

**THE MENIL COLLECTION LAUNCHES A SEASON OF CELEBRATIONS
FOR ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY, WITH CONCERTS, READINGS,
GALA EVENINGS AND A FREE PUBLIC BIRTHDAY PARTY**

HOUSTON, September 5, 2012 – Twenty-five years after Dominique de Menil ceremonially opened the doors of the Menil Collection, declaring, “Houston, this is your museum,” the world-renowned institution will mark its silver anniversary with celebrations throughout autumn 2012. In keeping with the public spirit of the Menil, where admission is always free, the commemoration will include events for everyone in the museum’s widespread community, from international supporters to residents of the institution’s “neighborhood of art.”

The events will kick off on **Tuesday, September 11**, with a sold-out benefit evening, “Yo-Yo Ma in Concert at the Menil.” One of the greatest musicians of our time, Yo-Yo Ma will perform in honor of the 25th anniversary and then join guests for a black-tie dinner at the Menil.

On **Saturday, September 22**, the museum will invite the entire community to celebrate at a free outdoor event, the “Menil 25th Birthday Party,” from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Houston’s own acclaimed Kashmere Reunion Stage Band (profiled in the movie *Thunder Soul*) and the dazzling Texas Southern University Jazz Ensemble will provide live powerhouse music for an afternoon featuring birthday cake, a scavenger hunt for children, and an official proclamation from the Mayor of Houston. Guests will also enjoy the recently launched “Voices of the Menil,” a cell-phone audio walk around the museum campus and neighborhood.

The commemorations continue with two spoken-word programs, also free to the public. Calvin Tomkins, the distinguished author and veteran art writer for *The New Yorker* will join Menil Director Josef Helfenstein in “Making a Museum” (**October 17 at 7:00 p.m.**), offering a vivid and highly personal view of John and Dominique de Menil and events in the art world over the past three decades. With “Poems for a Quarter Century” (**November 3, 7:00 p.m.**) the Menil presents an evening of poetry reflecting on the art and artists of the Menil Collection—including poems written by Houston school children who visit the museum—curated by poet, professor and editor Sasha West.

The celebrations will culminate on the weekend of November 30 – December 2, with two benefit parties and one remarkable free concert.

A Celebration in Blue, the third Menil gala in its 25-year history, will bring together friends and supporters from around the globe on **November 30** for cocktails, a seated dinner, dancing and a silent auction. Franci Crane, Sara Dodd-Spickelmier, Isabel Lummis, Susan de Menil and Karen Pinson are serving as Chairs for the gala, with Honorary Chairs François Delattre (Ambassador of France to the United States), Paal Kibsgaard, Jasper Johns, and Almine and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso.

The following evening, **December 1**, it will be the Menil Contemporaries' turn, when young arts patrons gather for *Bleu Electrique*, in a swirl of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, music and dancing, co-chaired by Lindsay and Jeremy Radcliffe, Isabel and Danny David, and Kelly and Russell Hamman.

Rounding off the weekend, on **Sunday December 2 at noon**, leading American composer Philip Glass will premiere a new composition for solo piano, commissioned by the Menil for its 25th anniversary. Performed by the composer himself in the Anniversary Tent, the composition is from the series of études that Glass began writing in the 1990s. The concert will be free to the public, but with advance tickets required.

Information on tickets for the Philip Glass concert and ticket prices for *Bleu Electrique* will be posted soon on the Menil's website, www.menil.org. Information on *Celebration in Blue* is available at www.menil.org/CelebrationInBlueTables.php.

About The Menil Collection

Considered one of the most important privately assembled collections of the twentieth century, the Menil Collection opened officially on June 4, 1987, and is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The Menil's holdings, ranging from the prehistoric to art of the present day, are housed in a modern landmark designed by the renowned architect Renzo Piano. In the quarter-century since it opened to the public, the Menil has established an international reputation for presenting acclaimed exhibitions and producing many highly respected scholarly publications; pioneering partnerships with other cultural and education institutions across Houston, Texas and the United States; and conducting groundbreaking research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art. The Menil charges no admission fees.

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