and which also traveled to the Collection Lambert, Avignon, France, and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2009-10). Horn received her MFA from Yale University in 1978 and her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1975. In addition to the Menil, her work is held in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Kunstmuseum Basel; and Tate Modern, London.

Exhibition Support

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by The National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support comes from Suzanne Deal Booth; Clare Casademont and Michael Metz; Barbara and Michael Gamson; Diane and Michael Cannon; Christina and Norman Diekman; Gary Mercer; Ellen and Steve Susman; the Mathew and Ann Wolf Drawings Exhibition Fund; Eddie and Chinhui Allen; Janet and Paul Hobby; Caroline Huber; the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation; Linda and George Kelly; Adelaide de Menil; Franci Neely; Susanne and William E. Pritchard III; Leslie and Shannon Sasser; Anne Schlumberger; Michael Zilkha; and the City of Houston.

Major funding for the exhibition publication is provided by Hauser & Wirth.

Public Opening

Members of the public are invited to an opening preview reception of *Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw* on Thursday, February 14, 2019 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Menil Drawing Institute located at 1412 West Main Street in Houston.

About the Menil Collection

Houston philanthropists and art patrons John and Dominique de Menil established the Menil Foundation in 1954 to foster greater public understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, culture, religion, and philosophy. In 1987, the Menil Collection's main building opened to the public. Today, some thirty years later, the Menil Collection consists of a group of five art buildings and green spaces located within a residential neighborhood. The Menil embodies the ideals and values of its founders, in particular, that art is vital to human life and should be readily accessible to all persons.

A program of the Menil Collection since 2008, the Menil Drawing Institute has organized major traveling exhibitions and undertaken scholarly projects including the catalogue raisonné of the drawings of Jasper Johns. The Menil Drawing Institute's home, designed by the Los Angeles-based firm of Johnston Marklee with the collaboration of landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, opened this past November.

All Menil art spaces are open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission to the Menil is always free.

On view at the Menil

The Condition of Being Here: Drawings by Jasper Johns – On view through January 27, 2019

Contemporary Focus: Trenton Doyle Hancock – Opening January 25, 2019

Collection Close-Up: John Cage – Opening February 1, 2019

Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw – Opening February 15, 2019

Collection Close-Up: Dorothea Tanning – Opening June 28, 2019

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Images

Roni Horn, *If 2*, 2011. Pigment, varnish, colored pencil, and graphite pencil on paper. Sheet: 101 9/16 x 101 15/16 in. (258 x 259 cm). Frame: 103 1/4 x 106 x 3 1/2 in. (262.3 x 269.2 x 8.9 cm). La Colección Jumex, Mexico. © Roni Horn

Roni Horn, *The Dog's Chorus. Let Slip to the Ends of the Earth*, 2016. Watercolor, pen and ink, gum arabicon paper with tape. Sheet (Left drawing): 26 3/4 x 21 in. (67.9 x 53.3 cm). Frame (Left drawing): 29 7/8 x 23 3/4 x 1 5/8 in. (75.9 x 60.3 x 4.1 cm). Sheet (Center drawing): 29 1/2 x 20 in. (74.9 x 50.8 cm). Frame (Center drawing): 32 5/8 x 23 1/8 x 1 5/8 in. (82.9 x 58.7 x 4.1 cm). Sheet (Right drawing): 29 3/4 x 19 in. (75.6 x 48.3 cm). Frame (Right drawing): 33 x 22 1/8 x 1 5/8 in. (83.8 x 56.2 x 4.1 cm). Installed (All 3 individually framed on wall together): 32 13/16 x 65 1/2 in. (83.3 x 166.4 cm). Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Roni Horn

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