

## THE MENIL COLLECTION NAMES CUAUHTEMOC MEDINA RECIPIENT OF THE 2012 WALTER HOPPS AWARD FOR CURATORIAL ACHIEVEMENT



**HOUSTON, November 8, 2012** — Josef Helfenstein, Director of the Menil Collection, today announced that independent curator Cuauhtémoc Medina has been chosen as the sixth recipient of the biennial Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. Established in 2001 in honor of Menil Founding Director Walter Hopps (1932–2005), the award recognizes curators in early to mid-career who have made significant contributions to the field of contemporary art and confers a stipend of \$15,000.

Widely acknowledged as one of the key figures in the rise to international prominence of contemporary art from Mexico City, Medina has organized both large survey exhibitions and projects developed with individual artists and was most recently Head Curator of the *Manifesta 9* Biennial in Belgium (2012). In conjunction with his receipt of the Walter Hopps Award, he will deliver a public lecture at the Menil Collection.

Selecting Medina was a distinguished panel of three arts professionals, assembled by Mr. Helfenstein and Menil Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Toby Kamps: Russell Ferguson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Art at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Adjunct Curator at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Elisabeth Sussman, Curator and Sondra Gilman Curator of Photography at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Ulrich Loock, a Berlin-based independent curator and professor of art history and former Deputy Director of Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal.

Speaking for the panel, Toby Kamps stated “As both a curator and a very active writer, Cuauhtémoc Medina has done important, influential work that has been informed both by theoretical concerns and by a committed engagement with social issues and everyday life. We recognize in him the qualities that distinguished Walter Hopps and are delighted to present him with this award.”

Josef Helfenstein stated, “Whether working in an institutional setting, as he did with notable success at Tate Modern, or collaborating with artists with whom he has developed longstanding relationships, such as Francis Alÿs, Cuauhtémoc Medina has consistently and innovatively advanced our understanding of a broad spectrum of contemporary art. On behalf of all of us at the Menil Collection, I congratulate him on this richly deserved award.”

Previous recipients of the Walter Hopps Award, and their current affiliations, are Adam Szymczyk (director and chief curator of Kunsthalle Basel), Maria Lind (director of the Tensta Konsthall), Eungie Joo (director of art and cultural programs at Instituto Inhotim), Hamza Walker (director of education and associate curator of the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago), and Roger M. Buergel (an independent curator who most recently was artistic director of the Busan Biennale 2012).

Art critic, curator, and historian, Cuauhtémoc Medina has been a full-time researcher since 1992 at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Between 2002 and 2008 he was the first Associate Curator of Art, Latin American Collections, at Tate Modern in London. He has written extensively on contemporary art and since 2000 has maintained a column of art criticism, titled *El Ojo Breve*, for the *Reforma* newspaper in Mexico City. Among the projects he has organized are *When Faith Moves Mountains* (Lima, Peru, 2001) by Francis Alÿs; *20 million Mexicans can't be wrong* (South London Gallery, 2002); *The Age of Discrepancies: Art and Visual Culture in Mexico 1968–1997* (in collaboration with Olivier Debrouse, Pilar García and Alvaro Vazquez, 2007-2008); Teresa Margolles's project for the Mexican Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2009; *What Else Could We Talk About?* and *The Red Specter: Critical Fetishes, Residues of the General Economy* at C2M in Madrid (in collaboration with Mariana Botey and Helena Chavez, 2010-2011); and the year-long exhibition *Cannibal Dominoes* at the Contemporary Art Project (PAC) in Murcia, Spain (2010). In 2012, Medina was Head Curator of the *Manifesta 9* Biennial in Genk, Belgium, titled *The Deep of the Modern*, in association with Katerina Gregos and Dawn Ades. He holds a Ph.D. in History and Theory of Art from the University of Essex in Britain and a BA in History from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Walter Hopps (1932–2005), began his career in Los Angeles, where in 1957 he co-founded the Ferus Gallery and was instrumental in bringing the first postwar generation of the city's artists to international prominence. Among the seminal exhibitions he organized as curator and director of the Pasadena Art Museum were the first retrospectives of Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Cornell; he also mounted the first exhibition devoted to Pop Art, 1962's *New Painting of Common Objects*. Over the years, as director of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Menil Collection in Houston, and as commissioner and curator of the São Paulo Biennial and Venice Biennale, Hopps presented work by artists including Barnett Newman, Frank Stella, Robert Irwin, James Rosenquist, and Diane Arbus. In 1997 Hopps organized a Robert Rauschenberg retrospective for the Menil Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (where he held the title of adjunct senior curator of twentieth-century art).

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