

**THE MENIL COLLECTION TO PRESENT ANDY WARHOL'S *SUNSET*  
AUGUST 19, 2016 – JANUARY 8, 2017,  
A FILM COMMISSIONED BY JOHN AND DOMINIQUE DE MENIL**



**HOUSTON, TX, July 28, 2016** – Beginning August 19, the Menil Collection will present *Sunset* – a film by Andy Warhol commissioned by John and Dominique de Menil in the mid-1960s for a proposed ecumenical chapel at the 1968 San Antonio World's Fair. The presentation of the film, organized by Curator Michelle White, includes a daily screening in the museum's east temporary gallery at 6pm every

evening the museum is open.

The de Menils asked Warhol to create a work of spiritual significance to be displayed in a contemplative space, a concept similar to what they were establishing for the Rothko Chapel in Houston. In response, Warhol shot a sunset over the Pacific Ocean in California. Recorded on 16mm film, the real-time footage is a slow and colorful shift of atmospheric light at dusk over the course of thirty-three minutes as the sun sinks into the horizon. It is overlaid with the deep voice of singer Nico—then working with the Velvet Underground—reading poetry off screen.

Curator Michelle White said, "In the film, there is such a subtle and poetic shift of saturated colors. The variations of hues operate much like an abstract painting and the film has been compared to the work of Mark Rothko. Meditating on temporal and everyday phenomena, the real-time footage provides such a wonderful opportunity to slow down and experience the magic of the day's end."

The World's Fair chapel project was never realized, and the film remained virtually unknown until it premiered in 2000 as part of The Andy Warhol Film Project, begun in the 1980s to research, catalogue, and preserve the artist's massive and relatively unknown body of work.

In the 1960s, the de Menils formed a deep, personal relationship with Warhol as both an artist and filmmaker. Over their lifetimes, the de Menils collected a number of important works by Warhol. In addition to the film project, the de Menils repeatedly invited him to the University of St. Thomas and later to Rice University. One result of their relationship was the influential exhibition *Raid the Icebox 1* for which the de Menils asked Warhol to choose items from storage at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) museum. The exhibition, presented at both RISD and Rice University, is considered to be one of the first shows featuring “museum intervention” by an artist.

Director of the Menil Collection Rebecca Rabinow said, “*Sunset* is an engaging yet little known example of the de Menils’ interest in the spiritual impact of contemporary art. By commissioning Warhol, an artist better known for his acerbic and dry approach to the world, the de Menils once again proved their acumen as visionary benefactors.”

On select Wednesdays throughout the run of the film, the Menil will host **After Sunset Sessions** – a series of short programs that respond to Warhol’s work. These presentations will include a music set inspired by the Velvet Underground, films from the Menil Archives, a meditation, and a poetry reading. The Menil encourages filmgoers to share photos of sunsets on Instagram and Twitter using #menilsunset.

This exhibition is generously supported by Pelican Builders; Janet and Paul Hobby; Anne and David Kirkland; Harry and Karen Pinson; Susanne and William E. Pritchard III; Mark Wawro and Melanie Gray; Michael Zilkha; and the City of Houston.

### **Public Programs**

#### **After Sunset Sessions**

On select Wednesdays, a series of short presentations will follow the screening of Andy Warhol’s *Sunset* at 6:00 p.m. Seating Limited. All **After Sunset Sessions** are held at the Menil Collection.

- **August 31:** DJ Merseyside presents a music set comprised of and inspired by the Velvet Underground & Nico’s seminal album, produced by Andy Warhol in 1967.
- **September 28:** Peter Lucas, film curator, presents a film from the Menil archives.
- **October 5:** Peter Lucas, film curator, presents a film from the Menil archives.

- **October 26:** Alejandro Chaoul, Assistant Professor and Director of Education for the Integrative Medicine Program at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, leads Tibetan meditations.
- **November 2:** Haley Berkman, curatorial assistant, on John and Dominique de Menil's relationship with Andy Warhol and their commissioning of *Sunset*.
- **November 9:** Joseph Campana, associate professor of English literature, Rice University and poet presents a reading.
- **December 14:** Dr. Tish Stringer, lecturer and Film Manager, Rice University and projectionist for *Sunset* will speak.

### *Shedding Light*

**Co-presented with Aurora Picture Show at 2442 Bartlett Street**

**Wednesday, September 7 at 7:30pm**

Presented in conjunction with the Menil's showings of Andy Warhol's film *Sunset*, this program includes rarely seen historic and contemporary short films that focus on the sun, light, color, reflection, refraction, and horizons. The evening includes François de Menil's *Evening of Light*, featuring Nico and Iggy Pop, John Cage and Richard Lippold's *The Sun*, Kayla Parker's *Sunset Strip*, and others.

### **About the Menil Collection**

A legacy of the philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil, the Menil Collection opened in 1987. The museum presents regular rotations of artworks from its growing permanent collection, organizes special exhibitions and programs throughout the year, publishes scholarly books, and conducts research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The Menil Collection's main museum building, the first building in the United States designed by Renzo Piano, anchors a parklike 30-acre campus, which also includes the Cy Twombly Gallery, a site-specific Dan Flavin installation, the Byzantine Fresco Chapel—now a venue for long-term installations by contemporary artists—and outdoor sculpture. A new building for the Menil Drawing Institute by Johnston Marklee, expected to open in 2017, will be the first freestanding facility in the United States designed expressly for the exhibition and study of modern and contemporary drawings. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11am to 7pm, and charges no admission fee.

### **On View at the Menil Collection**

*Francis Alijs: The Fabiola Project* – On view through January 28, 2018

*As Essential as Dreams* – On view through October 16, 2016

*Picasso The Line* – Opening September 16, 2016

*Holy Barbarians: Beat Culture on the West Coast* – Opening November 18, 2016

*ReCollecting Dogon* – Opening February 3, 2017

### **Find the Menil Online**

[www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org)

[www.facebook.com/menilcollection](https://www.facebook.com/menilcollection)

[www.twitter.com/menilcollection](https://www.twitter.com/menilcollection)

[www.instagram.com/menilcollection](https://www.instagram.com/menilcollection)

[www.youtube.com/themenilcollection](https://www.youtube.com/themenilcollection)

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*Image:* Film still from Andy Warhol, *Sunset*, 1967. 16mm film, color, sound, 33 minutes.  
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