

**THE MENIL COLLECTION RECEIVES NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS GRANT TO SUPPORT
*BARNETT NEWMAN: THE LATE WORK***

FIRST EXHIBITION TO FOCUS ON THE LAST FIVE AND A HALF YEARS OF THE ARTIST'S WORK

Exhibition on view March 27 – August 2, 2015

HOUSTON, TEXAS, December 11, 2014 — The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has announced a grant of \$65,000 through its Art Works funding category to the Menil Collection in support of the special exhibition *Barnett Newman: The Late Work*. Scheduled for presentation exclusively at the Menil from March 27 through August 2, 2015, the exhibition is the first to focus closely on the artist's work during his last five and a half years (1965-70), and is the first exploration of Newman's art to be curated jointly by a curator (Michelle White) and an art conservator (Brad Epley). Their collaborative research sheds new light on Newman's methods and concerns, as revealed in some 21 paintings (including three unfinished paintings that have never before been publicly displayed) and two sculptures. A related scholarly symposium, co-organized by the University of Texas, Austin with Newman scholar Richard Shiff, and exhibition catalogue will help inaugurate a significant new phase of international scholarship on Newman's body of work.

The NEA's Art Works grants support the creation of art that meets the highest standard of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of community through the arts. The Menil is one of 62 museums throughout the United States to receive grants for projects in this cycle of the Art Works program. Of these, only four museums were funded at a higher level than the Menil.

Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, stated, "*Barnett Newman: The Late Work* has been a complex and deeply researched project for us, yielding new insights into one of the most important American artists of the Abstract Expressionist group. As we prepare to bring the results to the public at large and the scholarly community, we are grateful to the NEA for both its financial support of this endeavor and for its no less valuable recognition of the significance of this undertaking."

In the last decade, the Menil has undertaken significant technical studies of Newman's work, including Epley's multi-year effort to restore Newman's *Be I (First Version)*. This exhibition is a logical and compelling outgrowth of these exhaustive studies and conservation projects.

Brad Epley, chief conservator of the Menil Collection, stated, "We showed before, with the exhibition *Magritte: The Mystery of the Ordinary, 1926-1938*, that conservation work can be revelatory about paintings, allowing us to understand not only process but meaning. This is certainly the case with Barnett Newman, who worked out his ideas on the canvas itself, without making preparatory studies. This generous grant from the NEA will help substantially to bring our findings to museumgoers and scholars alike."

For a complete listing of projects recommended for Art Works grant support, please visit the NEA website at arts.gov. Follow the conversation about this and other NEA-funded projects on Twitter at #NEAFall2014.

About the Menil Collection

A legacy of the late philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil, the Menil Collection opened in 1987 in the Houston neighborhood where the de Menils had created the Rothko Chapel in 1971. The Menil Collection's main museum building anchors the 30-acre campus, which includes (in addition to the Rothko Chapel) the Cy Twombly Gallery, a site-specific Dan Flavin installation, and outdoor sculpture. Presenting regular rotations of artworks from the growing permanent collection, the Menil also organizes special exhibitions and programs throughout the year, publishes scholarly books, and conducts research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11am to 7pm, and charges no admission fee.

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