

THE MENIL COLLECTION ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF PAUL R. DAVIS AS THE MUSEUM'S CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS

HOUSTON, TX, May 7, 2014 — Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, today announced the appointment of Paul R. Davis to the post of Curator of Collections. Davis, who will assume his new post on June 16, arrives at the Menil from the Centre for the Creative Arts of Africa (CCAA) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, where, as the Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, he has been researching urban identity formations and modernism.

“With more than five years of museum experience,” said Helfenstein, “Paul Davis brings to the Menil curatorial expertise in the arts of Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the ancient Americas, as well as seasoned university-level teaching and community engagement. Paul’s passion for non-Western, modern, and contemporary art, along with his academic achievements, resonate excitingly with our growing collection.”

After earning his bachelor’s degree from California State University, Chico, Davis continued his studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, earning his master’s degree in African and modern and contemporary art. His doctoral dissertation, *A Social History of Painting in Bamako, Mali, 1930s-1980s*, drew on four years of interviews and archival research in Mali, France, and Italy to examine the practices of painters and the role of art institutions in Bamako during colonial and post-independence periods. Davis was awarded his Ph.D. in 2012.

“I am inspired by the opportunity to strengthen the Menil’s position as an exceptional place for advancing the recognition and understanding of different forms of visual culture,” said Davis of his move to Houston. “The museum’s vision, architecture, and, most importantly, its art collections foster curatorial creativity and innovation. Though chiefly focused on interpreting the museum’s rich holdings of art from Africa and the Pacific Islands, I look forward to collaborating with my new colleagues and mining the

entire collection to engage with Houston's diverse communities and the Menil's visitors from around the world."

About The Menil Collection

A legacy of the late Houston philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil, the Menil Collection opened in 1987. The main museum building anchors a 30-acre campus, which also includes the Cy Twombly Gallery, a site-specific Dan Flavin installation, and outdoor sculpture. 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.

Contact:

Vance Muse or Gretchen Sammons

Menil Press Office

713-535-3170

press@menil.org