

Face Off: A Selection of Old Masters and Others from The Menil Collection

On view at The Menil Collection February 6 - April 26, 2009



Sir Joshua Reynolds *A Young Black* ca. 1770 Oil on canvas 21 x 25-1/8 inches (78.7 x 65 cm)
The Menil Collection, Houston Photo: Hickey-Robertson, Houston

Houston, February 26, 2009--***Face Off: A Selection of Old Masters and Others from The Menil Collection*** examines one of the most primary elements of human interaction: to look upon the face of another. Including prints from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, a few pre-Renaissance sculptures, and a small group of modern and contemporary paintings, ***Face Off*** mines seldom-seen areas of the museum's permanent collection to provide fresh insight into fundamental issues of likeness, memory, and identity. This selection of work illustrates that the tenets and strategies utilized in the creation of visual art today have been around for thousands of years, while simultaneously bearing witness to the multifaceted vision of art through time.

Masters of the printed medium, Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and Honoré Daumier (1808-1879) reveal their distinctive views of nineteenth-century society. With no pretensions to objectivity, Goya reveals brutality on both sides of Spain's Peninsular War in *Disasters of War (1810-1820)*, while Daumier takes satirical aim at bourgeois values in *Caricatures (1829-1872)*. In *Study of the Human Body (1983)*, Francis Bacon reveals a postmodern rendering of a seemingly faceless body.

Seventeenth-century artists, such as Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691) and Rembrandt (1606-1669), worked from positions solidly grounded in the visualization of religious imagery and biblical narratives. Because he lived in Italy for many years, Flemish master Denys Calvaert (1540-1619) stands out for his synchronization of Italian Renaissance and Flemish Mannerist styles. Calvaert's painting, *The Vision of St. Dominic*, features the virgin and child. A very different version of this traditional motif appears in *The Virgin and Child from Peru*. Dating from the first half of the eighteenth century, this painting demonstrates how Spain's colonies in the New World interpreted Christianity.

On view from February 6 to April 26 ***Face Off: A Selection of Old Masters and Others from The Menil Collection*** is organized by Franklin Sirmans, curator of modern and contemporary art.

This exhibition is generously supported by Michael Zilkha and the City of Houston.

For further information and images,
please contact the press office, 713.525.9469, or press@menil.org
The Menil Collection, located within Houston's Museum District,
is open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Admission and parking are free.