

**THE MENIL COLLECTION CELEBRATES 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY WITH *LUMINOUS*  
BALL HONORING CHAIR AND LIFE TRUSTEE LOUISA STUDE SAROFIM**

**Event Raises More Than \$2.5 Million in Table and Ticket Sales**

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations Continue with the Menil Contemporaries'  
*Surreal Soirée* on Friday, December 8**



**Houston, TX, December 3, 2017** – Under a bright night sky on the eve of the final full moon before the winter solstice, art-world luminaries and patrons from Houston and around the world gathered at the Menil Collection on Saturday evening, December 2, for *Luminous: The Menil Collection's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ball*. Only the fourth gala celebration at the museum since its opening in 1987, the event honored the Menil Foundation's Chair and Life Trustee Louisa Stude Sarofim, raising more than \$2.5 million in table and ticket sales to support the Menil Collection on the occasion of this anniversary milestone.

Said Menil Director Rebecca Rabinow, "Dominique de Menil understood that in order to ensure the Menil Collection's survival she must appoint a successor who believed as deeply as she did in the importance of the arts to human existence. She needed to find someone who had the intellect, sensitivity, and will to keep the de Menils' vision alive and relevant—someone courageous enough to alter her own life in order to make the enormous commitment of time, energy, and focus required by the task ahead.

Dominique de Menil had one person in mind: Louisa Stude Sarofim. Over the past decades, Mrs. Sarofim has led the Menil Collection with unwavering grace, determination, and generosity."

Said Louisa Stude Sarofim, "When I agreed to Mrs. de Menil's daunting request, I did so because I respected what she and her husband John believed. I was—and still am—

moved by their approach to art, their spiritual values, and their determination to transform Houston. I have done my best to follow suit. I support those institutions and causes that broaden our thinking, heighten our awareness, and hone our values. For me, the Menil Collection is a beacon of all of these things, a special and beautiful place for everyone to enjoy. The Menil Collection has the power to change lives. Indeed, it has changed my own.”

Staged in an enormous tent spanning the Menil’s front lawn, the gala’s decor was inspired by Surrealist artist Max Ernst’s small moonlit scene, *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year* (1955), a gift from the artist to Dominique and John de Menil. The painting is one symbol of the long friendship between Ernst and the de Menils after they were introduced in 1932.

Dr. Rabinow welcomed the evening’s co-chairs Allison Sarofim, Leigh and Reggie Smith, and Phoebe and Bobby Tudor. She also recognized the distinguished honorary chairs Ambassador of France to the United States Gérard Araud, architect of the Menil Collection’s main building Renzo Piano, and co-chair Adelaide de Menil Carpenter, who were unable to attend.

Among the guests toasting the Menil’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary were Menil Foundation Board of Trustees President Janet Hobby and her husband Paul, Board of Trustees Vice President Doug Lawing and his partner Guy Hagsette, Consul General of France Alexis Andres, Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, Hamish Bowles, JooYoung Choi, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Michael Heizer, Roni Horn, Caroline Huber, Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee, Menil Foundation Trustee Janie C. Lee and her husband David Warren, Allison Leland, Almine and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, and Andrea and Bill White.

Members of the de Menil family in attendance included Lois and George de Menil, Andee and Aziz Friedrich, Susan and Menil Foundation Trustee Francois de Menil and their children Sophie, Conrad, and John.

Guests dined on a menu presented by Jackson and Company featuring pecan wood grilled lamb chops with port wine demi-glace and a special *Luminous*-themed dessert, each with wine pairings. Following dinner, guests were treated to a concert by the Grammy-winner Angélique Kidjo, whose performance included original music as well as selections from her versions of the songs on the classic Talking Heads album *Remain in Light*, which are the focus of her rapturously received current tour. To the surprise and delight of the crowd, Talking Heads’ keyboardist and guitarist Jerry Harrison

joined Kidjo for several songs. Dancing followed, and museum galleries remained open until midnight for guests to enjoy.

The Menil Collection is appreciative of these friends who have given their creativity, time, and services to make *Luminous* possible: Ahl&Co, Four Seasons Houston Downtown, Houston Wine Merchants, InfoVine, Jackson & Company, Le Labo, Matt Ringel / Red Light Management, PaperCity Magazine, Pro/Sound, Roxor, Tenenbaum Jewelers, and Todd Events.

### **Menil Contemporaries to Celebrate 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

On Friday, December 8, the Menil Contemporaries, the museum's membership group for young professionals, will host the museum's final 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration: *Surreal Soirée*, inspired by the legendary Surrealist ball hosted by Marie-Hélène de Rothschild in 1972. This ticketed, black-tie fundraiser will celebrate the spirit of Surrealism, one of the most iconic artistic movements represented in the museum's permanent collection. Guests are encouraged to incorporate avant-garde and whimsical elements symbolic of the movement into their attire. The event is co-chaired by Saba Jawda, Sarah Jawda, and Olivia and Edward Persia.

All ticket and sponsorship proceeds of the *Surreal Soirée* benefit the Menil Contemporaries Fund, a crowdsourcing effort to establish a permanent, endowed fund that will support neighborhood greening—helping to ensure the development, maintenance, and preservation of the Menil's green spaces for years to come. Tickets are \$200 for members and \$250 for non-members. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [menil.org](http://menil.org).

The Menil Collection is appreciative of these friends who have given their creativity, time, and services to make the *Surreal Soirée* possible: Aesop, Buffalo Bayou Brewing Co., Four Seasons Houston Downtown, PaperCity Magazine, Roxor, Tito's Handmade Vodka, and Total Wine & More.

### **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 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, opening in 2018, 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, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and charges no admission fee.

### **On view at the Menil**

*Thirty Works for Thirty Years* – On view through January 28, 2018

*Mona Hatoum: Terra Infirma* – On view through February 25, 2018

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

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**Image:** Max Ernst, *Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*, 1955. Oil on wood panel, 5 1/2 x 3 3/8 in. (14 x 8.6 cm). The Menil Collection, Houston. Gift of the artist. © 2017 Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

### **Event Images**

Available upon request.

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