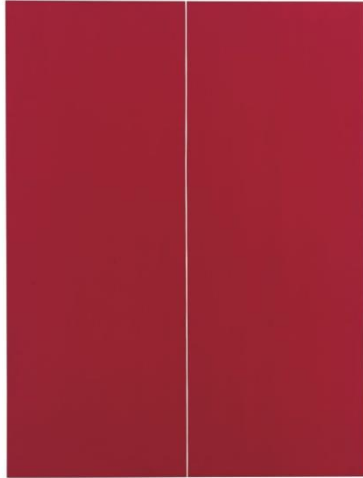


THE MENIL COLLECTION TO PRESENT *BARNETT NEWMAN: THE LATE WORK*  
MARCH 27 – AUGUST 2, 2015



**HOUSTON, TEXAS, February 26, 2015** — For Barnett Newman (1905 –1970), a pioneering figure of post-war abstraction, his last five and a half years were a period of significant creative developments. Adopting the new medium of acrylic emulsion paints and honing his style in a way that was “audacious” (according to critic Peter Schjeldahl) and “meticulously simplified” (Harold Rosenberg), he finished his monumental series *The Stations of the Cross: Lama Sebachthani*, completed twenty-two other paintings and produced the majority of his sculptures. Determined to “deluge” The Museum of Modern Art with new works for a solo exhibition planned for 1970, Newman continued to work at an ambitious pace, finishing four paintings and starting three more in the months preceding a fatal heart

attack.

This distinctive period in the artist’s career becomes the focus of a museum exhibition for the first time with the Menil Collection’s *Barnett Newman: The Late Work*, March 27 through August 2, 2015. On view exclusively at the Menil Collection, the exhibition is organized by Bradford A. Epley, Chief Conservator, and Michelle White, Curator, whose collaborative research sheds light on Newman’s working methods and creative concerns. The exhibition is comprised of a focused selection of late paintings, including three unfinished works heretofore unseen by the public, from the Menil Collection and other public and private collections such as the Kunstmuseum Basel, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Detroit Institute of Arts.

In the last decade, the Menil has undertaken significant technical studies of Newman’s work, including a multi-year effort by Brad Epley to restore Newman’s 1949 *Be I*. The information gathered through these efforts has contributed significantly to an understanding of Newman’s private studio practice, illuminating his working methods. *Barnett Newman: The Late Work* is a logical outgrowth of these exhaustive studies and conservation projects. In the exhibition, the artworks are complemented by a selection of archival materials from the artist’s studio, including paint brushes, rollers and other objects, offering a unique glimpse into Newman’s technique.

Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, stated, “Our institution’s longstanding commitment to the art of Barnett Newman, including the personal ties that existed between the

museum and his late wife Annalee, puts the Menil Collection in an ideal position to organize this complex and deeply researched exhibition. *Barnett Newman: The Late Work* shows that conservation work can be revelatory, allowing us to understand how process and meaning are intertwined; exhibiting the paintings, finished and unfinished, alongside the implements of their creation, allows us to present the impact Newman's adoption of new tools and materials had on his late paintings."

A symposium is scheduled for April 9-10, 2015, with a panel discussion open to the public at 6 pm on April 10. With this exhibition, the accompanying catalogue and programming, the Menil hopes to inaugurate a scholarly re-examination of Newman's work.

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **Symposium Panel Discussion – Open to the Public**

*Barnett Newman: The Late Work*

**Friday, April 10, 2015, 6:00 p.m.**

**Menil Foyer**

The exhibition *Barnett Newman: The Late Work* is accompanied by a symposium co-organized by Menil Curator Michelle White and Chief Conservator Brad Epley in collaboration with the Department of Art History at the University of Texas-Austin. The symposium will focus on Newman's material and technical innovations in his late period. Unfinished work in Newman's studio after his death will be used as a way of understanding the evolution of his painting process. The concluding panel discussion is open to the public.

### **Outdoor Film**

*Painters Painting* (116 min.)

**Emile de Antonio, director**

**Wednesday, June 3, 2015, 8:00 p.m.**

**Rothko Chapel Plaza**

*Co-presented with the Rothko Chapel and Aurora Picture Show*

A collective film portrait of the legendary figures who redefined the post-war New York art world. The conversations weave a brilliant portrait—with Barnett Newman at its center—in which can be seen the genesis of Abstract Expressionism. An entertaining way to absorb the context in which Newman's paintings were made.

*The exhibition is generously supported by The John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation;  
National Endowment for the Arts; Nancy and Mark Abendshein, Susanne and Bill Pritchard;  
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Frost Bank; Suzanne Deal Booth; Janet and Paul Hobby; Gensler; Russell Reynolds Associates;  
and the City of Houston.*

### **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, outdoor sculpture and the repurposed Byzantine Fresco Chapel that is now the home for an experimental series of long-term, site-specific installations. 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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*Image: Barnett Newman, Be I (Second Version), 1970. Detroit Institute of Arts.*

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