

**THE MENIL COLLECTION MOVES FORWARD WITH ITS CAMPUS PLAN  
WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL VAN VALKENBURGH ASSOCIATES  
TO CREATE A NEW LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

**First Phase of Work Expected to Begin in Fall 2013**

HOUSTON, TX, June 13, 2013 — Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection, today announced the appointment of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) to enhance and expand the landscape design of the institution's 30-acre campus in the heart of Houston. The appointment signals the beginning of implementation of the Menil's master plan for its urban "neighborhood of art," as the enclave of museum buildings, green spaces, and bungalows has been called.

The Menil expects to begin site preparation for the first phase of the MVVA design in Fall 2013.

The Menil's project, undertaken on the basis of a master site plan by David Chipperfield Architects, calls for the creation of additional green space and walkways, new visitor amenities such as a cafe, and the addition of new buildings for art. Existing facilities include the main museum building by Renzo Piano (recently recognized with the AIA 25 Year Award); the Cy Twombly Gallery (also by Piano); and Richmond Hall, which houses light installations by Dan Flavin. The first new art building on campus will be the Menil Drawing Institute, a freestanding center for the exhibition, collection, conservation and study of modern and contemporary drawings, to be designed by the Los Angeles-based firm Johnston Marklee.

MVVA's work will begin with the creation of a new entrance sequence on the north side of the Menil's campus. The landscape design will welcome visitors from the parking area off West Alabama Street to the new Menil café (envisioned for construction in one of the bungalows) and the main museum building beyond.

"The enjoyment of the garden-like outdoor spaces is essential to the Menil Collection," Josef Helfenstein commented. "The feeling here of appreciating art is closely tied to the experience of crossing a green space under our magnificent trees as you go from one gallery building to another. We know that the superb design work of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates is

ideally suited to our setting, and we are delighted to start with the firm's team as we begin to realize our aspirations for this campus."

"It is an honor to be selected by the Menil Collection to develop and implement new landscape designs for its unparalleled campus," Michael Van Valkenburgh stated. "In no other place do you have this extraordinary fusion of great international art and architecture and serene, parklike expanses, in the midst of a thriving, humanely scaled neighborhood. We look forward to helping usher visitors into the Menil through our landscape design and are excited to carry forward this work elsewhere on campus as the project progresses."

### **About Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates**

MVVA is a landscape architecture firm that creates environmentally sustainable and experientially rich places across a wide range of scales, from city to campus to garden.

Among the firm's notable projects are the redesign of Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, Waller Creek in Austin, Brooklyn Bridge Park and Hudson River Park in New York City, the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston and the Garden on Turtle Creek in Dallas. The firm's designs for campuses include landscapes for Carnegie-Mellon, Cornell, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, Rockefeller University, Wellesley and Vassar.

The firm's projects have received numerous honors including awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects, the U.S. National Park Service, the Municipal Arts Society of New York City, the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Building Stone Institute, the Waterfront Center, Places/EDRA, Progressive Architecture and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. MVVA has also won multiple high-profile design competitions including Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, the Lower Don Lands project in Toronto and The City + The Arch + The River competition for St. Louis and East St. Louis.

Michael Van Valkenburgh, President and CEO, is a registered landscape architect in more than 25 states and Canada and is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome and the American Society of Landscape Architects. He received the National Design Award in Environmental Design from the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in 2003 and was named the 2010 recipient of the Arnold W. Brunner Memorial Prize in Architecture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, making him only the second landscape architect to

be honored in the award's 45-year history. He currently serves as the Charles Eliot Professor in Practice of Landscape Architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design,

**About The Menil Collection**

Considered one of the most important privately assembled collections of the twentieth century, with holdings that range from the prehistoric to the art of the present day, the Menil Collection opened in 1987. Over the course of a quarter of a century, the Menil has established an international reputation for presenting acclaimed exhibitions and producing 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 fee. [www.menil.org](http://www.menil.org).

**Contact:**

Vance Muse or Gretchen Sammons  
Menil Press Office  
713 535 3170  
[press@menil.org](mailto:press@menil.org)

Sarah Buffum  
Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors  
212 715 1594  
[sarah.buffum@finnpartners.com](mailto:sarah.buffum@finnpartners.com)