

THE MENIL COLLECTION

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News

UNTITLED (STRUCTURES): LESLIE HEWITT IN COLLABORATION WITH BRADFORD YOUNG

A new film installation inspired by Civil Rights-era photographs in the Menil Collection

On view at the Menil January 26 – May 5, 2013

Preview events Friday, January 25th:

**6:00 p.m. – Curator Michelle White in conversation with Leslie Hewitt & Bradford Young
7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Exhibition preview**



HOUSTON, TX, January 3, 2013 — ***Untitled (Structures): Leslie Hewitt in Collaboration with Bradford Young*** is a meditation on the distance in time that separates us from, while still connecting us to, the Civil Rights era. The Menil Collection has commissioned this film installation in partnership with the Des Moines Art Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Untitled (Structures): Leslie Hewitt in Collaboration with Bradford Young will be on view at the Menil from January 26 through May 5, 2013.

According to Menil Curator Michelle White, Leslie Hewitt drew inspiration for the work from the museum's holdings of Civil Rights-era photographs (a gift to the Menil from Adelaide de Menil and the late anthropologist Edmund S. Carpenter). Searing, poignant, and timeless, the photographs – by Bob Adelman, Dan Budnik, Bruce Davidson, Elliott Erwitt, Leonard Freed, Danny Lyon, and Charles Moore – document the long struggle for civil rights and racial equality in the United States. “I am thrilled that we were able to facilitate the creation of a new work based on this important archive of photographs here at the Menil,” stated White. “Their power provides a provocative basis to discuss the contemporary relevance of such events and images from past decades.”

The result of two years of research, ***Untitled (Structures)*** comprises images recorded on 35mm film at locations in Chicago and Memphis as well as various sites in Arkansas. The buildings and spaces chosen for the film (such as Clayborn Temple and the Universal Life Insurance Building in Memphis and the headquarters of Johnson Publishing in Chicago) are associated with the Great Migration and the Civil Rights movement but are often relatively nondescript. The images, assembled without a soundtrack or narrative, are projected side-by-side on two screens in the gallery on a 16-minute loop.

According to Hewitt, both the choice of sites and the pace of the film are meant to slow the viewer's perception of time and encourage reflection on architectural spaces and landscapes where events of the still-recent past risk being forgotten. Said the artist: "We were like urban archaeologists, finding traces of history in the density of contemporary life."

"The co-commissioning and exhibition of ***Untitled (Structures)*** is a natural project for us," stated Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, "given the significance to us of our photographs from the Civil Rights era, which are an irreplaceable record of great social transformations in process. ***Untitled (Structures)*** now makes its own contribution – contemplative and analytic – to this visual tradition."

About the artists

Leslie Hewitt studied at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, the Yale University School of Art, and New York University, where she was a Clark Fellow in the Africana and visual studies programs. She was included in the 2008 Whitney Biennial and received a 2008 Art Matters research grant to the Netherlands. She has had or will have exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Studio Museum in Harlem, Artists Space in New York, Project Row Houses in Houston, and LA><ART in Los Angeles. Hewitt has held residencies at the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and was most recently a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, **Bradford Young** received his Bachelor of Arts and MFA from Howard University. As a documentary cinematographer his credits include, *Eventual Salvation*, directed by Dee Rees, which won the 2007 Sundance Documentary Fund, and the 2007 Tribeca All Access Creative Promise Award. Other documentaries include *Alicia in Africa*, directed by Earle Sebastian and *The Western Front* directed by Zachary Iscol. Young's feature credits include *Black Sheep*, *White Lies*, directed by James Spooner (Afropunk), which made its premiere at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival; and *Mississippi Damned*, directed by Tina Mabry, which made its world premiere at the 2009 Slamdance Film Festival and was developed at Project FIND's directors and producers lab.

Untitled (Structures) was produced by Karin Chien and commissioned by the Menil Collection with the support of Jereann and Holland Chaney, in collaboration with the Des Moines Art Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Additional funding for the project was provided by Joseph Chung, Marilyn and Larry Fields, and Elliot and Kimberly Perry. Material support was provided by Kodak, Panavision, and Harbor Picture Company. The work is presented through the courtesy of the artists and Lucien Terras, Inc.

The exhibition of ***Untitled (Structures)*** at the Menil Collection is generously supported by The John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation, UBS, Jereann and Holland Chaney, and the City of Houston.

PREVIEW EVENTS

Friday, January 25, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. Curator Michelle White will lead a conversation with artists Leslie Hewitt and Bradford Young, followed by the exhibition opening from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Caption: Leslie Hewitt in collaboration with Bradford Young, *Untitled (Structures)*, 2012. Production still. Courtesy of the artists and Lucien Terras, Inc.

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