

## The Menil Collection Presents a Two-Part Lecture with Hilton Als

*The renowned writer, critic, and curator will speak on the 1971 exhibition “Some American History” November 2 and 4*



Photo: Ali Smith

HOUSTON—October 20, 2021—The Menil Collection is pleased to announce renowned writer, critic, and curator Hilton Als as the upcoming speaker for the museum’s Marion Barthelme Lecture Series. The two-part lecture will take place Tuesday, November 2, and Thursday, November 4, at 6 p.m. The timing of Als’ lectures coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the 1971 exhibitions *Some American History* and *The De Luxe Show*.

Based on his primary research at the Menil Archives and in the museum’s collection, the talks will explore the history and cultural context of *Some American History*. Organized by Larry Rivers for the Menil Foundation at the Institute for the Arts, Rice University, the show brought together work that explored the history of slavery in the United States by a group of artists, including Ellsworth Ausby, Frank Bowling, Peter Bradley, Daniel LaRue Johnson, Joe Overstreet, and William T. Williams. Als will underscore the significance of this exhibition and how it led to others that addressed racial politics and contemporary art, like *The De Luxe Show*, which was curated by Peter Bradley at the invitation of Dominique and John de Menil the same year.

As with all Menil programs, the Marion Barthelme Lectures are free and open to all. Free, advance registration is required to attend these programs and is available at [menil.org/events](https://menil.org/events). Seating is first-come, first-serve. A live stream of the talk will be available on [menil.org](https://menil.org) and on the museum’s

front lawn pending weather. A group of paintings related to *Some American History* will also be on view in the Menil's foyer, featuring artists Frank Bowling, Peter Bradley, and William T. Williams.

### **About Hilton Als**

Hilton Als began contributing to *The New Yorker* in 1989, writing pieces for “The Talk of the Town;” he became a staff writer in 1994, theater critic in 2002, and lead theater critic in 2012. Before coming to *The New Yorker*, Als was a staff writer for the *Village Voice* and an editor-at-large at *Vibe*. His reviews are provocative contributions to the discourse on theater, race, class, sexuality, and identity in America. His first book, *The Women*, was published in 1996. His book, *White Girls*—a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2014 and winner of the 2014 Lambda Literary Award for Nonfiction—discusses various narratives of race and gender. His most recent book, *I Don't Remember* (Penguin, June 2020), is a book-length essay on his experiences in AIDS-era New York.

Als is the curator of many exhibitions including: *Alice Neel, Uptown and God Made My Face: A Collective Portrait of James Baldwin* at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York City. He is curating three successive solo exhibitions at the Yale Center for British Art, the first exhibit in 2018 featured Celia Paul, the second, in 2019, featured Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, the third will feature Peter Doig. In 2017 Als won the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism and the Langston Hughes Medal in 2018. He is an associate professor of writing at Columbia University's School of the Arts and has taught at Yale University, Wesleyan University, and Smith College. He lives in New York City.

### **About The Marion Barthelme Lecture Series**

The Marion Barthelme Lecture Series is presented in honor of the late Menil Foundation Trustee Marion Barthelme Fort (1944–2011). Each year, a distinguished speaker is invited to explore the work of a key artist or aspect of the museum's collection. Past lectures have included Michael Govan on the work of Michael Heizer (2013), Sarah Whitfield on the work of René Magritte (2014), Yves-Alain Bois on the work of Ellsworth Kelly (2015), Rachel Z. DeLue on the work of Kara Walker (2018), and Lucy Lippard on the politics of land use and art in America (2019).

This series is made possible by Marion's family, Jeff Fort and Kristina Van Dyke Fort, and Katharine Barthelme.

### **About the Menil Collection**

Houston 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 museum building opened to the public. Today, the Menil Collection consists of a group of five art buildings and green spaces located within a residential neighborhood. The Menil remains committed to its founders' belief that art is essential to human experience and fosters direct personal encounters with works of art. The museum welcomes all visitors free of charge to its buildings and surrounding green spaces. [menil.org](http://menil.org)

### **Press Contact**

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