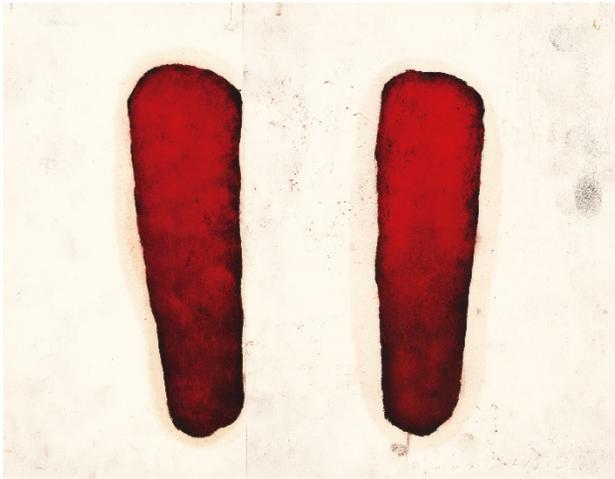


# THE MENIL COLLECTION

## THE MENIL COLLECTION ANNOUNCES AUTUMN 2017 CELEBRATIONS OF ITS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, INCLUDING INAUGURAL YEAR EXHIBITIONS IN THE NEW MENIL DRAWING INSTITUTE

**Fundraising Campaign Surpasses \$105 Million Mark, as Unprecedented Menil Drawing  
Institute Building by Johnston Marklee Rises on an Evolving Menil Campus**

**Anniversary Events to Include a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition  
Spotlighting 30 Significant Works in the Collection and a Celebratory Gala**



**HOUSTON, TX, March 23, 2017** — Rebecca Rabinow, Director of the Menil Collection, today announced plans for the institution's 30th anniversary celebrations in autumn 2017, featuring exhibitions, programs, and events for Houston and the international art community. Highlights include:

- an ambitious schedule of inaugural exhibitions of contemporary American artists in the new Menil Drawing Institute, the first freestanding facility built expressly for the exhibition, study, conservation, and storage of modern and contemporary drawings;
- a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary installation, highlighting 30 significant works from the collection installed in art spaces on the Menil campus;
- and the opening on October 13, 2017 of *Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma*, the artist's first major exhibition in the United States in more than twenty years.

The 30,000-square-foot, \$40 million Menil Drawing Institute is the fifth art building on the Menil's 30-acre campus. The celebrated main museum building by Renzo Piano opened in 1987. The Menil Drawing Institute, designed by the Los Angeles firm of Johnston Marklee with the collaboration of landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, will include the following inaugural year exhibitions:

- a career-spanning survey of the drawings of Jasper Johns, selected from major gifts of art to the Menil from the late David Whitney and trustees Louisa Stude Sarofim and Janie C. Lee, along with loans from the artist (October 7 – December 31, 2017);
- an exploration of the role of drawing over the course of Brice Marden's career, including works created specifically for the exhibition (January 12 – April 8, 2018);
- and a two-part presentation of drawings by Roni Horn—the first American museum exhibition to be devoted to this aspect of her practice—featuring some of her most recent works (April 27 – October 28, 2018).

Rabinow announced that *The Campaign for the Menil*, inaugurated in 2012 on the occasion of the institution's 25th anniversary, has now passed the \$105 million mark toward its goal of \$115 million. The first comprehensive fundraising initiative in the museum's history, the campaign supports the realization of a master plan for the Menil's campus in the heart of Houston, including construction of the Menil Drawing Institute and new public amenities, expansion and enhancement of green spaces, and significant growth in the endowment, with the intention that admission to the Menil Collection always remain free.

Other major events during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year will include:

- community festivities on June 3, 2017, commemorating Dominique de Menil's inauguration of the Renzo Piano building;
- a major exhibition in the main museum building of the work of Mona Hatoum (October 13, 2017 - February 25, 2018);
- and a fundraising gala on Saturday, December 2, 2017, only the fourth to be held in the Menil's history.

"We hope to make the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Menil Collection both a reaffirmation and a revelation," Rebecca Rabinow said. "We deeply value the profound artistic and social ideals that inspired Dominique and John de Menil to found this institution as a place where everyone is free to experience the power of art directly and intimately, as part of the daily life of a residential neighborhood. The exhibitions planned for the extraordinary new Menil Drawing Institute, the expanded landscape, our major Mona Hatoum exhibition, and a full schedule of public programming will open up the Menil Collection as never before. We invite everyone to join us."

### **Advance Initiatives**

As a preamble to the inauguration of the Menil Drawing Institute on October 7, the Menil Collection is currently presenting *The Beginning of Everything: Drawings from the Janie C. Lee, Louisa Stude Sarofim, and David Whitney Collections* in the main museum building (through June 18, 2017). The exhibition of almost one hundred master drawings, by artists ranging from Cézanne and Edgar Degas to Rachel Whiteread and Bruce Nauman, is a selection of the gifts of art promised to the Menil by Trustees Janie C. Lee and Louisa Stude Sarofim and bequeathed in 2005 by David Whitney.

### **Inaugural Year Exhibitions in the Menil Drawing Institute**

Acknowledging the primary place of drawing in creative life, the Menil Collection established the Menil Drawing Institute as a program in 2008. Since then, the Menil Drawing Institute has organized major traveling exhibitions and undertaken scholarly projects, including the preparation of the catalogue raisonné of Jasper Johns drawings.

To inaugurate the Menil Drawing Institute building, the Menil will present *The Condition of Being Here: Drawings by Jasper Johns*. With the 15 Johns drawings promised by Janie C. Lee and Louisa Stude Sarofim and the 17 drawings received in the bequest from David Whitney, the

Menil is now one of the world's largest repositories of drawings by Johns and a primary institution for viewing and studying the artist's practice. On view exclusively at the Menil, the exhibition is organized thematically, tracing the artist's recurrent use of motifs such as the target and the flag over six decades.

The presentation of *The Condition of Being Here: Drawings by Jasper Johns* will precede the Menil's anticipated publication in 2018 of the *Jasper Johns Catalogue Raisonné of Drawings*, whose multiple volumes will document more than 800 works, including their exhibition and publication histories.

*Think of Them as Spaces: Brice Marden's Drawings* will include the artist's highly finished graphite-and-wax studies for his four-panel painting *The Seasons* (1974)—a decisive project in Marden's artistic development, conceived in response to the Rothko Chapel and now in the collection of the Menil. Another distinct body of drawings is his *Post and Lintel* series from the late 1970s, inspired by his time on the Greek island of Hydra. Marden recently completed ten of these starkly geometric black-and-white drawings for the Menil Drawing Institute exhibition. Some 35 *Cold Mountain* studies date from 1988 through 1991 and are inspired by Chinese calligraphy and the writings of the ninth-century poet Han Shan. Finally are drawings made in the last few years. The three interrelated sequences carry forward the calligraphic imagery of *Cold Mountain* and also look back on *The Seasons*. *Think of Them as Spaces* honors Brice Marden's conviction that "each work of art is part of a continuing quest."

*Roni Horn: When I Breathe, I Draw* will be exhibited in two parts over the course of six months. The first part will showcase Horn's large, complex pigment drawings from her recent series *Through* (2007-08), *Else* (2009-10), *If* (2011-12), *Put* (2012-13), and *Or* (2014). The second part will include two recent series, *The Rose Prblm* (2015-16) and *The Dog's Chorus – Let Slip A Dead Certainty* (2016), which recompose, interrupt, and reinvent well-known phrases by Gertrude Stein and William Shakespeare: "rose is a rose is a rose is a rose" and "Let slip the dogs of war." This is the first time that a U.S. museum has dedicated an exhibition exclusively to the fundamental role of drawing in Horn's practice. Her unique technique of cutting, marking, and reassembling yields art works that hint at the intimacy of the artist's studio as well as the malleability of language.

### **A Schedule of 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events for Houston and the Entire Menil Community**

To celebrate its first 30 years, the Menil will spotlight 30 works from the permanent collection, each chosen to represent the museum's origins, activities, and evolution. Distributed throughout the permanent collection galleries and the campus, each of the featured paintings, sculptures, and drawings will have a special label that highlights an aspect of the Menil's history, whether it be an event, an inspiration, or a key individual. The accompanying gallery guide will provide information on the works—ranging from Native objects from the Pacific Northwest and Africa to Byzantine icons, Surrealism, postwar art from the United States and Europe, and contemporary art—and shed light on three decades of Menil history. This 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary feature will be on view from August 11, 2017 through January 28, 2018.

On Saturday, June 3, the Menil Collection will invite the community to a birthday celebration held on its lawn and in the main building. Free events for the public will include music, dance, and spoken word performances. The Menil will offer refreshments and hire food trucks to line an adjacent street of the campus.

On Saturday, December 2—the eve of the final full moon before the winter solstice—the Menil will host *Luminous: The Menil Collection's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball*, honoring Chair and Life Trustee Louisa Stude Sarofim. Menil friends and supporters will gather under a bright night sky to honor the enduring legacy of the museum and celebrate its radiant future. Staged in a tent on the Menil's lawn, the event will take its visual theme from Surrealist artist Max Ernst's small moonlit scene, *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year* (1955), a gift from the artist to Dominique and John de Menil.

### **Menil Drawing Institute Architecture: An Unprecedented Home for Drawing**

Designed to give a new public prominence to the medium of drawing, which in the hands of modern and contemporary artists has gone beyond its traditional function of study and preparation, and to accommodate the special needs of the largest and fastest-growing body of work in the Menil's holdings, the Menil Drawing Institute is centrally sited within the Menil campus. Located south of the main museum and the Cy Twombly Gallery, and north of the Dan Flavin Installation, the Menil Drawing Institute will become an important part of the Menil's neighborhood of art buildings, surrounded by green spaces and placed at the center of new pedestrian paths.

Constructed on a footprint of 17,000 square feet and rising to a height of 16 feet, the Menil Drawing Institute is midway in size between the mostly residential bungalows that encircle the Menil campus and the more substantial architecture of the main museum building.

The design by Johnston Marklee shields sensitive works on paper from natural light, yet at the same time, fills the common areas of the building with carefully modulated sunshine. Two square, open-roofed, landscaped courtyards serve as entrances—one at the west end of the building, one at the east—while a third such courtyard creates a 'scholars' cloister' on the building's north side. A large space referred to as the 'living room' functions as both a circulation spine and a gathering place and runs between the east and west courtyards. On its south side, the space opens into exhibition galleries. On the north, the living room gives access to administrative offices on one side of the scholars' cloister and to study rooms and the conservation lab on the other.

As visitors approach the Menil Drawing Institute, the sharp Texas sunlight is gradually reduced, first by the canopy of trees and then by the roof. By the time visitors are inside, the intensity of the light has been incrementally and greatly diminished, even as the courtyard windows enable a sense of connection to the outdoors and allow a modest level of baffled light

to spill into the building. When visitors pass from the living room into the interior spaces, this mild wash of sunlight fades away.

In keeping with the fluidity of use and atmosphere throughout the building, a custom collection of benches, tables, ottomans, and desk accessories have been designed by Johnston Marklee in collaboration with Jeff Jamieson, founder of Wood & Plywood Furniture of San Luis Obispo, California, where they are being fabricated. Each piece of furniture is inspired by the elemental, structural forms of the Menil Drawing Institute building. Triangular planes and beams form the legs of each bench and table, which are topped by solid oak boards, finished with a custom, hand-applied 5-coat oil-based varnish. The 4'x10' long tables in the living room recall great library tables, and together form a flexible arrangement for quiet reading, small meetings, staff work space, and book display. In the corner of the annex off the living room, surrounded by a soaring glass enclosure, an ottoman, echoing the proportions and form of the original Charles James-designed ottoman from the de Menils's personal residence, will offer a view of the landscape outside. Natural wool upholstered cushions, with seams that subtly echo the structure of each bench are used within the building.

In addition to the Menil Drawing Institute, Johnston Marklee has also designed the nearby Energy House, which provides a new central source of heating and cooling for the Menil's campus. A new public green space designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates is located between the Energy House and Menil Drawing Institute. The firm also designed the landscape of the Menil Drawing Institute courtyards and a new entry sequence to the Menil Campus.

The construction of the Menil Drawing Institute has entered its final stages, with key milestones in April and May to complete the exterior installation of the steel canopies in the east and west courtyard, and finalize the installation of the Port Orford cedar cladding of the building. Fabricated of solid ½" plate steel, each length of the canopy roof, measuring 12 feet wide and 60 feet long will be craned into place and secured to the building and the solid steel plate walls that will enclose the courtyards. After the canopies are in place, white oak trees will be planted in the courtyards.

Finish work continues on the interior of the building which will be completed a few months after the exterior. As the drywall and painting progress, the crisp forms of the interior take shape, reflecting and baffling light throughout the building. Bright, even light in the conservation laboratory to the north transitions to filtered light in the drawing room, and finally to the raking light from vertical openings to the east, west, and south of the exhibition galleries. The final materials to be installed will be the wide European white oak floor boards.

### **About the Menil Collection**

The Menil Collection presents regular rotations of artworks from its growing permanent collection, organizes special exhibitions and public programs throughout the year, publishes scholarly books, and conducts research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11am to 7pm, and charges no admission fee.

*Image: Roni Horn, Brooklyn Red, 1985. Powdered pigment, graphite, charcoal, colored pencil, and varnish on paper, 12.75" x 14.25". Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Roni Horn. Photo: Thomas Mueller.*

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