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Figure 1 John and Dominique de Menil at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, 1965 (photo: Hickey-Robertson; Menil Archives, The Menil Collection, Houston)

The Menil Connection

Louis Kahn and the Rice University Art Center

STEPHEN JAMES
University of Houston

“We hope that Rice will construct a home for the School designed by an outstanding architect whom we would like to help choose.”¹

—John and Dominique de Menil
23 November 1968

Writing about his experience as the client for the Yale Center for British Art, Louis Kahn’s last building, Jules David Prown remarked that in such projects “although we know the draftsmen by name, the clients remain largely anonymous.”² Kahn had more than a few noteworthy clients—particularly Jonas Salk at the Salk Institute, Richard Brown at the Kimbell Art Museum, and Prown at Yale—and in many accounts these clients receive significant credit for the success of his buildings. Yet the stories of most of his projects support Prown’s statement; the architect is identified as the creative force, and the client’s contribution goes largely unheralded. Even scarcer is the recognition of the clients of unbuilt architectural projects, which are usually considered important only because of their relationship to the architect’s larger body of work. Rarely is the significant role of their clients understood.

Among Kahn’s many unbuilt projects, two of the more obscure were arts commissions in Houston. Kahn never

developed his designs for the Rice University Art Center of 1969–70 and the Menil Foundation museum of 1972–74 beyond his initial sketches.³ Rice canceled its project suddenly, and Kahn’s death ended his work on the Menil commission. Although the Rice project was never built, it occupies an important place in the chronology of Kahn’s work and in the history of Houston.

Kahn’s Menil Foundation project has received more attention than the university art center because the clients, John and Dominique de Menil, assembled one of the most important private art collections of the twentieth century (Figure 1).⁴ They were well known in Houston and achieved national fame in 1987, fourteen years after John de Menil’s death, when Dominique de Menil opened their large art collection to the public.⁵ The Menil Collection museum building designed by Renzo Piano received as much attention as the art, and within a decade the Menil arts campus expanded to include other, more specialized buildings (Figure 2).⁶

The de Menils were more than collectors; they actively commissioned art and architecture to further their vision of the role of art in the community. Their efforts went beyond mere philanthropy and embraced clear social and spiritual goals. Their social activism often merged with their interest in art, as in their ground-breaking multivolume study *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (1976–89), or in their creation of an African American arts center in an inner-city Houston neighborhood.⁷ Behind the scenes they cultivated rising African American political leaders and supported such

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Figure 2 Renzo Piano Workshop with Richard Fitzgerald & Partners, The Menil Collection, Houston, 1987, east elevation (photo: Paul Hester; Menil Archives). See *JSAH* online for high-resolution, zoomable color image

humanitarian causes as the Carter-Menil human rights awards, established with former President Jimmy Carter.⁸ They also believed strongly in the capacity of modern art to enrich the religious experience. Nowhere was this more apparent than in their creation of the Rothko Chapel, a non-denominational setting for an enigmatic group of paintings by Mark Rothko (Figure 3). The chapel relies on abstract modern art to create a place of spirituality independent of conventional religion.⁹ Their patronage led one writer to call the de Menil family “the Medici of Modern Art.”¹⁰

While Kahn’s Menil museum project has elicited more attention from scholars, his two Houston projects were closely related, not only in time and place but in the identity of the key players. The earlier project for Rice University led to the museum commission, and the de Menils were crucial to both. The Art Center was important to the university’s attempt in the 1960s to move beyond its traditional strengths in the sciences and engineering. Critical to that effort was its new alliance with the de Menils, which promised to make Rice a leading institution in the fine arts. The ambitious Art Center project would have consummated this relationship. Its failure had important consequences for the university and its prominent patrons, setting back the enhancement of the Rice fine arts programs and leading the de Menils to house their art collection elsewhere.¹¹ For two decades the de Menils had worked through existing cultural institutions, dependent on others, such as Rice University, to help them realize their vision for the community. Rice’s abrupt cancellation of the Art Center proved to be the catalyst that forced them to venture out on their own.

Beyond the Art Center’s influence on Houston’s cultural history, its story offers an opportunity to understand better



Figure 3 Barnstone & Aubry, Rothko Chapel, Houston, 1971, south elevation, with Barnett Newman’s *Broken Obelisk*, dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (photo: Hickey-Robertson; © 2000 The Rothko Chapel, Houston). See *JSAH* online for high-resolution, zoomable color image

Kahn’s work. Although his ideas were never fully developed, he showed a remarkable engagement with the university’s original master plan while synthesizing its existing campus planning traditions. Moreover, the Rice Art Center was one of his few large multibuilding projects during this period, and in it he developed the landscape to provide the “connective” spaces essential to any community.¹² The ambitious program required a solution framed broadly in terms of the landscape rather than individual buildings. The project is an important contrast to most of his built works of this period, which were self contained and inwardly focused.

Louis Kahn

In 1969 Louis Kahn (1901–1974) was at the peak of his career, having achieved architectural celebrity nearly a decade earlier with his innovative Richards Medical Research Building at the University of Pennsylvania (1957–60).¹³ This milestone capped a productive period in which he built a reputation as an architectural theorist and constructed his first nationally published building, an addition to the Yale University Art Gallery (1950–53). Yet it was the Richards



Figure 4 Louis Kahn in his Philadelphia office, early 1960s (photo: George Pohl; The Louis I. Kahn Collection, the University of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission ["Kahn Collection"])

building that made him famous, with a torrent of publicity that included an exhibition on the building at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1961) and a monograph, *Louis I. Kahn* (1962), by Vincent Scully. Rescued from obscurity in middle age, Kahn embarked on a number of high-profile commissions in the mid 1960s, the most prominent of which was the new research institute in La Jolla, California, for Dr. Jonas Salk, inventor of the polio vaccine.

The Richards building had captured the imagination of the architectural world because of its didactic quality, clearly expressing its structural system while distinguishing among the functions within. Formally, Kahn inverted the expected hierarchy by visually subordinating the laboratory spaces to the service functions. But it was his romantic allusion to medieval fortress towers that intrigued architects looking for a new paradigm for modernism that would take them beyond

Bauhaus functionalism. Kahn's image as an innovator drew a steady stream of architects, students, and prospective clients to his Philadelphia office.¹⁴ What they found was a small practice run like an architecture-school design studio. Kahn was slow and methodical, and because he had no partners he made or approved all design decisions himself (Figure 4). Ill-equipped for large commercial projects, Kahn instead attracted academic and cultural institutions seeking nothing less than a work of art. He succeeded with these smaller commissions when they were managed by individuals who were flexible about their timetable and budget and who tolerated his idiosyncratic work habits.¹⁵ Rice University, which came to Kahn for the design of a new fine arts complex, was typical of these clients.

Rice University

The William M. Rice Institute for the Advancement of Letters, Science and Art opened in 1912. Chartered in 1891 and endowed by a large bequest from its namesake, a wealthy cotton merchant, the new private school sought to emulate the elite private universities of the northeast. In 1907 the initial board of trustees chose Dr. Edgar Odell Lovett of Princeton University as the first president. Although the charter envisioned a school that might offer technical and vocational training, he modeled the new institution after Princeton and other private research universities. Lovett acquired a large tract of land on what was then a treeless plain several miles south of Houston's central business district and hired Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson to plan the new campus.¹⁶

As the designer, Ralph Adams Cram relied on formal Beaux-Arts planning principles to give the campus structure and an appropriate choice of historical precedent to give it form. His General Plan of 1910 organized the grounds along primary and subsidiary axes and sited the initial buildings on a quadrangle known as the Academic Court (Figure 5).

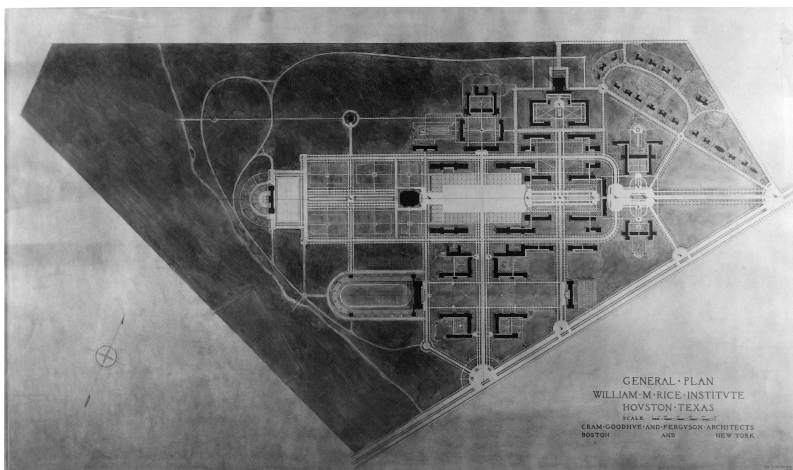


Figure 5 Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, General Plan of the William M. Rice Institute, Houston, 1910 (Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston)



Figure 6 Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Rice University, Houston, 1910–12, view of the Physics building (left) and the Administration building (Lovett Hall) (right) in 1917 (photo: Frank J. Schlueter; Woodson Research Center)

Composing on a blank slate, Cram tried to create an architectural personality for the new institution that reflected its context. Although influenced by Houston's semitropical climate, he avoided the more obvious Spanish Colonial style in favor of an eclectic mix of sources that evoked Byzantium and Venice at the height of their power (Figure 6).¹⁷

During its first half century, the Rice Institute grew slowly under the guidance of a conservative board of trustees drawn from local business leaders. In 1960, however, it changed its name to William Marsh Rice University as part of a broader plan to join the ranks of the nation's elite academic institutions. This required that it expand beyond its traditional strengths in the sciences and engineering to embrace a broader range of scholarship.¹⁸ President Kenneth S. Pitzer directed the transformation, with strong support from the board of governors, including attorney H. Malcolm Lovett, son of Rice's founding president.¹⁹ In 1967 Lovett became chairman of the board and continued to support efforts to strengthen Rice's offerings in the humanities and fine arts. The Rice Art Center commission in 1969 was part of this endeavor.²⁰

Although the university ventured out of state to hire art historian John O'Neil to head the new art department in 1965, Lovett and others at Rice must have been keenly aware of the art resources at their doorstep. Houston had prospered as a center of the oil industry, and many of the city's wealthy elite had invested in fine art. Setting an example was Will Hogg, who as early as the 1920s assembled his large Frederic Remington collection. Others developed significant collections of French Impressionists and old masters. These

private collections formed the core holdings of the city's leading arts institution, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, located only half a mile from the Rice campus.²¹ Rice trustees did not have to look far for financial support and technical expertise to expand its commitment to the arts. Still, it was an unusual stroke of luck and good timing for the university to be approached by John and Dominique de Menil, who at that moment were looking for a new institutional partner.

The de Menils

A native of France, Dominique Schlumberger de Menil (1908–1997) fled Paris with her family in 1941, just ahead of the German army. She was an heir to the Schlumberger oil technology fortune, and the following year she and her husband, Jean (1904–1973), settled in Houston, where the company had regional offices.²² Over the next three decades they amassed a substantial art collection that included modernist abstraction, Surrealism, Byzantine icons, and tribal art, and they became generous benefactors of Houston's cultural institutions.²³ They were unsuccessful, however, in establishing themselves with the city's Contemporary Arts Museum or the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and in the 1950s they began a close relationship with Houston's University of St. Thomas, a small liberal arts college.²⁴ They subsidized its operations, acquired land for campus expansion, began its art collection, and transformed it into a respected center for the fine arts. One of the art department's core activities was curatorial: regular exhibitions were assembled from public and private art collections, including the de Menils' own. In 1964 Dominique de Menil became head of the art department and planned its exhibitions.

Their patronage of modern art extended to modern architecture. In 1948 they became one of Philip Johnson's first clients when they hired him to design their modernist house on the edge of the city's wealthy River Oaks neighborhood (Figure 7).²⁵ In 1956 they helped Johnson obtain the commission to design the new campus for the University of St. Thomas, and in 1964 they commissioned the fourteen Rothko paintings and hired Johnson to design a chapel to house them at St. Thomas.²⁶

In the early 1960s Johnson's work underwent a dramatic shift to a less abstract and more eclectic modernism. The de Menils apparently disliked this change, and correspondence suggests a more critical engagement with Johnson, who pleaded for understanding.²⁷ Even though Johnson won the job for the Rothko Chapel, the de Menils made inquiries of other architects. Among the architects they contacted was Louis Kahn, who in late 1965 sent them information about his Salk Institute, which was nearing completion in California.²⁸



Figure 7 Dominique de Menil with Philip Johnson in Houston, November 1949 (photo © 1949 *The Houston Post*, Menil Archives)

The fame of projects such as the Salk Institute led to frequent speaking engagements for Kahn, and in April 1967 he appeared at Rice University as part of its prestigious President's Lecture Series.²⁹ During this visit he met Dominique de Menil. As collectors, the de Menils' tastes in art were wide ranging, but with a common theme: art was an expression of the transcendent. Kahn spoke in poetic aphorisms and challenged his audiences, at Rice and elsewhere, with an esoteric philosophy grounded in neoplatonic metaphysics. His intellectual yet poetic approach to architecture matched Dominique de Menil's, and they seemed to have an immediate rapport. By the time Kahn left, she had obtained his commitment to write a preface to the catalog of her latest exhibition at St. Thomas, devoted to the visionary architects of eighteenth-century France: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu. He returned in November to give a lecture in conjunction with the opening (Figure 8).³⁰ The following summer he apparently visited the de Menils on Long Island, which suggests that their mutual interests were becoming more than casual.³¹

Kahn's appearances in Houston in 1967 led to a commission two years later, after a convoluted chain of events involving the de Menils, St. Thomas, and Rice. In 1968 the de Menils lost a power struggle with the administration at St. Thomas and terminated their relationship. Although the Basilian fathers who ran the school had accepted the de Menils' involvement in their affairs as the price of the couple's financial support, they drew the line when the de Menils insisted the university become a secular institution under the control of laymen. In addition to ending their financial



Figure 8 Louis Kahn speaking at the University of St. Thomas, Houston, 2 November 1967, with Dominique de Menil in foreground at far right, behind Kahn (photo: Hickey-Robertson; Menil Archives)



Figure 9 Philip Johnson, University of St. Thomas, Houston, Academic Mall, designed and built 1956–70s (author's photo, 2005)

support, the de Menils took with them the resources they had used to build the art department, including their donated art collection, art library, and the faculty they had recruited.³²

Before they left, they had transformed the university in ways that were pervasive but not obvious. Not a single building at St. Thomas bears their name, but their most important legacy is the campus itself. They had pushed hard to have the administration hire Philip Johnson to prepare the master plan and design several of the initial buildings. They ensured Johnson's control of the design process through an extraordinary series of agreements that bound the university to use Johnson or an equally eminent architect.³³ The result was an inspired ensemble of Miesian pavilions grouped around a grassy lawn and linked by a two-story colonnade in the manner of Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia (Figure 9). There

is no evidence that the couple influenced Johnson's design for the campus, although Henri Cartier-Bresson recorded one strategy session between Johnson and Dominique de Menil at her home (Figure 10). At St. Thomas the de Menils saw their role as patrons in the traditional sense: it was their job to identify the great artist and give him the resources and freedom to make great art. They did not need to control the details.

The Rice University Art Center

The couple quickly found a new home at Rice, which at that moment was trying to build an art department from scratch.³⁴ It was a promising merger: Rice offered the de Menils prestige and institutional support; they offered the university instant credibility in a discipline where it had



Figure 10 Dominique de Menil and Philip Johnson discuss the plan of the University of St. Thomas campus at her home in Houston, ca. 1956 (photo: Henri Cartier-Bresson © Magnum Photos; Menil Archives)

none. They reorganized the resources they removed from St. Thomas under the umbrella of a new entity at Rice called the Institute for the Arts.³⁵ Significantly, while faculty and staff from St. Thomas were integrated into the Rice community, and other property, such as the art library, was transferred to Rice, the university did not get the most important asset, the art collection.³⁶

The de Menils proposed that their program of art exhibitions and their curriculum in art history, photography, and film form the core of a new School of Arts, which also would include Rice's existing departments in studio art, music, and drama. To house these activities, they said, "We hope that Rice will construct a home for the School designed by an outstanding architect whom we would like to help choose." Until such permanent quarters could be created for the de Menil programs, the university would erect temporary facilities.³⁷ This followed the pattern at St. Thomas: they did not want their name on the buildings but insisted on choosing the architect.

Recent planning for the arts programs at Rice had included a 1967 proposal to house the architecture school and the small studio art department in one building.³⁸ Administrators had decided instead to put the art department in the new Sewall Hall, just beginning construction, but the arrival of the de Menils and their entourage required much more space. There is no evidence of serious discussion about creating a "School of Arts," but almost immediately the university did exactly what the de Menils asked: it hired a prominent architect to study new facilities for all of the fine arts departments, including the architecture school.³⁹

Louis Kahn quickly emerged as the consensus choice to design the project. Anderson Todd, the newly appointed director of the architecture school, was from Philadelphia and had known Kahn for many years. The de Menils still referred work to Philip Johnson, but Kahn seemed to have become their new favorite. Their opinion carried weight with the university because the couple had pledged \$2 million to help pay for the project. Kahn had a further ally in H. Malcolm Lovett, the board chairman. Lovett admired the library that Kahn had been hired to plan for the Phillips Exeter Academy, where it would sit alongside other campus architecture by Ralph Adams Cram, designer of Rice's original buildings.⁴⁰

Todd's position in this triangle was complex. He was married to an heir to the Cullinan (Texaco) oil fortune and—unlike other members of the architecture faculty—he was wealthy. When the trustees and the de Menils looked to him for architectural advice, he spoke not just in his professional capacity but also as a social peer.⁴¹ An architect among the elite, he had been involved a decade earlier in the decision to hire Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to design Cullinan Hall, an addition to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.⁴²

In architectural matters Todd's opinion carried weight in the clublike atmosphere of the Rice boardroom, where the boundary between personal and professional was never very clear. The trustees' arrangement with the de Menils appears to have been formalized with little more than a handshake.⁴³ During this time the university president's position was vacant, and the trustees routinely acted in an executive, rather than supervisory, capacity. They handled the Art Center project with a minimum of involvement by subordinates.⁴⁴ The university's buildings and grounds department participated only at the lowest level, transmitting routine technical information to the architect. As a result, the commission was driven much more by personal relationships than is typical for such institutional ventures.

In October 1969, Lovett and fellow trustee Herbert Allen flew to Philadelphia to hire Kahn. At the end of the month, he made his first visit to the tree-shaded site immediately to the west of the Fondren Library, where the university wanted to build an Art Center to house the Institute for the Arts, the Rice Media Center, the Department of Fine Arts, the School of Architecture, the Shepherd School of Music, the Rice Players drama program, and a large theater (Figure 11).⁴⁵ The university asked him to do "preliminary studies" first, with a formal design phase to follow.⁴⁶

Kahn returned for talks with his client on 10 February 1970, when he discussed the project informally with Rice trustees and their spouses at an evening social affair.⁴⁷ His presentation was schematic, probably involving charcoal sketches of the site plan, showing the location of new buildings.⁴⁸ He captured their attention by proposing an arts precinct that would enclose the open space adjacent to the library. While Kahn gave them few specifics, the trustees were delighted. Until that point Rice had said nothing publicly about the Art Center, but his proposal was so promising that several weeks after his visit, administrators called the local press to publicize it. Newspaper stories gushed that, if built, "the center would place Rice in the nation's top echelon of universities having large and diversified programs for both teaching and performance of the arts."⁴⁹

Kahn's Design

On 29 June 1970, Kahn again appeared before the board, this time with sketches and a large model to show the specifics of the ideas he had outlined in February (Figures 12–14).⁵⁰ He proposed a separate arts quadrangle that would mirror in plan and equal in size Cram's original Academic Court to the east of the Fondren Library. His plan was striking not just in its grand scale but also in its reference to Cram's master plan of 1910, which the university had abandoned in the late 1940s.⁵¹

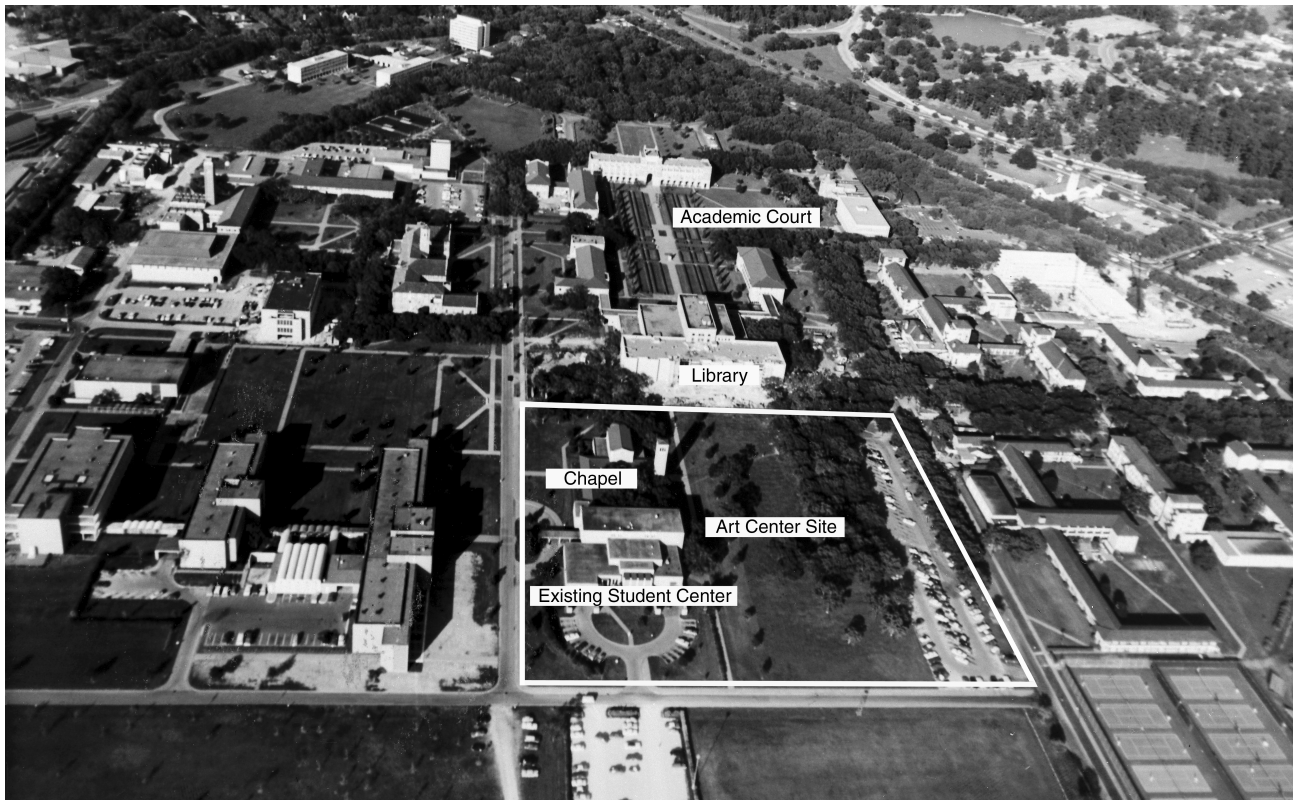


Figure 11 Aerial view of the Rice University campus, looking east, ca. 1969, showing Fondren Library at center and the Academic Court beyond; site of Kahn's Art Center in foreground, with existing Student Center and Rice Memorial Center Chapel to the left (Woodson Research Center)

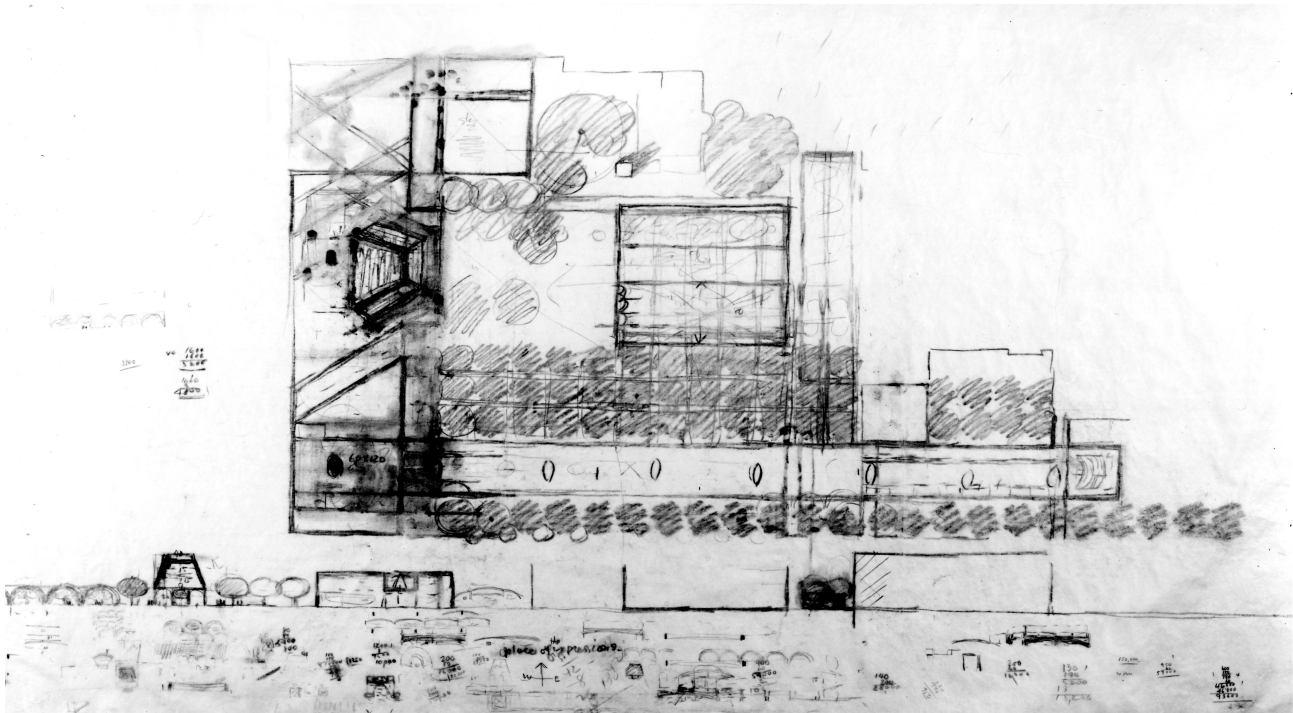


Figure 12 Kahn, Rice University Art Center, sketch, charcoal on tracing paper, 28 June 1970 (Kahn Personal Drawing no. 800.4; Kahn Collection). See *JSAH* online for high-resolution, zoomable color image

long seven-bay art and architecture building on the sites later occupied by Cesar Pelli's Herring Hall (1984) and Alan Greenberg's Humanities Building (2000). The odd shape of this component resulted from Kahn's decision to insert the building into a clearing between rows of live oak trees. (Pelli and Greenberg followed the same strategy.) Kahn placed this bar-shaped building approximately where the Cram master plan had located a future building (see Figure 5). It is unclear whether Kahn had studied Cram's plan or was just respecting existing site conditions, but his design reestablished the important planning principles of the original design. Rice had placed the Fondren Library across Cram's main axis in the 1940s, destroying the linear force of the original campus plan, but Kahn resuscitated the formal system, and this would also be respected by other architects who later built at the west end.⁵²

The awkward placement of the Fondren Library was the site condition that most affected Kahn's response. The library completely closed the Academic Court on the west end and made it impossible for Kahn to connect his Art Center complex to Cram's quadrangle. This and the wooded character of the site dictated the inwardly focused quality of Kahn's design, which suggested the arts precinct was a world unto itself. The library's largely blank west wall was unattractive and led him to place the new student center in front of it, leaving only a narrow residual space between.

On the northwest a new art museum would replace the existing Rice student center, but the adjoining Rice Memorial Chapel with its campanile and oak-shaded courtyard would remain (see Figure 14). It was a small gesture, to be sure, but it was a clue to the larger synthesis that Kahn was attempting. Architectural historian Stephen Fox has suggested that Rice campus planning has alternated between two poles—Cram's Beaux-Arts formality and a later, more casual, "suburban" aesthetic.⁵³ Kahn introduced a third paradigm: his buildings completely enclosed the wooded area to the west of the library and created a number of intimate courtyards. With neither the manicured lawns of the Academic Court nor the loose arrangement of recent additions, Kahn's Art Center alluded to Cram—with its enclosed, inward focus—and to the suburban aesthetic—with its thorough integration of nature and architecture.

Kahn's proposal would have added a great richness and spatial complexity at the heart of the campus. The preserved chapel's courtyard would be only one of the small, intimate spaces that made up the arts precinct. The large student center defined a narrow tree-shaded lane between it and the library to the east; this path opened onto a more expansive one to the south. Yet another court appeared south of the library in a residual space created by the positioning of the art and architecture building.

All of these courts took advantage of one of Cram's legacies, the extended allée of oaks west of the Academic Court, which was to have defined a proposed Persian garden.⁵⁴ The garden never materialized, but after half a century the trees had matured into a thick canopy that offered a respite from the Texas sun. Kahn would have surrounded the oaks with architecture and allowed this natural pavilion to mediate between his interventions. At the west end of the site, a broad lawn—framed by the theater, the art museum, and the new student center—served as a focal point for the arts complex.

The Relationship to Kahn's Other Work

Such attention to small, private spaces connects the Rice project to Kahn's other work in which he explored the theme of community by treating multibuilding projects as urban microcosms. In a January 1969 lecture Kahn spoke of his understanding of places like the ones he would soon design for Rice, and it sounded remarkably like a city. He believed the nature of a university involved an interrelatedness, an "architecture of connection . . . a consciousness of the involvement of the land and the buildings, [and] their association with the library." It included several types of outdoor space, such as "the garden, the court and a piazza," as well as "a place of happening"—a crossroads such as the Athenian Agora, a place of chance encounter, "a place where possibly the student, the administration, and the teacher would meet . . . and it sits probably in a green area like this without paths whatsoever, because who knows where you're going."⁵⁵

Kahn's interest in the role of landscape is less apparent in his better-known built works of the period, such as the Phillips Exeter library, the Kimbell Art Museum, and the Yale Center for British Art, which are self-contained and inwardly focused. Along with his other large multibuilding projects for academic, cultural, and religious institutions, the Rice Art Center demonstrated Kahn's preference for complex, rather than simple arrangements, which suggested the feeling of an urban neighborhood.⁵⁶ This type of solution lacked the drama and clarity of Jefferson's Lawn at the University of Virginia but better expressed Kahn's belief that an academic community required intimate places that encouraged human interaction ("Schools began with a man under a tree who did not know he was a teacher discussing his realization with a few who did not know they were students").⁵⁷ Similar design principles applied to both the city and the university because both were communities; landscape provided the matrix, connecting places that could be either public or private, depending on the situation. "This architecture of connection between, let's say, of the whole city, takes direction," Kahn said. "The

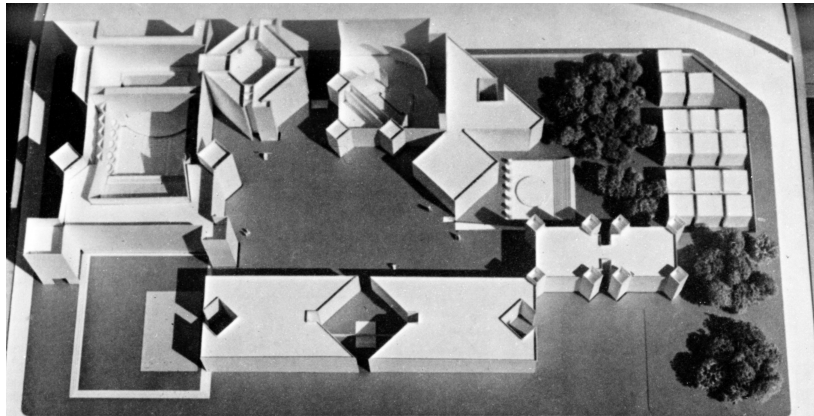


Figure 15 Kahn, Fort Wayne Fine Arts Center, model, November 1963 (Kahn Collection)

university, you see, and the other schools take direction by reason of their courts, gardens, and their avenues.”⁵⁸

The earliest of these larger projects, the Fort Wayne Fine Arts Center (1961–73), began with a program for a cultural center that Kahn described as encompassing “the philharmonic; the civic theater; the art school; art gallery; [and] dormitories.”⁵⁹ Over time he arranged the buildings in various configurations that sought to establish a dialogue among the institutions. Common to all iterations was a large central plaza that anchored the complex, but the placement of the buildings generated many subsidiary spaces at the edges. A model from late 1963 (Figure 15) shows these ideas, as well as his fondness for diagonal geometry, often achieved by bisecting a square or turning a square 45 degrees. In plan either tactic resulted in triangular open areas around the buildings. These features combined to create a lively and dynamic urban center for Fort Wayne, a small but ambitious city that lacked such a focal point.

The monumental plaza at Fort Wayne recalled such grand civic spaces as the Piazza di San Marco in Venice or the Piazza del Campo in Siena and it was, above all, a public space shared by the institutions that defined its perimeter. Kahn heightened the plaza’s importance by hiding it from view until the visitor had crossed a small square at the edge of the complex and squeezed through a funnel-like opening between two buildings. The act of entrance became an event and the visitor sensed arrival, as if entering a room. Kahn recognized that such monumental public spaces not only separate buildings but join them, creating a relationship best defined as a community, in which the result is greater than the sum of its parts. Each institution gained importance through its proximity to other institutions.⁶⁰

In these urban ensembles, Kahn usually balanced such large public spaces with smaller private ones. Although there was one formal entrance to the plaza, there were many informal ways to enter, and each seemed to connect to a smaller, more

intimate place. These were the residual spaces created by the diagonal orientation of his buildings, but that did not imply that they were accidental. Kahn explained: “A square preceding the buildings can have life independent of the buildings which gravitate to it. But a place which depends on each building for its completion is one which gives no life until its parts are assembled. There is a different desire, a different will, a different way of making such a place.”⁶¹ He was conscious that life shared by a community of people requires different kinds of spaces, each with qualities that complement the other.

These ideas are apparent in the largest and most important of these multibuilding projects, the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad (1962–74).⁶² He organized the campus of the business school hierarchically, with the important academic functions of classrooms, library, and faculty offices surrounded by residential areas for students and faculty (Figure 16). The academic buildings surrounded a monumental plaza—the symbolic heart of the community—but the classroom and office wings formed smaller residual

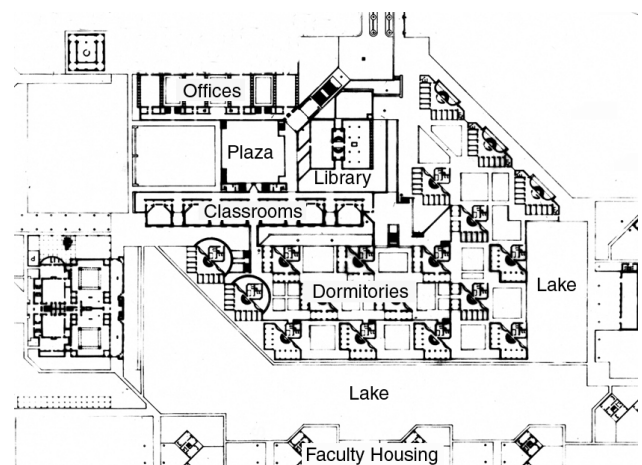


Figure 16 Kahn, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, detail of site plan, ca. 1974, labeled by author (Kahn Collection)

spaces. This strategy echoed his proposal for Fort Wayne, but at Ahmedabad Kahn added another layer—a large man-made lake that physically separated yet visually connected the academic and residential components.

The different nature of public and private activities required a difference in scale at Ahmedabad, and while a few monumental buildings defined the plaza, the residential areas across the lake were composed of many smaller two- and three-story buildings, each of which enclosed its own small private gardens. Thus, as Kahn said about Fort Wayne, while the plaza had a “life independent” of the buildings that encircled it, the residential areas at Ahmedabad depended on the relationships formed among the many smaller buildings.

Although Kahn provided smaller, more intimate spaces at Fort Wayne, these offered visitors only private moments in an entirely public precinct. The more complex program at Ahmedabad required real privacy and places to live, work, and study. Taking advantage of the large site, he relied on a formal system of zoning to separate the private residential areas from the public academic complex. Each group of buildings formed a small neighborhood, unified and ordered by the overall system of courts and gardens. The lake was to be the focal point of this system, and although the client decided not to build it, Kahn used the idea in a similar manner to separate his legislative assembly building at Dhaka, Bangladesh from the nearby residential hostels.⁶³

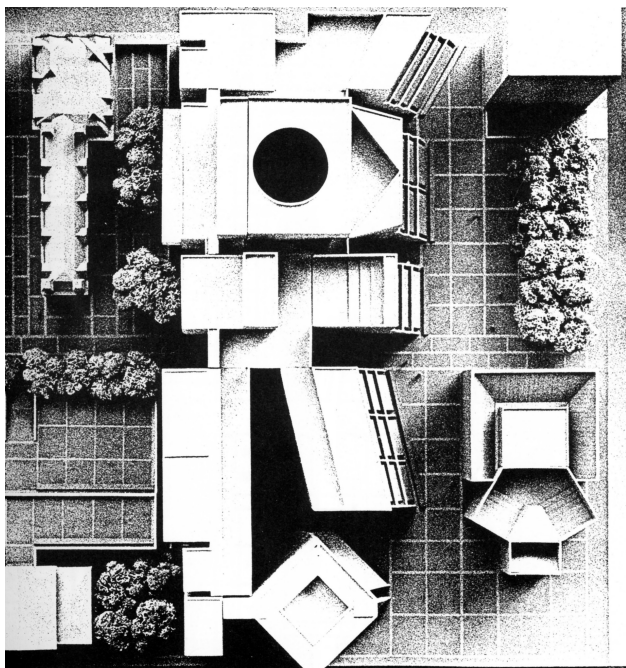


Figure 17 Kahn, Philadelphia College of Art, model, 1964, with existing campus at left, proposed new buildings in center, and to the right, courts that open to the edges of the site (Kahn Collection)

In the mid-1960s the Philadelphia College of Art wished to expand its historic Center City campus northward, and Kahn struggled to reconcile competing demands (1964–66).⁶⁴ At first he proposed a series of low-rise buildings whose height and parallel arrangement alluded to the existing campus, while enclosing small linear courts between them. Further revision led to fewer but larger buildings that defined an expansive plaza at the northern edge of the site (Figure 17). By opening the center of the site to the surrounding streets, he better integrated the campus with its urban neighborhood. The open spaces were less intimate and the buildings more massive, because the requirements of the commission forced him to choose between two paradigms for a community. He abandoned the model of the introspective monastic cloister in favor of a more contextual approach that recognized the campus was part of a larger community.

In 1965 the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine de Ricci sought Kahn’s help for a new convent near Media, Pennsylvania (1965–69).⁶⁵ The program called for a chapel, dormitory, dining hall, classrooms, and offices. Kahn configured the plan with the residences as an extended U shape; within the resulting central court he inserted volumes for

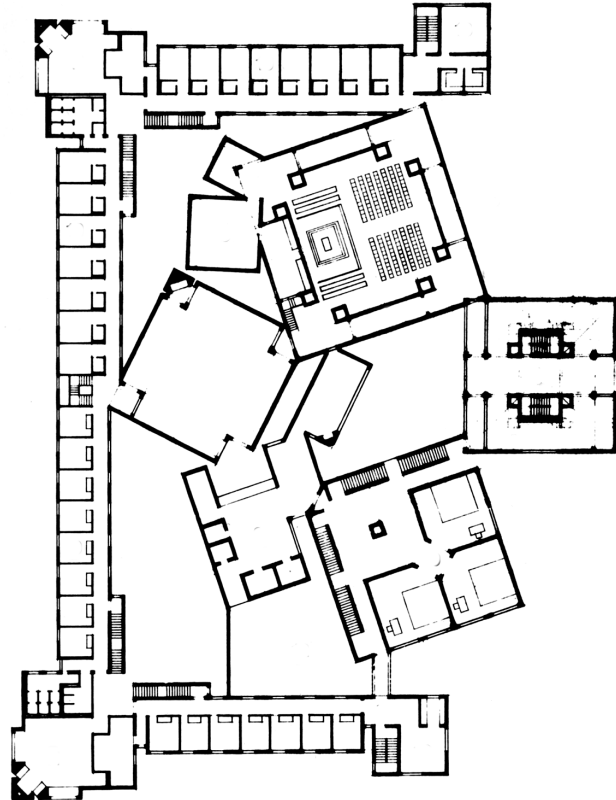


Figure 18 Kahn, Motherhouse, Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine de Ricci, Media, Pennsylvania, plan, 1968 (Kahn Collection)

the other functions (Figure 18). As with his other multi-building projects, the arrangement generated numerous small subsidiary courts. The design for the convent was unique in his work, however, because its plan departed from the rectilinear and diagonal geometry that he favored. Instead, the buildings floated in the central court with a randomness that bordered on collage. The smaller courts that resulted from the collision of these collaged elements were triangular or polygonal—much more dynamic spaces than the static cloisters that were the norm in monastic institutions.

In this series of projects for academic and religious institutions, Kahn sought to define the essence of the institution in small moments of human interaction such as those between teacher and student. This required an architectural solution that encouraged such conversations—a garden or court shielded from outside distraction. This model is apparent in his iconic Salk Institute, where two laboratory buildings define a central court. He promoted this type of human interaction in larger projects by providing multiple courts. In these multibuilding projects, with their complex arrays of buildings, small courts, and gardens, he showed an intense engagement with the landscape that is also clear in the Rice Art Center.

Kahn's proposals for Rice had much in common with the other projects, but each program was unique and his solutions were site specific. The smaller commissions at Philadelphia and Media differed from those at Fort Wayne and Ahmedabad because they did not have a single monumental public space and relied instead on medium-sized courts to serve both public and private functions. The Rice campus already had one such monumental public space—Cram's Academic Court—and Kahn did not want to compete with it. With a site that equaled the area of the Academic Court, his challenge was to avoid overwhelming the original spaces and buildings (see Figure 11). That concern was clear in his response, which stressed small, not monumental, spaces. His "architecture of connection" was tailored to the site and its history.⁶⁶

In the other projects Kahn's buildings ordered the site; he imposed geometries to create an order. In his design for Rice there were no dominant geometries or regulating lines. Each proposed building was a single intervention, carefully inserted in the existing landscape. The open lawn between the theater and the student center was the focal point, but it was not like the monumental plaza at Fort Wayne, with its "life independent" of the buildings. With the exception of this lawn, each outdoor space of the Art Center complex seemed to be residual space, which in Kahn's words, "depends on each building for its completion."⁶⁷ Kahn wanted to give the Art Center a scale comparable to the neighboring Academic Court while avoiding the monumental effect of its formal quadrangle. The Art Center's large buildings would

be screened by trees and approached through a series of small private courts. These smaller spaces did not have a lower status; they were essential for what he celebrated as the paradigmatic activity of academic institutions, the teacher talking with his students under a tree.

It is striking that in his drawings for Rice Kahn rendered the trees and landscape with more definition and vitality than his proposed buildings. The buildings relate to each other not through geometry or even shared public space, but rather through the landscape; they are connected by spaces that share the canopy of trees. Where there were no old trees, Kahn planted them, as in the residual space between the library and the new student center, which acquired its own allée of oaks (see Figure 13). The trees were not added to enhance an architectural rendering; they embodied his belief that in a community with multiple centers of activity, the buildings must clearly relate or connect to each other and that their relationship occurs in public space. Each of his multibuilding projects showed a different way to make such connections. His public spaces were carefully modulated to achieve the desired tone or atmosphere, whether a monumental space to energize a city like Fort Wayne or polygonal courts to bring new dynamism to a religious community. Taking advantage of Rice's wooded campus, Kahn relied on the "architectural" nature of trees to provide the shelter and privacy required for the interaction of teacher and student.

Kahn's vision of a community based on "the garden, the court and a piazza" proved too ambitious for most clients.⁶⁸ Although one building of the proposed Fort Wayne complex was realized, only the Indian Institute of Management was completed in substantially the form Kahn intended. Clients abandoned the other projects when it became clear that they could not afford to build his designs. The outcome at Rice was similar.

The Board's Decision and the Roles of the Parties

Kahn's proposal for the Art Center was an original work that showed great promise, but he was unable to persuade the trustees. It is unclear exactly what happened at the 29 June meeting because the board left no record of the proceedings, and the surviving participants have conflicting recollections. There is a consensus that the cost of Kahn's proposal far exceeded what the university wanted to spend, and some trustees also may have reacted negatively to the large size and sprawling nature of the complex. Todd blamed Kahn as well for failing to develop his initial proposals.⁶⁹ Within minutes after the presentation, the trustees suspended the project indefinitely—a de facto cancellation. Two days later, the

university sent Kahn a letter thanking him for his efforts but reminding him that the matter would require further study.⁷⁰

In the months and years that followed, the university said little about the project. In 1971 Rice convened a blue-ribbon panel to advise on the direction of its fine arts programs. The committee briefly discussed the Art Center, but the details were kept under wraps. "The Kahn study has not been released," the minutes report, and trustee Oveta Culp Hobby minimized its importance, stressing the need for pre-architectural planning: "some things preceded brick and mortar."⁷¹ Within a few years, memories faded and the university seems to have lost or destroyed all records of the project.⁷²

By quietly dropping the whole matter, the trustees tactfully avoided embarrassing the architect, the university, and its prominent patrons. Public reticence masked the complex change in circumstances that had occurred in the nine months since the university commissioned the Art Center. In hindsight, it is clear that each of the parties associated with the project—Kahn, the board of governors, and the de Menils—contributed in some way to its failure.

Anderson Todd's criticism of Kahn's failure to develop his ideas identified only one of the board's concerns—and probably a minor one. Yet it raised a ghost that haunted Kahn's reputation. He was notorious for his dilatory working style, which often pushed projects months behind schedule.⁷³ Indeed, there is evidence that he did not spend many hours on the Rice commission.

Kahn had little time for the project because he was over-committed. His booming architecture practice competed with teaching duties at the University of Pennsylvania and a grueling travel schedule that kept him out of the office for days at a time. Moreover, he tended to keep revising designs, even during the construction process. Adept at keeping many balls in the air, Kahn seems to have made his last drawing for Rice on 29 June, the day he met with the board (see Figure 13).⁷⁴

Yet Kahn made time for more favored commissions. In the spring of 1970 the Phillips Exeter library and the Kimbell Art Museum had begun construction, and he was just beginning the Yale Center for British Art, a commission that he received shortly before being hired by Rice. His Yale project files from that period are voluminous, and his calendar records frequent meetings in New Haven, including a series of client presentations in May and June 1970, at precisely the time he was supposed to be preparing for his presentation in Houston. In contrast, his files contain only nine sketches for the Art Center, some programming and preliminary design work by his associates, and a chipboard model.⁷⁵ Of course, at Rice's request, Kahn was doing only preliminary planning, but even in that context, his

productivity was low, and this tends to support Todd's blunt assessment that the Rice project failed because "Kahn didn't do anything."⁷⁶ The higher priority given the Yale project is not surprising, considering Kahn's close association with that institution over two decades.

The board could have asked Kahn to reduce the scale of his proposal or it could have changed architects. Its decision to stop the project entirely suggests that there were other issues besides Kahn's performance. The most obvious was financial. The university had lined up \$6 million in potential funding for the complex, including \$2 million previously allocated for the new architecture building, \$2 million pledged by the de Menils, and \$2 million from the endowment for the music school.⁷⁷ If approved, the project would have been designed and built in stages, but even in 1970, \$6 million was an unrealistically low budget for such an ambitious program. The 1967 prospectus estimated the cost of a combined facility for the architecture school and the art department at more than \$7 million. Two years later, the university added to the program an art museum, a center for multimedia studies, a music school, a performing arts theater, and a parking garage. Kahn reportedly told the trustees that his full proposal would cost \$40 million.⁷⁸

The board must have realized that even with a different architect, such an ambitious arts complex would cost considerably more than it had available—a fatal problem, because under its charter the university was prohibited from borrowing to pay for capital projects. Also, like many academic institutions at the time, Rice was running a budget deficit because of cutbacks in federal research funding. Faced with economic uncertainty, the trustees favored retrenchment, not expansion.⁷⁹ Moreover, they seemed bewildered and alienated by the politically charged atmosphere on the Rice campus during the 1969–70 school year. They began the term still smarting from student-faculty demonstrations in the spring of 1969 that had forced the resignation of William H. Masterson, the recently appointed university president.⁸⁰ Antiwar protests and student rebellion continued in the spring of 1970. Embittered and resentful of a university community that showed little respect or gratitude, and lacking presidential leadership, the trustees were in no mood to embark on an expensive capital project for the arts.⁸¹

Termination of the project may have been the safe choice under the circumstances, but it constituted a stunning policy reversal and an unmistakable rebuff of the de Menils. As part of its broad enhancement of the humanities and fine arts, Rice had recruited them to increase its prominence, and the couple expected that the university would support their efforts.⁸² Thus no one was more stunned by the cancellation of the project than the de Menils, who seem to have been

little more than spectators when the board made its decision. Two years later John de Menil criticized the way the trustees handled the matter, complaining privately that “[n]one of the interested parties were shown [Kahn’s] sketches.”⁸³

The trustees’ actions underscore the fact that their relationship with the couple was not warm. Despite the best intentions, the Rice–de Menil union was frustrated by a clash of cultures and temperaments that they never succeeded in bridging. The de Menils and the members of the board were all wealthy but otherwise had little in common. The trustees were politically conservative, while the de Menils were liberal. The trustees worked quietly behind the scenes, while the de Menils attracted public attention. The biggest difference was more subtle. In their many years as the primary donors at St. Thomas, the de Menils dealt with that institution from a position of power. The priests and administrators were not their equals, socially or financially. At Rice, however, the situation was reversed. The board of governors included members of the city’s richest and most prominent families. In such company the de Menils’ fortune and social status were not exceptional.⁸⁴ Yet the couple was dogmatic in their support of modern art, and they never concealed their disdain for the board’s conservative taste in art and architecture.⁸⁵ This could be interpreted as arrogance, and the trustees probably resented it.⁸⁶ While there is no evidence of overt conflicts with Rice trustees, the couple’s failure to win approval for the construction of any major facilities at Rice, even if financed with their own money, suggests they were rebuffed by their social peers on the board.⁸⁷

The project could have been salvaged, but the trustees seemed reluctant to work with the couple. John de Menil also proposed that Rice build a smaller, less expensive arts facility just for the de Menil programs, but the board showed little interest in this idea either.⁸⁸ In a December 1972 letter, H. Malcolm Lovett reminded Herbert Allen, the new board chairman, that the de Menils had expressed interest in construction of new facilities for their arts programs at Rice. He recommended that the board reconsider the Kahn proposal to keep the couple at the university, but there is no evidence that the board took any action.⁸⁹

Indeed, it was already too late. After two decades of working to advance their programs through existing institutions, the de Menils were beginning to chart a more independent course. When their break with St. Thomas sent them and their arts programs to Rice, their promising Rothko Chapel project at St. Thomas was cast into doubt. They originally had intended it as the focal point of the Johnson-designed quadrangle, but their split with the university forced them to move it to their own land adjacent to St. Thomas in 1968.⁹⁰

Dedicated in 1971, the Rothko Chapel proved very successful in its first year of operation as an art and ecumenical center and was drawing visitors from all over the world.⁹¹ No doubt marveling at what they had created on their own, the de Menils realized that they no longer needed the city’s established cultural institutions to attain their goals. By September 1972, while the Rice trustees and administration continued their desultory consideration of the Art Center, the de Menils had decided to build their own art museum with Kahn as the architect.⁹² John de Menil explained the decision in a memorandum to the Menil Foundation’s board of directors. He said that Rice’s failure to provide adequate space for storage and handling of their collection would require them to build their own facility.⁹³ He reminded his board that four years earlier the couple had pledged \$2 million toward construction of an arts complex on the Rice campus that would have solved these problems, but the university had not acted. With characteristic bluntness he concluded: “[t]he announcement by the Menil Foundation that it has commissioned Kahn to design the [new facility] will make it clear to Rice that we are out of their building plans on the campus.”⁹⁴

Conclusion

The de Menils’ relationship with Rice was strained, but it was not over. John de Menil died in June 1973 and Dominique de Menil was left to carry on their work. Because of the long lead time needed to develop their own art museum, she continued to stage exhibitions at Rice until 1986, shortly before Piano’s Menil Collection building opened.⁹⁵ She also continued her financial support of the university’s fine arts programs, and in 1997, shortly before her death, Rice recognized her generosity by naming one of the President’s Lectures in her honor.⁹⁶

The Rice Art Center project is not as well known as Kahn’s other work, but it offers valuable insights about the architect’s approach to complex community projects, few of which were realized. In all such projects, he created an elaborate network of open spaces to establish what he called the “architecture of connection.”⁹⁷ By modulating the scale of public spaces, he made them conducive to the human interaction on which such institutions depended.

Although Prown lamented that the clients of architectural projects remain largely anonymous, the Rice Art Center shows that closer study of the clients can provide another layer of meaning that is often overlooked. The project marked the enthusiasm that greeted the de Menils’ arrival at Rice in 1969. It was a strategic venture to strengthen the new relationship, but when the initial euphoria waned, the

university's commitment to the project proved short lived. This led the de Menils to create their own cultural institution, a development that brought formal recognition of their contributions to American art and culture. Thus, the Rice Art Center episode is noteworthy because it explains why the history of the Menil Collection unfolded as it did. Indeed, it probably had less significance for the busy architect than for his institutional client and prominent patrons.

Notes

1. The research for this article was funded in part by a Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in 2002. The author appreciates the assistance of the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania; the Menil Archives, the Menil Collection; and the Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University. He is grateful to Stephen Fox, Nora Laos, Michelangelo Sabatino, and Richard Guy Wilson for their insightful comments about the text, and would like to single out Geraldine Aramanda of the Menil Archives for special thanks. The article has benefited from David Brownlee's careful editing. The author presented an early draft at the annual meeting of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, Fort Worth, October 2005.

Memorandum regarding "The Establishment of a School of Arts at Rice University," 23 Nov. 1968, with transmittal letter, Mino Badner to Dean Virgil W. Topazio, 25 Nov. 1968. Menil Archives, The Menil Collection, Houston (hereafter Menil Archives).

2. Jules David Prown, "On Being a Client," *JSAH* 42 (March 1983), 11.

3. The Rice University Art Center of 1969–70 and the Menil Foundation project of 1972–74 are described in the standard Kahn reference books. The most helpful is Heinz Ronner and Sharad Jhaveri, *Louis I. Kahn: Complete Work, 1934–1974*, 2nd ed. (Basel and Boston: Birkhäuser, 1987), 376–77 (Rice), 424–25 (Menil). Garland has published all of Kahn's sketches for the two projects in *The Louis I. Kahn Archive, Personal Drawings: The Completely Illustrated Catalogue of the Drawings in the Louis I. Kahn Collection* (New York: Garland, 1987), 6: 338–41 (Rice), and 7: 2–29 (Menil) (hereafter *Kahn Personal Drawings*). See also David B. Brownlee and David G. De Long, *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 109–10 (Rice), 136–37 (Menil). Elsewhere, the Rice project has appeared only twice. Stephen Fox, *The Campus Guide: Rice University* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 18; *The General Plan of the William M. Rice Institute and Its Architectural Development, Architecture at Rice, Monograph 29* (Houston: Rice University, 1980), 80–82. Regarding Kahn's Menil Foundation project, see Patricia Cummings Loud, *The Art Museums of Louis I. Kahn* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 244–59. Otherwise, the Menil project is usually mentioned only as a footnote to discussions of Renzo Piano's 1987 Menil Collection building. See, for example, Richard Ingersoll, "Pianissimo: The Very Quiet Menil Collection," *Texas Architect* 37, no. 3 (May–June 1987), 40–47.

4. There are no biographies or scholarly histories of John and Dominique de Menil but many profiles by journalists. The following are the most thorough and are the basis for much of the historical background in this article. Marguerite Johnson, "The Institute for the Arts Comes to Rice," *Rice University Review* (Summer 1971), 6–11, "Information Files, 'Institute for the Arts, 1969–1972,'" Woodson Research Center, Fondren Library, Rice University (hereafter, "Woodson Research Center"); Marguerite Johnston, "The de Menils, (four-part series)," *Houston Post*, 9–12 Jan. 1977; Ann Holmes, "Dominique de Menil—From Jeune Fille to Renaissance Woman," *Art News* (Jan. 1983), 80; Dominique Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," *Texas Monthly*, April 1983, 140; Grace Glueck, "The de Menil Family:

The Medici of Modern Art," *New York Times Magazine*, 13 May 1986, 28; Calvin Tomkins, "The Benefactor," *New Yorker*, 8 June 1998, 52–67. The de Menil children have continued their parents' activities as collectors and patrons of the arts but on a smaller scale. Regarding the children, see Glueck, "The Medici of Modern Art," 34, 37–39; and Bob Colacello, "Remains of the Dia," *Vanity Fair*, Sept. 1996.

5. The de Menils' private collection was said to number in excess of 10,000 pieces at the time the museum opened in 1987. Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 209 (quoting Walter Hopps, first director of the Menil Collection). There is no record of its size in the late 1960s, but clearly it was substantial. Their large but idiosyncratic collection of art reflected their interests in four areas: Antiquity, Byzantine and Medieval, Tribal, and Twentieth-Century Art (particularly Surrealism). *The Menil Collection: A Selection from the Paleolithic to the Modern Era* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 9. See also *La Rime et la raison: Les collections Ménéil (Houston–New York): Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 17 avril–30 juillet 1984* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture, Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1984). The wide range of curatorial projects undertaken before Dominique de Menil's death is recorded in dozens of exhibition catalogs, dating back to 1960. See also Marcia Brennan, *Modern Patronage: de Menil Gifts to American and European Museums* (Houston: Menil Foundation, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

6. The Menil Foundation arts campus now includes the Rothko Chapel (1971) by Barnstone and Aubry, Renzo Piano's Menil Collection building (1987), Piano's later Cy Twombly Gallery (1995), and the Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum (1997) designed by François de Menil to house two thirteenth-century Byzantine ceiling frescoes rescued from a vandalized church in Cyprus. Nearby is the renovated Richmond Hall Gallery, housing the minimalist light sculptures of the artist Dan Flavin (1998).

7. *The Image of the Black in Western Art* is a monumental project to catalogue every recorded image of the black race in Western art. The de Menils began the project in 1960, and it produced four volumes before responsibility shifted to Harvard University in 1994. *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976–89), vols. 1–4. Another volume is forthcoming, and the enormous archive of images has been made available to scholars. They also helped transform the historic De Luxe Theater in Houston's Fifth Ward into a neighborhood art gallery, from 1971 to 1973. Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 206.

8. In the late 1960s the de Menils groomed local activist Mickey Leland (1944–1989) for a political career; he served in the Texas legislature before earning a seat in the United States House of Representatives. Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 206–7. In 1986 Dominique de Menil and Jimmy Carter created the Carter-Menil Human Rights Foundation to promote the protection of human rights throughout the world.

9. Dominique de Menil, "Address by Mrs. John de Menil at the Opening of the Rothko Chapel, February 27, 1971," Information Files, "de Menil, Dominique," Woodson Research Center; Dominique de Menil, "The Rothko Chapel," *Art Journal* 30 (Spring 1971), 249; Susan Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel: An Act of Faith* (Houston: Rothko Chapel, 1989); David Anfam and Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, *Mark Rothko, the Chapel Commission* (Houston: The Menil Collection, 1996); Sheldon Nodelman, *The Rothko Chapel Paintings: Origins, Structure, Meaning* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).

10. Glueck, "The Medici of Modern Art," 28.

11. There is no evidence that the de Menils intended to give their art collection to Rice, but as this article shows, they did expect the university to build a facility to store and exhibit it. It is unclear what they planned to house in the Kahn building—their entire collection or only a small part of it dedicated to their activities at Rice. Nevertheless, archival documents show that they urgently needed to consolidate their many holdings in one location and

viewed the Rice facility as the solution—a place to store and exhibit all of the work that eventually became the core of the Menil Collection. See notes 93, 94, and accompanying text.

12. Kahn said a university was characterized by an “architecture of connection.” See “Silence and Light,” Lecture at ETH, Zurich, 12 Jan. 1969, reprinted in Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 6–9, and discussion at text accompanying note 55.

13. The seminal Richards building has been treated in numerous monographs and articles, including Museum of Modern Art, *Louis I. Kahn, Architect: Richards Medical Research Building* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961); Yukio Futagawa, *Richards Medical Research Building, Pennsylvania, 1961*; Salk Institute for Biological Studies, *California, 1965* (Tokyo: A.D.A. Edita, 1971); William H. Jordy, “What the Building ‘Wants to Be’: Louis I. Kahn’s Richards Medical Research Building at the University of Pennsylvania,” in William H. Jordy, ed., *American Buildings and their Architects, Volume 5: The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 361–426; August E. Komendant, *18 Years with Architect Louis I. Kahn* (Englewood, N.J.: Aloray, 1975), 7–24; *Kahn Personal Drawings*, 1: 468–82; Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 104–9; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 62–64; 172–79; 324–29; Thomas Leslie, *Louis Kahn: Building Art, Building Science* (New York: Braziller, 2005), 91–127; Robert McCarter, *Louis I. Kahn* (New York: Phaidon, 2005), 112–25; Carter Wiseman, *Louis Kahn: Beyond Time and Style: A Life in Architecture* (New York: Norton, 2007), 94–105.

14. The architectural press at the time portrayed Kahn as an intellectual leader of the profession, a man with new ideas. See “Louis Kahn and the Living City,” *Architectural Forum* 108 (March 1958), 114; Walter McQuade, “Architect Louis Kahn and His Strong-boned Structures,” *Architectural Forum* 107 (Oct. 1957), 134.

15. Kahn was known for his dilatory work habits and insensitivity to clients’ budgets. See discussion at text accompanying notes 73–76. His success with institutional clients often depended on the presence of a leader who could guide the development process with patience and a firm hand. Examples include Jonas Salk, Richard Brown, and Jules David Prown, discussed in text accompanying note 2. See Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 80. Kahn associate Marshall Meyers said that having an institutional bureaucracy for a client created a dilemma because it gave Kahn “the freedom to elaborate on ideas that were never thoroughly tested. There was no constituency for the opposition.” Marshall D. Meyers, interview, Alessandra Latour, *Louis I. Kahn: l’uomo, il maestro* (Rome: Edizioni Kappa, 1986), 77.

16. For the early history of Rice University, see Fredericka Meiners, *A History of Rice University: The Institute Years, 1907–1963* (Houston: Rice University, 1982); John B. Boles, *A University So Conceived: A Brief History of Rice* (Houston: Rice University, 1992); John B. Boles, *University Builder: Edgar Odell Lovett and the Founding of the Rice Institute* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

17. Rice’s architectural history is recounted in Fox, *Campus Guide*, and Fox, *General Plan*, (see note 2). See also Patrick Nicholson, *William Ward Watkin and the Rice Institute* (Houston: Gulf Printing, 1991).

18. In 1964 Rice’s Ten Year Plan announced that the university “aspires to a level of excellence which clearly transcends a regional frame of reference.” Rice University, *A Ten Year Plan for Rice University, 1965–1975* (Houston: Rice University, 1964), 1. The document candidly assessed strengths and weaknesses and suggested changes. Acknowledging that “the natural sciences have received relatively greater emphasis at Rice from the very beginning,” the authors saw the need for all programs in the social sciences and fine arts to “be strengthened greatly.” *Ibid.*, 9, 2. In particular, they confessed that with the exception of architecture, “[c]reative expression is one pecu-

liarily human activity to which until recently not too much attention has been paid at Rice University.” *Ibid.*, 14.

19. The charter provided for seven trustees. In 1949 the board of trustees became part of a larger body known as the “board of governors,” which included a number of non-voting governors serving as advisors. In 1968 the board of governors added several non-voting alumni representatives. In 1998 the body was drastically enlarged and the distinction between voting trustees and non-voting governors was abolished, as all members became trustees. *Rice Thresher* (24 Sept. 1999), 9, Information Files, “Board of Governors,” Woodson Research Center.

20. This process, and the background to the Ten Year Plan, are described in Meiners, *A History of Rice University*, 196–211.

21. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston dates its inception to 1900 and constructed its first building in 1924. In its early years it acquired much of its permanent collection through bequests and donations from interested citizens. Will Hogg (1875–1930) and his sister Ima (1882–1975) played significant roles in Houston’s cultural life in the first half of the twentieth century. They were among the first of their peers to establish large collections of the fine and decorative arts and to donate them to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and other institutions. Emily Ballew Neff, *Frederic Remington: The Hogg Brothers Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2–37. Many others followed their example. Peter C. Marzio, “A Permanent Legacy: A History of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,” in *A Permanent Legacy: 150 Works from the Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1989), 11–37.

22. Jean de Menil changed the spelling of his name to “John” in 1962 after he became a United States citizen. Holmes, “Dominique de Menil,” 83.

23. The de Menils also owned a house in New York City and were strong supporters of the Museum of Modern Art. John de Menil served on the board of that institution for a number of years.

24. The de Menils’ conflicts with the Contemporary Arts Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston arose from their attempts to control the institutions they were funding. Philippe de Montebello, a former director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, admitted that “[w]hen they didn’t control things, they stepped aside.” Glueck, “The Medici of Modern Art,” 46. See similar accounts in Browning, “What I Admire I Must Possess,” 196, 198. Furthermore, their rigorous and uncompromising standards of quality alienated others in the arts community. Peter Marzio, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, called the de Menils “discerning collectors” and noted their “rigorously high aesthetic standards.” Marzio, *A Permanent Legacy*, 25.

25. The de Menil house has rarely been published and was ignored by Johnson, who objected to his clients’ decision hire Charles James, a New York fashion designer, to warm up the cold Miesian interiors. The most extensive discussion—with plans and photographs—is in Frank D. Welch, *Philip Johnson and Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 45–51. The interior is documented in Rosamond Bernier, “A Gift of Vision,” *House and Garden* 159 (July 1987), 120. The Menil Foundation recently restored the house, described in William Middleton, “The House that Rattled Texas Windows,” *New York Times*, 3 June 2004, F10; Bruce C. Webb, “Menil House, *Texas Architect* 57, no. 5 (Sept.–Oct. 2007), 56; and Bruce C. Webb, “Living Modern in Mid-Century Houston: Conserving the Menil House,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 62 (Sept. 2008), 11–19.

26. Johnson eventually withdrew from the chapel project because of disagreements with Rothko, but another de Menil protégé, Houston architect Howard Barnstone, and his partner, Eugene Aubry, completed it. The best account of Johnson’s work in Texas and his relationship with the de Menils is Frank D. Welch, *Philip Johnson and Texas*. See also Frank Welch, “Philip Johnson’s Texas Connections,” *Texas Architect* 4, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1993), 48–57; Frank Welch, “From Hines to Eternity,” *Texas Architect* 43, no. 4 (July–Aug. 1993), 44–53.

27. In 1962, when John de Menil criticized his recent work, Johnson responded defensively: "I will try to improve in the future. I care very much what you and Dominique think." Philip Johnson to John de Menil, 10 Oct. 1962, 3363 SF Records, box 1, folder 1, Menil Archives. Another copy of the letter exists in box 9, folder 48, "Philip Johnson Correspondence," Burdette Keeland Papers, University of Houston Libraries, Department of Special Collections and Archives.

28. In November 1965 John de Menil had called Kahn to request information about his work, and Kahn responded with photographs and other material about the Salk Institute. Louis I. Kahn to John de Menil, 5 Nov. 1965, box LIK 54, folder "Schlumberger," Kahn Collection; Yvette McGill to Louis I. Kahn, 15 Nov. 1965, box LIK 54, folder "Schlumberger," Kahn Collection.

29. Kahn's appearance at Rice became the basis two years later of an important Kahn monograph: Ann Mohler and Peter Papademetriou, eds., *Louis I. Kahn: Talks with Students, Architecture at Rice no. 26* (Houston: Rice University, 1969); reissued as *Louis I. Kahn: Conversations with Students, Architecture at Rice no. 26*, 2nd ed. (Houston: Rice University School of Architecture and New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

30. Dominique de Menil to Louis I. Kahn, 22 May 1967, box LIK 58, folder "University of St. Thomas," Kahn Collection. The exhibition *Visionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu* had originated in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale. Dominique de Menil brought it to the United States and produced the American catalog. It ran from October 1967 to January 1968 at St. Thomas, and proved to be the vanguard of a new interest in the three French architects. Kahn's contribution to the catalog was a poem, "Twelve Lines"; see Jean-Claude Lemagny, *Visionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, Lequeu* (Houston: University of St. Thomas and Gulf Printing, 1968), 5.

31. The notation "De Menil 10:00 Atlantic Aviation to Barcelona Point Long Island" appears on Kahn's calendar for 16 June 1968. Late in the day he left for Rome. This suggests that he traveled by private plane from Philadelphia to the Hamptons area of Long Island to visit the de Menils and later in the day went to Kennedy Airport to catch his flight to Europe. Box LIK 121, folder "Calendars," Kahn Collection. The de Menils owned a home in Manhattan and sometimes spent holidays in the Hamptons.

32. See generally documents in University of St. Thomas Records, box 1, folder 27, "UST and Art Department Financial Records, 1968–72," Menil Archives. Other accounts of the split can be found at Glueck, "The Medici of Modern Art," 66; Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 200; Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 105; Ann Holmes, "De Menils May Shift Patronage to Rice," *Houston Chronicle*, 17 Dec. 1968, sec. 1, p. 15; Ann Holmes, "The de Menil Art Influence Goes On," *Houston Chronicle*, 5 June 1973, sec. 3, p. 5.

33. Father Vincent J. Guinan, C.S.B. to Mr. and Mrs. Jean de Menil and Mr. Ed Hudson, 27 June 1956, University of St. Thomas Records, box 1, folder 3, "Architecture/Building Records, 1956–67," Menil Archives; Agreement, 12 April 1962 (possibly misdated because it was transmitted by letter of 12 April 1963), University of St. Thomas Records, box 1, folder 3, "Architecture/Building Records, 1956–67," Menil Archives.

34. Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 105; Johnson, "Institute for the Arts," 6–11. In 1965 Rice had recruited John O'Neil from the University of Oklahoma to head a new art department. O'Neil remembered later that "the first year I spent in a state of shock because there was *nothing* here. We were in primitive quarters in the basement of the Fondren Library." Johnson, "The de Menils," 10 Jan. 1977, 16A.

35. Glueck, "The Medici of Modern Art," 66; Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 200–201. The Institute was not to be a formal academic department but rather an adjunct to the humanities and fine arts programs. Unencumbered by the formalities of academic requirements, the new institute could act as a public outreach program that "would open Rice to the

public in a way not to be expected of the physics and math departments." Johnson, "Institute for the Arts," 7.

36. Glueck, "The Medici of Modern Art," 66; Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 200–201. This contrasted with their practice at St. Thomas, where the de Menils actively acquired art over a period of years and donated it to the university to form the core of its permanent collection. It was "meant to give the student direct personal experience with art." University of St. Thomas, *A Young Teaching Collection* (Houston: University of St. Thomas and Gulf Printing, 1968), 8. Ironically, the university exhibited the collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from November 1968 to January 1969, just as news broke that the de Menils were moving their operations to Rice. The exhibition catalog lists 252 pieces, which were a representative sampling of over two millennia of art history from all major cultures. Although parts of the Teaching Collection were stored and exhibited at Rice, the couple retained ownership of the art. Mary Kadish, Collections Registrar, The Menil Collection, telephone interview by the author, 11 June 2008.

37. Memorandum regarding "The establishment of a School of Arts at Rice University," 23 Nov. 1968, with transmittal letter, Mino Badner to Dean Virgil W. Topazio, 25 Nov. 1968, Rice Records, box 1, folder 4, "1968 Memo to Rice University—establishment of School of Arts," Menil Archives.

38. Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000. Todd credits his mentor, Jean Labatut of Princeton, for the idea of combining the art and architectural disciplines under one roof. The 1967 proposal is documented in "A Center for the Visual Arts," 16 Nov. 1967, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University—Pending," Kahn Collection.

39. James Sims, the university's business manager at the time, believed the Art Center project was undertaken to cement the relationship with the de Menils. James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999.

40. Fox, *General Plan*, 81–82. Lovett also mentioned his admiration for Kahn's Exeter building in private correspondence. H. Malcolm Lovett to Herbert Allen, 6 Dec. 1972, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 17, folder 1, "Board: Correspondence—Lovett, H. Malcolm (68/69—73/74)," Woodson Research Center. When Fox interviewed Lovett in 1977, Lovett took credit for the decision to hire Kahn. Stephen Fox, telephone interview by the author, 7 Aug. 2000.

41. Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000.

42. See the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, An Architectural History, 1924–1986* (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1992); Stephen Fox, "Cullinan Hall: A Window on Modern Houston," *Journal of Architectural Education* 54 (Feb. 2001), 158.

43. Surprisingly, the author was unable to find any document in the archives of the university or the Menil Collection regarding the terms of the agreement, including the rights and obligations of the parties. See, however, the memorandum regarding "The establishment of a School of Arts at Rice University," 23 Nov. 1968, with transmittal letter, Mino Badner to Dean Virgil W. Topazio, 25 Nov. 1968, Rice Records, box 1, folder 4, "1968 Memo to Rice University—establishment of School of Arts," Menil Archives.

44. The Art Center project appears to have been handled by the board's building and grounds committee, a small group that nonetheless would have constituted a majority of the seven voting trustees. Apparently, the committee never referred the matter to the full board for consideration because, according to James Sims, the project "never got off the ground." James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999. For the same reason, there seem to be no records of the project in the board's minutes. Ann Wise, Assistant to the Vice President and Treasurer, telephone interview by the author, 11 Jan. 2000.

45. Frank Vandiver to Louis I. Kahn, 4 Nov. 1969, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection; H. Malcolm Lovett to Louis

- I. Kahn, 21 Oct. 1969, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection. The Department of Fine Arts was later called the Department of Art and Art History.
46. The university envisioned "an initial phase of exploring our campus and determining the proper scope of the project. After the preliminary work is completed . . . a formal contractual agreement will be executed." Frank Vandiver to Louis I. Kahn, 4 Nov. 1969, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection. Kahn confirmed this understanding and added that "after the initial phase of the project is satisfactorily completed" the parties could frame "an agreement to cover Architect's services in designing and supervising construction of the buildings." Louis I. Kahn to James R. Sims, 19 Nov. 1969, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection. Therefore, it was always contemplated that Kahn's initial planning efforts would lead to a formal design phase if the client was satisfied with the preliminary design work.
47. Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000 (board meeting with Kahn at social club).
48. It is unclear exactly what Kahn showed the trustees at the meeting on 10 February 1970 because his sketch in the Kahn Personal Drawings file at no. 030.I.A.800.1 bears Kahn's handwritten note, "first dwg for Rice LIK 30 Mar 70" (emphasis in original) in the same red pencil as the drawing itself. Thus any sketches Kahn made for the trustees on 10 February must have been left in Houston.
49. "Rice Ponders Future Xanadu of the Arts" *Houston Post*, 6 March 1970, sec. 2, p. 8. See also Ann Holmes, "Louis Kahn Planning Possible Arts Complex, Theatre at Rice," *Houston Chronicle*, 5 March 1970, sec. 2, p. 5.
50. Kahn was assisted at the presentation by Winton Scott, his project architect for the Art Center. Winton Scott, e-mail communication with the author, 3 June 2008; Fox, *General Plan*, 82.
51. The sketches and model survive among the holdings of the Kahn Collection at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Cram's master plan, called the "General Plan," is discussed in detail at Fox, *General Plan* 5–27, and more generally at Fox, *Campus Guide*, 6–11. The siting of the library and its relationship to the master plan are discussed at Fox, *Campus Guide*, 49–53.
52. Stirling and Wilford's addition to Anderson Hall (1981), Cesar Pelli's Herring Hall (1984), and Alan Greenberg's Humanities Building (2000) are all located at the edge of Loop Road and constitute an outside ring of buildings beyond those that front on the Academic Court—a placement consistent with Cram's master plan. Fox discusses the siting of these buildings according to Cram's principles at Fox, *Campus Guide*, 56 (Anderson Hall), 60 (Humanities Building), 117 (Herring Hall).
53. Fox, *Campus Guide*, 16–17 ("suburbanization").
54. *Ibid.*, 7. In the 1950s the university destroyed many of the trees at the northwest end of Cram's allée by its insensitive placement of the student center.
55. Louis I. Kahn, "Silence and Light," Lecture at ETH, Zurich, 12 Jan. 1969, reprinted in Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 6–9.
56. The individual projects are covered in Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, and the Garland reference, *Kahn Personal Drawings*. David Brownlee notes the related themes that connect these multibuilding projects at Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 94.
57. Louis I. Kahn, "Form and Design," reprinted in Vincent Scully, *Louis I. Kahn* (New York: Braziller, 1962), 115.
58. "Silence and Light," Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 8.
59. Louis I. Kahn, "Remarks," *Perspecta* 9 (1965), 318; Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 198–207; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 112–13; Carla Yanni, "Fine Arts Center, School, and Performing Arts Theater," in Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 346–51.
60. "Now, is it good to feel that the art school is close to the philharmonic and to the civic theater? I think when all these activities come together, there is a kind of thing that is created. They surely function in themselves but when they come together there is something new." Louis I. Kahn, "Remarks," *Perspecta* 9 (1965), 319.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 208–33; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 103–07; Kathleen James, "Indian Institute of Management," in Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 368–73.
63. The capitol complex at Dhaka (1962–83) is widely considered Kahn's masterwork. For more information, see Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 234–65; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 81–86; Peter Reed, "Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Capital of Bangladesh," in Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 374–83; Sarah Williams Goldhagen, *Louis Kahn's Situated Modernism*, 162–98; Sarah [Williams] Ksiazek, "Architectural Culture in the Fifties: Louis Kahn and the National Assembly Complex in Dhaka," *JSAH* 52 (December 1993), 416; and *Louis I. Kahn, National Capitol of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1962–83* (Tokyo: A.D.A. Edita, 1994).
64. Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 276–81; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 115–16; Kathleen James, "Philadelphia College of Art," in Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 358–61. The Philadelphia College of Art occupied the south end of a block bounded by Broad, Pine, 15th, and Spruce streets and wished to expand its campus to the north end, a site now occupied by the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts (Raphael Viñoly, completed 2001).
65. Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 302–11; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 107–09; Michael J. Lewis, "The Dominican Motherhouse of St. Catherine de Ricci," in Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 384–89. In 1965 Kahn accepted a similar commission for a monastery in Southern California, St. Andrew's Priory near Valyermo (1965–67). Although he was not able to develop the design before the client abandoned the project, his early schemes predicted the tendency toward collaged elements that animated the Pennsylvania design. Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 312–13; Brownlee and De Long, *In the Realm of Architecture*, 107.
66. For Kahn's "architecture of connection," see "Silence and Light," Ronner & Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 6–9.
67. See Louis I. Kahn, "Remarks," *Perspecta* 9 (1965), 319.
68. For Kahn's explanation of the importance of "the garden, the court and a piazza," see "Silence and Light," Ronner and Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 6–9 and text accompanying note 55.
69. Winton Scott, quoted in Fox, *General Plan*, 82 (expense); James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999 (size); Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000 (neglect); William Camfield, interview by the author, 23 Aug. 2000 (expense).
70. James R. Sims to Louis I. Kahn, 1 July 1970, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection.
71. "Arts Advisory Council of Rice University: Report of the First Meeting," 9 Nov. 1971, 23, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 3, folder 10, "Advisory Council in Fine Arts, 1970/71–1971/72," Woodson Research Center.
72. There were few records to begin with, because the trustees handled the project personally, with little involvement by subordinates. Historian Fredericka Meiners noted that "Rice was a small community, and much of its business was transacted by one person who consulted another, arrived at a decision, and implemented it without recording it." Meiners, *A History of Rice University*, xiv–xv. Sims and Todd confirmed that the trustees usually communicated with each other orally, not in writing. James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999; Anderson Todd, interview by the

author, 8 Jan. 2000. Nevertheless, even the routine business correspondence could not be located only a few years later. In 1980 Drexel Turner of the Rice School of Architecture reconstructed a small file by obtaining copies of relevant documents from the Kahn archives in Philadelphia. Gerald L. Walker to Drexel Turner, 7 July 1980, Information Files: "Kahn, Louis I.," Woodson Research Center; Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 6, folder 3, "Art Institute Complex (building) (1969/70–70/71, 80/81)," Woodson Research Center.

73. These problems are common knowledge among those who knew Kahn or followed his career, but they are discussed at length in the memoirs of his engineer, August Komendant. See Komendant, *18 Years with Architect Louis I. Kahn*.

74. Of Kahn's nine surviving sketches for Rice, five are dated the day of the board meeting or the day before. Drawings nos. 030.I.A.800.5 through 030.I.A.800.7 in the Kahn Collection are dated 29 June 1970, *Kahn Personal Drawings*, 6: xxviii. Two others, 030.I.A.800.3 and 030.I.A.800.4, are dated 28 June 1970. *Ibid.*

75. There is an important caveat to this judgment about the small number of Kahn sketches for Rice. Kahn's personal drawings published by Garland include only those authenticated after his death by several close associates. See Julia Moore Converse, "Cataloguing the Collection," *Kahn Personal Drawings*, 1: xiii. The Kahn Collection also has a large folder of "Office Drawings" for the Rice project that are attributed to others in his office. This folder includes over sixty sketches on tracing paper, some of which are executed in charcoal in Kahn's distinctive style but have not been authenticated. Therefore, it is possible that he did more work on this project than the Garland compilation indicates.

76. Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000. Kahn's billing records provide more insights about his efforts on the project. They show time incurred only in connection with his three site visits; a block of time from March to May 1970 by Winton Scott, his project architect; and a flurry of activity by students, apparently to build the model, in the last two weeks of June. Kahn rarely billed clients for his own time, but activity by his employees is a clue to periods when he also worked on the project. Billing records, box LIK 88, "Rice University, Houston, Texas 77001 (Art Center)," Kahn Collection. In contrast, Kahn produced over fifty sketches for his later project for the de Menils. *Kahn Personal Drawings*, 7: 2–29.

77. *Engineering News-Record* briefly noted the project and its \$6 million budget. *Engineering News-Record* 184 (16 April 1970), 37, clippings file, "Rice Institute for the Arts," Menil Archives. As for the sources of the funds, the \$2 million previously allocated for the architecture building appears in Kahn's notes of his telephone conference with Anderson Todd. Notes, box LIK 32, folder "Rice University, Houston, Texas," Kahn Collection. The \$2 million de Menil contribution appears in H. Malcolm Lovett to Herbert Allen, 6 Dec. 1972, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 17, folder 1, "Board Correspondence—Lovett, H. Malcolm 1968/69–1973/74," Woodson Research Center, and in John de Menil, "Memo to Grants Committee," 5 Oct. 1972, Menil Archives. The use of music school funds appears in Ann Holmes, "Louis Kahn Planning Possible Arts Complex, Theatre at Rice," *Houston Chronicle*, March 5, 1970, sec. 2, p. 5.

78. Kahn's files for the Rice project include the architecture school's original 47-page prospectus and program for a new building, authored by Anderson Todd. "A Center for the Visual Arts," 16 Nov. 1967, "Rice University—Pending," box LIK 32, Kahn Collection. The \$40 million figure comes from Winton Scott, Kahn's project architect, quoted at Fox, *General Plan*, 82.

79. "Charter of Incorporation of the William M. Rice Institute for the Advancement of Literature, Science, and Art," published in *William Marsh Rice and His Institute: A Biographical Study*, Sylvia Stallings Morris, ed., *Rice*

University Studies (series) 58, no. 2 (Spring 1972), 154. James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999 (financial pressures); George R. Brown to Norman Hackerman, 18 Sept. 1972, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 16, folder 11 "Board Correspondence—General 1970/71–1972/73," Woodson Research Center (budget deficit); W. W. Akers to F. E. Vandiver, 12 December 1969, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 19, folder 1, "Budget 1969/70," Woodson Research Center (cut-backs in federal funding).

80. President Kenneth S. Pitzer resigned late in 1968 to become president of Stanford University. The Rice board's attempt to appoint William H. Masterson, a Rice faculty member, as president failed because of faculty and student opposition. He resigned less than a week after his appointment. Frank E. Vandiver served as interim president until the inauguration of Norman Hackerman in 1970. It is unclear whether this vacuum in the president's office affected the Art Center project. Although Vandiver did write a letter welcoming Kahn, he appears to have had little or no role in the discussions about the project.

81. William Camfield, interview by the author, 23 Aug. 2000.

82. See, for example, H. Malcolm Lovett to Herbert Allen, 6 Dec. 1972, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 17, folder 1, "Board Correspondence—Lovett, H. Malcolm 1968/69–1973/74," Woodson Research Center; William Camfield, interview by the author, 23 Aug. 2000 (de Menils expected Rice support).

83. John de Menil, "Memo to Grants Committee," 5 Oct. 1972, Menil Foundation Project/Grant Files, box 11: Administration, folder 10: "Louis Kahn File 1972–2008," Menil Archives.

84. Anderson Todd, interview by the author, 8 Jan. 2000. Tomkins quoted one source who described the de Menils' fortune as "really peanuts." Tomkins, "The Benefactor," 64.

85. Browning, "What I Admire I Must Possess," 201 (disdain).

86. James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999. To Sims, the university's business manager at the time, the de Menils "felt they were dealing with people who didn't know anything about art." Significantly, some of those connected with the Rice board, such as former chairman George R. Brown and his wife, Alice Pratt Brown, were themselves important patrons of the arts, and major supporters of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Indeed, the Brown family was largely responsible for the museum's second Mies van der Rohe addition, the Brown Pavilion (1974), and funded the acquisition of a number of important works of art. See Marzio, *A Permanent Legacy*, 27–30.

87. While they were not the "major" facilities that the de Menils expected, the university did erect a pair of industrial metal buildings for them at the edge of the campus. The de Menils hired the architects and paid for the unorthodox buildings, but it was understood that this was only a temporary solution. When permanent facilities never materialized, these humble metal buildings became the de Menils' architectural legacy to the Rice campus. The buildings were designed by Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry, the same architects who completed the Rothko Chapel after Johnson withdrew. The buildings are still in use as the Rice Media Center and the Rice Center for Continuing Education. See Pamela Smart, "Sacred Modern: An Ethnography of an Art Museum" (PhD diss., Rice University, 1998).

88. De Menil proposed that the facility be built to the west of the site Kahn studied, approximately where James A. Baker III Hall (1997) is now located. William Camfield, interview by the author, 23 Aug. 2000.

89. H. Malcolm Lovett to Herbert Allen, 6 Dec. 1972, Rice University President's Office Records, Norman Hackerman, 1969–1985, box 17, folder 1, "Board Correspondence—Lovett, H. Malcolm 1968/69–1973/74," Woodson Research Center. The de Menils' relationship with the university

was limited to a five-year term, renewable at the option of the parties. Although there seems to be no document setting out the terms of their agreement, Lovett's letter confirms that the de Menils expected Rice to erect permanent facilities for their programs. Another source suggests that Rice undertook the Art Center project primarily for the couple's benefit. James Sims, telephone interview by the author, 29 Nov. 1999.

90. The reasons for this development are discussed in Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel*, 106–7.

91. A list of the many ecumenical religious events at the chapel in its first year are found at *ibid.*, 118.

92. John de Menil made the initial contact with Kahn by telephone and followed up this conversation on 28 Sept. 1972 with a letter confirming the project and enclosing a plat map of the area around the chapel. John de Menil to Louis Kahn, 28 Sept. 1972, Menil Foundation Project/Grant Files, box 11: Administration, folder 10: "Louis Kahn File 1972–2008," Menil Archives.

93. The de Menils stored their large art collection at several locations in Houston. It is unclear what they planned to house in the proposed Kahn building at Rice—their entire collection or only a small part of it dedicated to their activities at Rice. In this memo John de Menil makes no distinction, which suggests they may have planned to store and exhibit at Rice all of the work that eventually became the core of the Menil Collection.

94. John de Menil, "Memo to Grants Committee," 5 Oct. 1972, Menil Foundation Project/Grant Files, box 11: Administration, folder 10: "Louis Kahn File 1972–2008," Menil Archives.

95. Art historian William Camfield, who moved with the de Menils from St. Thomas to Rice, doubted that they ever intended to stay at Rice permanently. He believed they saw themselves as catalysts for change who could come in, shake things up, and move on. He conceded, however, that for a short period "at the beginning," the couple may have entertained the notion of a long-term relationship with Rice. William Camfield, interview by the author, 23 Aug. 2000. Their participation in the Art Center project supports that inference because the program included gallery and storage facilities for their art collection. Moreover, John de Menil's memo to his board stated that the couple expected Rice to build such a storage facility. John de Menil, "Memo to Grants Committee," 5 Oct. 1972, Menil Foundation Project/Grant Files, box 11: Administration, folder 10: "Louis Kahn File 1972–2008," Menil Archives.

96. Lisa Nutting, "In Memoriam, Dominique de Menil, Art Collector, Philanthropist and Human Rights Advocate Leaves Valuable Legacy to Rice," *Rice News*, 15 Jan. 1998, 3, Information Files, "de Menil, Dominique," Woodson Research Center.

97. For Kahn's "architecture of connection," see "Silence and Light," Ronner & Jhaveri, *Complete Work*, 6–9 and discussion at text accompanying note 55.