

Major funding for the Contemporary Focus series is provided by Cecily E. Horton.

Curated by Michelle White, Senior Curator

# Contemporary Focus

Leslie Hewitt

## Public Program

### Artist Talk with Leslie Hewitt and Courtney J. Martin

Wednesday, October 3, 7–9 p.m.

#### Main Building

Artist Leslie Hewitt will be in conversation with Courtney J. Martin, Deputy Director and Chief Curator at Dia Art Foundation.

The above program is free and open to the public. Menil members enjoy additional events. Visit the museum or [menil.org](http://menil.org) to join or for more information.



**cover** Leslie Hewitt, *Where Paths Meet, Turn Away, Then Align Again* (Distilled moment from over 72 hours of viewing the civil rights era archive at the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas), 2012. Lithographs on paper, each 11 1/8 x 11 1/8 in. (28.3 x 28.3 cm). The Menil Collection, Houston, Purchased with funds provided by Mark Wawro and Melanie Gray

September 22–January 6, 2019

THE MENIL COLLECTION

Leslie Hewitt's art addresses undocumented aspects of history, the things left unwritten. The recently acquired works presented here resulted from the artist's research in the photographic archive at the Menil Collection and exemplify her practice of reflecting on contemporary social issues related to human rights by looking at images from the past. Hewitt is the inaugural artist in a Contemporary Focus series highlighting work by living artists in the museum's collection.

*Where Paths Meet, Turn Away, Then Align Again* (Distilled moment from over 72 hours of viewing the civil rights era archive at the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas), 2012, consists of two photolithographic variations of a detail in a photograph from the Edmund Carpenter and Adelaide de Menil collection of Civil Rights-era photographs at the Menil Collection. Using a micro lens, Hewitt focused on the background of an original reportage photograph by Dan Budnick of a 1965 voting rights march. Her selection of such an unassuming area created a figurative abstraction. A blurred image of the back of a woman's head and a man's shoulder is pushed into the foreground. In the artist's words, "When you take a photograph, there's a decisive moment, an instant when you choose what to frame and when to trigger the shutter. The point of view is yours, and it's necessarily singular. My projects point to the structure of photography to put pressure on this idea of a single perspective and remind the viewer that every act of perception is an act of translation."

*Where Paths Meet, Turn Away, Then Align Again*, 2013, addresses perception through repetition, variation, and geometry. The lines and planes of the white powder-coated steel may appear to unfold, bend, and shift as the viewer walks between and around the different parts. Each form has a ninety-degree fold that calls to mind the asceticism of Minimalism, one of the defining art movements in the 1960s, during the Civil Rights era, an often-overlooked concurrence that informs Hewitt's sculpture. Yet while the mute, simple forms might initially seem entirely abstract, the blank white surfaces are like enormous empty sheets of paper, waiting to be inscribed and prompting us to wonder what remains undiscovered.



Leslie Hewitt, *Where Paths Meet, Turn Away, Then Align Again* (detail, in foreground), 2013. White powder-coated steel, installation dimensions variable. The Menil Collection, Houston, Museum purchase and partial gift of Galerie Perrotin. Photo: Todd Johnson

*The work of American artist Leslie Hewitt (b. 1977, Saint Albans, New York) is found in major collections around the world. She has had solo exhibitions at SculptureCenter, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and Contemporary Art Museum of Saint Louis. Her work has been included in the Carnegie International, Pittsburg, 2018; the Whitney Biennial, New York, 2008; and in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; among others. She earned a BFA from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York, in 2000 and an MFA in sculpture from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in 2004. Hewitt lives and works in New York.*