

THE MENIL COLLECTION TO MARK ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH “A CELEBRATION IN BLUE” ON NOVEMBER 30

Honorary Chairs of the Event—Only the 3rd in the Museum’s History—Include François Delattre, Ambassador of France to the United States; Paal Kibsgaard, CEO of Schlumberger; Almine and Bernard Picasso; and Jasper Johns

Special Public Programs to Feature Composer Philip Glass and Author Calvin Tomkins

Gala Evening Launches Weekend of Special Events at the Menil

Houston, April 19, 2012 – It was the year Andy Warhol died and *Nixon in China* premiered. Josef Brodsky received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Bernardo Bertolucci took home the Best Picture Oscar for *The Last Emperor*. In the theatre, August Wilson triumphed with *Fences*; on the runway, Marc Jacobs astonished with his first line of designs.

And, in Houston, the Menil Collection opened its doors to the world.

On June 4, 1987, Dominique de Menil – flanked by her joyous family, architect Renzo Piano, and Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire – cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of the Menil Collection and announced, “Houston, this is your museum.” With that, the magnificent art collection that she and her husband John had assembled over many decades became the public’s. Forever free of admission charge, the masterpiece building stands as Renzo Piano’s first in the United States.

Twenty-five years later, the Menil is cherished as a unique local treasure and a national and international destination. “There is nothing like this museum anywhere in America,” as essayist Phillip Lopate wrote in the *New York Times Magazine*. Now, to celebrate its first quarter-century, the Menil will mark the weekend of November 30, 2012, with a benefit gala – only the third in the museum’s history – chaired by Franci Crane, Sara Dodd-Spickelmier, Isabel Lummis, Susan de Menil, and Karen Pinson.

A great tent on the museum’s front lawn will be the setting for “A Celebration in Blue,” with décor evoking the vibrant color that famously suffuses the paintings of the late Yves Klein, a fellow Frenchman and longtime friend of the de Menil family. Several of Klein’s paintings will be on view in the museum at the time of the gala. Cocktails, dinner, and a silent auction featuring

works by artists represented in the Menil will be followed by dancing to the music of Party on the Moon.

“This November evening will honor the legacy of this institution and lead toward its great future,” said Menil Director Josef Helfenstein. “It will be a moment of celebration for all who hold the Menil dear.”

The Friday fête will mark the beginning of a weekend filled with exciting public programs and special guests, including composer Philip Glass and renowned *New Yorker* art critic Calvin Tomkins. Throughout the 25th anniversary year, the Menil will be offering the public a rich schedule of exhibitions, events, programs, and publications.

Proceeds from the gala will help the Menil maintain the distinctive experience for which it is admired around the world – a direct encounter between the visitor and the creative spirit of the great modern and contemporary artists and their forebears – offered free of charge at all times. Proceeds will also assist the Menil in realizing its long-range plan to improve and enhance its serene urban campus by adding more green space; amenities for the public; single-artist concentrations of art; and the Menil Drawing Institute, the first museum building in America dedicated to the collection, exhibition, preservation and study of modern and contemporary drawings.

**For further information and images,
please contact press@menil.org or visit www.menil.org**

**The Menil Collection, located within Houston’s Museum District,
is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Admission and parking are always free.
1533 Sul Ross St. Houston, TX 77006
713-525-9400**