

The Menil Collection Announces *What drawing can be: four responses*

The exhibition at the Menil Drawing Institute will feature site-specific installations by Jillian Conrad, Teresita Fernández, Tony Lewis, and Constantin Luser



Artists from left: Jillian Conrad, Teresita Fernández, Tony Lewis, and Constantin Luser

HOUSTON—*October 23, 2024*—The Menil Collection is pleased to announce *What drawing can be: four responses*, **on view at the Menil Drawing Institute March 21–August 10, 2025**. The exhibition will feature site-specific installations by four artists: Jillian Conrad, Teresita Fernández, Tony Lewis, and Constantin Luser. Each artist will have an individual gallery space to respond to the prompt “What drawing can be,” while exploring the conceptual potential of the medium, its boundaries, and its connections with other art forms, such as sculpture and architecture.

Drawings that expand beyond a sheet of paper have a rich history within the 20th century. Examples include Alexander Calder and his wire sculptures from the 1930s and artists of the 1960s, like Dorothea Rockburne and Sol LeWitt, who pushed the parameters of the medium to include text, folded papers, and wall drawings. Eluding labels and limitations, whether they be in terms of material, scale, or ephemerality, the artists in this exhibition will reveal the continuing relevance, agility, and vitality of drawing.

The show will include existing pieces alongside new, site-specific works. The artists will approach the medium with personal perspectives on how they characterize drawings.

Edouard Kopp, John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Chief Curator, Menil Drawing Institute, said, “We are thrilled to welcome these talented artists to the Menil Drawing Institute for an exciting exhibition highlighting the expansive ways in which artists think about drawing. Aligning with the Drawing Institute’s mission, this presentation recognizes the centrality of drawing to artists today, as well as the experimental ways in which they work.”

What drawing can be: four responses is curated by Edouard Kopp, John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Chief Curator, Menil Drawing Institute, and Kelly Montana, Associate Curator, Menil Drawing Institute.

About the Artists

Jillian Conrad explores questions of materiality and intangibility. Her sculptures and works on paper often engage aspects of the landscape and everyday materials with the goal of locating thresholds between the visible and invisible. Conrad has been a professor at the University of Houston since 2009.

Teresita Fernández is well known for her public installations and large-scale sculptures. Her art offers an expansive view of the landscape, foregrounding questions of geography, cartography, cosmology, and political states. Fernández lives and works in New York City.

Tony Lewis, in an ever-expanding engagement with drawing, harnesses materials like graphite powder, torn paper, and digital projection to confront social and political topics including race, power, communication, and labor. Lewis lives and works in Chicago.

Constantin Luser employs kinetic wire sculptures that cast elaborate shadows and inspire delicate line drawings for installations that challenge and delight visitors' perceptions. Luser lives and works in Vienna.

About the Menil Collection

Philanthropists and art patrons John and Dominique de Menil established the Menil Foundation in 1954 to foster greater public understanding and appreciation of art, architecture, culture, religion, and philosophy. In 1987, the Menil Collection's main building opened to the public. Today, the Menil Collection consists of a group of art buildings and green spaces located within a residential neighborhood in central Houston. The Menil remains committed to its founders' belief that art is essential to human experience and welcomes all visitors free of charge to its buildings and surrounding green spaces. menil.org

About the Menil Drawing Institute

The Menil Drawing Institute was established in 2008 in recognition of drawing's centrality in the lives of artists and its crucial role in modern and contemporary artistic culture. The Drawing Institute has since developed an international profile for exhibitions, scholarship, and collaboration. In 2018, a dedicated building for the Menil Drawing Institute, designed by Johnston Marklee, was inaugurated. It is now the site of regular drawings exhibitions, an annual monumental wall drawing commission, public programs, and study.

Images

1. Jillian Conrad. Photo: Sarah Hobson
2. Teresita Fernández. Photo: Steve Benisty
3. Tony Lewis. Photo: Sarah Hobson
4. Constantin Luser. Photo: Markus Rössle

Funding

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