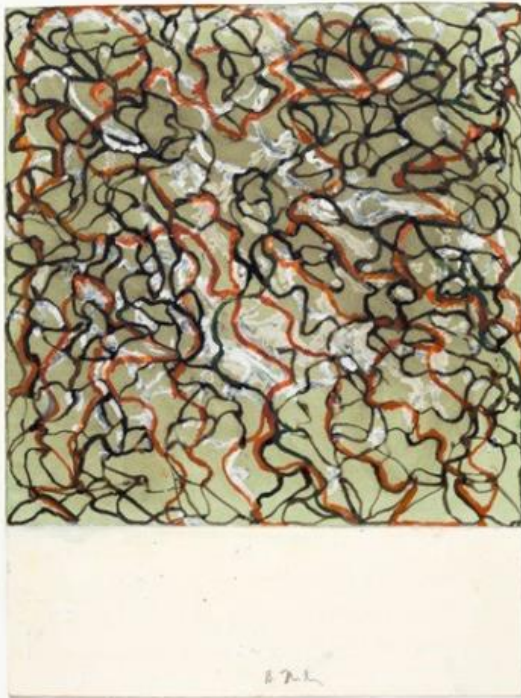


THE MENIL COLLECTION PRESENTS
THINK OF THEM AS SPACES: BRICE MARDEN'S DRAWINGS,
OPENING TO THE PUBLIC FEBRUARY 21 AT THE MENIL DRAWING INSTITUTE

Exhibition spans the distinguished artist's ongoing career,
with 91 drawings, including six distinct series

Marden to speak at the Menil on Friday, February 21 at 7 p.m.



HOUSTON, TEXAS, February 14, 2020 – The Menil Collection is pleased to present ***Think of Them as Spaces: Brice Marden's Drawings***, an exploration of the artist's draftsmanship and the catalytic role that drawing plays in his practice. On view to the public in the Menil Drawing Institute from February 21 through June 14, 2020, the exhibition presents 91 of the artist's drawings, representing six distinct series that span his ongoing career.

In a statement he wrote in 1979, Marden asked that his drawings be thought of “as spaces.” This comment suggests that, for him, drawing is a medium that exists in more than two dimensions and can reflect the spirit and experience of a place. ***Think of Them as Spaces*** reveals how over the course of more than forty years, Marden's drawings have explored how landscape, architecture, and objects found in nature may shape one's way of understanding the world.

Rebecca Rabinow, Director of the Menil Collection, said, “Brice Marden's trip to Houston in 1974 included a visit to the recently constructed Rothko Chapel and led to John and Dominique de Menil's commission of a four-panel painting, *The Seasons*, which augured the introduction of atmospheric color into his art. Now, more than forty years later, we are honored to welcome Brice Marden back to Texas with a marvelous exhibition that highlights the essence of his drawings.”

Said Menil Drawing Institute Associate Curator Kelly Montana, “Brice Marden's long relationship with Houston makes the Menil Drawing Institute an especially meaningful place to look back on this artist's work and see the processes of invention and permutation as he thinks on paper. The inspirations for these masterwork drawings may vary—from the lines and indentations on seashells, to the architecture of ancient Greece, to classical Chinese poetry and calligraphy—but they are infused with Marden's searching, improvisational spirit, combined with his profound feeling for proportion, ratio, and balance.”

The six series represented in ***Think of Them as Spaces*** are *Mirabelle Addenda*, 1979; *Post and Lintel*, 1984/2019; *Shell Drawings*, 1985–87; *Cold Mountain Studies*, 1988–91; *Twelve Letters from Borobudur*, 2010; and *15 x 15*, 2015–17 augmented by selections from *The Seasons* and *River Study*. By bringing them together, the Menil Drawing Institute shows how themes and concerns have reverberated through his art and evolved across the decades. Both the saturated monochrome of *The Seasons* and the calligraphic rhythms of the *Cold Mountain Studies*—two watershed works—have recurred elsewhere over the years. Similarly, the heavily worked, opaque surface of wax and graphite in the *Post and Lintel* series looks back to qualities that first brought Marden to prominence in the 1960s and that continued in *Post and Lintel* drawings completed as recently as 2019.

Think of Them as Spaces is organized by Kelly Montana, Assistant Curator, the Menil Drawing Institute. The exhibition is accompanied by a 128-page catalogue with 120 color illustrations and an essay by Kelly Montana and an interview with the artist by Josef Helfenstein, director of the Kunstmuseum Basel.

About the Artist

Brice Marden was born in Bronxville, New York, in 1938. Gaining distinction in the late 1960s, Marden's work continues to chart a course involving systematic investigations of color, abstract and intuitive gestures, and the studied imprecision of calligraphic line. The subject of numerous exhibitions around the world, Marden has had three important shows in Houston: *Brice Marden: Drawings, 1963–73* at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in 1974; *Marden, Novros, Rothko: Painting in the Age of Actuality* at the Rice Institute for the Arts in 1975; and *Brice Marden: Cold Mountain* at the Menil Collection in 1992–93.

Major funding for this exhibition is provided by Janie C. Lee; and Schlumberger. Additional support comes from Angela and William Cannady, Diane and Michael Cannon; Julie and John Cogan, Jr.; Carol and David Neuberger; Mathew and Ann Wolf Drawings Exhibition Fund; Eddie and Chinhui Allen; Clare Casademont and Michael Metz; Barbara and Michael Gamson; Diana and Russell Hawkins; Janet and Paul Hobby; Linda and George Kelly; Susan and Francois de Menil; Susanne and William E. Pritchard III; Leslie and Shannon Sasser; James William Stewart, Jr.; Taub Foundation/Marcy Taub Wessel; Michael Zilkha; and the City of Houston.

Public Programs

Public Opening Reception

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.

Artist Talk

Brice Marden in Conversation with Assistant Curator Kelly Montana

Friday, February 21, 7:00 p.m.

Musical Performance

Stop, Look, and Listen!

Da Camera Young Artists Reflect on the Exhibition

Saturday, February 22, 3:00 p.m.

Lecture

Lilly Wei

Romancing the Line: The Drawings of Brice Marden

Wednesday, April 1, 7:00 p.m.

Curator Talk

Assistant Curator Kelly Montana on Brice Marden's *Cold Mountain Studies*

Sunday, June 14, 3:00 p.m.

All programs are free and open to the public. For additional information and programs, visit menil.org.

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, thirty-three years later, the Menil Collection consists of a group of five art buildings and greenspaces 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. For this reason, access to the museum galleries and grounds is always free.

On view at the Menil

Collection Close-Up: Of Heaven and Earth – on view through March 15, 2020

Wall Drawing Series: Jorinde Voigt – on view through summer 2020

Photography and the Surreal Imagination – on view through June 14, 2020

Si Lewen: The Parade – opening April 24, 2020

Allora & Calzadilla: Specters of Noon – opening May 15, 2020

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Image: Brice Marden, *15 x 15 10*, 2015–17. Ink and colored ink on paper, 20 x 15 in. (50.8 x 38.1 cm). Collection of the artist. © Brice Marden / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Bill Jacobson

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