

Santa Barbara Museum of Art **Inside Houston's Art World** March 3 to 7, 2027

Houston has quietly become one of America's most exciting art cities, where world-class museums, remarkable private collections, and a thriving community of artists exist far beyond the public eye. Led by Houston-based art historian Dr. Leo Costello and enriched by special insight from SBMA Board Chair Michael Linn, a former Houstonian, we'll enjoy access to exceptional homes, artists' studios, and museum spaces not ordinarily open to visitors. Many of the private collections rival those of major museums yet remain deeply personal spaces where art is experienced as part of daily life.

Through private conversations with collectors and artists, visits to acclaimed museums, and memorable culinary experiences, we'll discover the people, places, and ideas shaping one of America's most dynamic cultural communities.



Leo Costello, Ph.D., is Associate Professor and Chair of Art History at Rice University in Houston, where he also serves as Co-Director of the Program in Museum and Cultural Heritage. Before joining Rice, he was with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. A distinguished scholar of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European art and a leading expert on J.M.W. Turner, Dr. Costello brings both academic expertise and firsthand knowledge of Houston's museums, collections, and vibrant art community.

Why Houston?

Houston is home to one of the nation's richest concentrations of museums, collectors, artists, and philanthropists. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Menil Collection rank among America's finest museums, while the city's thriving community of collectors and artists has made it one of the country's most dynamic centers for contemporary art.

Wednesday, March 3

Depart for Houston. Suggested flights from Santa Barbara will be shared with confirmed participants once the minimum group size has been reached. Travelers arriving on the suggested flight will be met at the airport and transferred together to the Four Seasons by private coach.

En route to the hotel, begin our introduction to Houston's creative community with a **specially arranged visit to the studio of artist Nestor Topchy**.

After checking in at the Four Seasons Hotel Houston, gather for a **Welcome Dinner** at BCN Taste & Tradition, a Michelin-starred restaurant with modern Spanish cuisine in a historic 1920s bungalow. Over dinner, Dr. Costello will provide an introduction to the art and people that will be encountered in the days ahead.

Dinner included. Overnight at the Four Seasons.

Thursday, March 4

Begin the day with a special invitation to visit a **distinguished private art collection**, where our hosts will share the personal vision and relationships that have shaped their holdings.

Depending on final exhibition schedules, we will either have a **special visit at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston**, or a **private director-led tour of the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**, one of the nation's leading institutions devoted to contemporary craft.

Experience a Houston tradition over a relaxed lunch of classic Texas barbecue at Goode Co. Barbeque.

This afternoon, visit a **cutting-edge contemporary private art collection** with a particular commitment to women artists and artists of color. Notable works by Rashid Johnson, Shara Hughes, Mark Bradford, Theaster Gates, Cecily Brown, and Jenny Holzer reflect the collectors' dedication to supporting living artists and advancing cultural dialogue. Recognized among the world's leading collectors, they are also deeply involved with major museums in Houston and beyond.

Return to the hotel in the late afternoon. The evening is at leisure, with an optional no-host dinner at Potente, a modern Italian restaurant with excellent pasta and seafood.

*Breakfast (included each morning in the hotel dining room) and lunch included.
Optional no-host dinner. Overnight at the Four Seasons.*

Friday, March 5

Begin the day with special before-hours access to the **Museum of Fine Arts Houston**, one of the nation's largest and most distinguished art museums. Following a curator-led tour, schedule permitting, continue through the **sculpture garden**, an artful landscape designed by Isamu Noguchi, with works by Matisse, Giacometti, Rodin, Ellsworth Kelly, Frank Stella, David Smith, and Joel Shapiro. Lunch will be nearby in the museum district at Granger's.

Continue to the **home of a prominent philanthropist** who has assembled an exceptional collection of modern and contemporary drawings. Beginning with a fascination for collage, she has developed a deeply discerning collection that includes works by Willem de Kooning, Eva Hesse, Jasper Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Lee Krasner, Brice Marden, Joan Miró, Bruce Nauman, Claes Oldenburg, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, and many other defining artists of the twentieth century.

In the early evening, **join art dealer and collector Hiram Butler for a private reception at his home and gallery**. Hear about his influential career in Houston's art world and view his collection of works by artists including Agnes Martin, James Turrell, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Jennifer Bartlett, and Sherrie Levine. Located on the same grounds, Josh Pazda Hiram Butler Gallery is among Houston's most respected galleries for modern and contemporary art.

Breakfast, lunch, and reception included. Overnight at the Four Seasons.

Saturday, March 6

This morning, begin at the **Rothko Chapel**, the renowned interfaith sanctuary commissioned by John and Dominique de Menil. Fourteen monumental paintings by Mark Rothko surround visitors in an immersive space dedicated to contemplation, dialogue, and human rights. The chapel was designed by Philip Johnson, with later contributions by Howard Barnstone and Eugene Aubry.

Walk through the Menil neighborhood to **The Menil Collection for a special introduction to one of the twentieth century's great private collections**.

Founded by John and Dominique de Menil, the collection is particularly celebrated for its holdings in Surrealism, modern and contemporary art, the arts of Africa and Oceania, and works from the ancient world. The collection of work by Max Ernst is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost collections of its kind.

Continue to the Menil Drawing Institute, the only freestanding facility in the United States devoted to the exhibition, study, conservation, and care of modern and contemporary drawings.

Following lunch nearby, enjoy time to explore the campus independently, including the **Cy Twombly Gallery**, designed by **Renzo Piano**; Richmond Hall, home to a permanent installation of fluorescent-light works by **Dan Flavin**; and the **Menil's** changing exhibitions. Also nearby is **Philip Johnson's Chapel of St. Basil**.

Gather this evening for a **Farewell Dinner** at Toro Toro, the Four Seasons' Pan-Latin steakhouse.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included. Overnight at the Four Seasons.

Sunday, March 7

After checking out, conclude our time in Houston with a final invitation into a place few visitors experience: the **studio and foundry of sculptor Joe Havel**. Working in a former church with its own bronze-casting foundry, Havel transforms familiar materials and domestic objects—including shirts, sheets, and drapery—into sculptures that connect personal memory with broader histories.

Continue to the airport for midday flights home. En route, **Dr. Costello will offer concluding reflections** on Houston and the art, artists, and collectors encountered during our journey.

Breakfast included.

~ The order of visits will likely shift and itinerary is subject to change. ~

To reserve space on the tour: Phone: (805) 884-6431 | **Fax:** (805) 966-6840 |
Email: travel@sbma.net | **Web:** www.sbma.net/travel **Mail:** SBMA Travel, 1130
State St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Per person, double occupancy: \$5,420; **For single occupancy, add:** \$860;
Plus Tour-Related Donation to SBMA: \$750 per person

Included: Accommodations for four nights at Four Seasons; meals as described; transportation for included activities including airport transfers in Houston for those on the suggested flights; admissions and special visits; gratuities for included activities; and the services of tour staff.

Not included: Flights in and out of Houston; checked baggage fees; airport transfers in home city; airport transfers for those not on the suggested flights; housekeeping tips; travel insurance; and items of a personal nature.

Air Arrangements: To allow maximum flexibility for travelers, flights to and from Houston are not included in the cost of the tour. A suggested flight schedule will be sent to confirmed passengers once the group has been formed. Please do not book your flights until the minimum group size has been reached and you have received the suggested flights from SBMA. ***Airport transfers between the airports and the hotels will be included for those on the suggested flights.*** Participants are responsible for any additional expenses, including hotels, meals, or transfers, resulting from airline schedule changes. Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance is strongly encouraged.

Payment Schedule and Cancellation Policy: Your reservation deposit (\$1,200 per person) is refundable until October 1, 2026, minus a \$300 cancellation penalty. Final Payment is due by check November 1, 2026 and becomes fully non-refundable November 24, 2026. (Between due dates and non-refundable dates, cancellation penalty amount increases as departure nears.) The \$750 tour-related donation to SBMA may be made any time before November 1, 2026 and is not refundable and not insurable. ***By placing a deposit on the tour, you are acknowledging acceptance of terms and cancellation penalties and all other requirements for participating in the tour.***

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance information will be sent to you upon receipt of your tour deposit. While optional, travel insurance is highly recommended. Adding the “CFAR” option is recommended if you are a more cautious traveler and may wish to cancel for personal reasons while the trip is still operating, as having this option will be your only means for getting a (partial) return of your funds. If you do not purchase insurance and need to cancel, the cancellation terms above will apply without exception. Obtaining travel insurance must be done shortly after placing a deposit in order to have certain early-purchase benefits such as the pre-existing conditions waiver.

Museum Membership Requirement: Travel is a benefit of Museum Membership. *Membership is separate from the donation portion of your tour cost.*

Activity Level/Other Requirements: In order to make the most of being in the destination, this is an active, full program with moderate levels of activity. To fully enjoy the itinerary, participants should be in good health and able to keep pace with the group without assistance from tour staff. Days will be busy with a moderate amount of walking and standing during tours. Sightseeing excursions may last for a few hours with distances of up to a few miles and participants must be able to keep pace with a larger group, get on and off of buses, and navigate uneven terrain, stairs, and slippery surfaces with ease. A sense of adventure and a positive, flexible attitude about delays and inconveniences are also essential. Participants should enjoy traveling as part of a group, communicate respectfully with fellow travelers, tour hosts, and staff, and be willing and able to follow the itinerary, schedules, and instructions provided by tour staff. Participants should also be comfortable with occasional itinerary

adjustments, schedule changes, and the flexibility that accompanies specially arranged visits and exclusive access. The right is reserved to decline or retain any person as a member of the tour when such action is determined by SBMA to be in the best interests of the health, safety, enjoyment, or general welfare of the tour group or the individual participant. ***Please read every day of the itinerary and contact SBMA Travel if you have any concerns about your ability to take part in the activities.***

Health Considerations: When participating in this group tour, travelers should be in good health. We encourage everyone to be cautious before departure and to take precautions while traveling and on tour to prevent the spread of illness. If you come down with a contagious illness before or during the tour, we ask that you not participate in tour activities and/or take precautions, in order to prevent the spread of illness to others, until determined not contagious by a doctor. We highly recommend travel insurance and you should confirm with the insurance company what will (and will not) be covered in the event you are ill and are unable to join or continue on the tour. Travel always has inherent risks and when choosing to travel, you are accepting all risks.

Other: Although SBMA and its suppliers will make every effort to adhere to the printed itinerary, on occasion it may be necessary to adjust arrangements because of circumstances beyond our control. The itinerary, individuals, tour cost, and all other arrangements are all pending final confirmation and subject to change. Should an itinerary adjustment be necessary, substitution will be made to the best of our ability and additional costs necessitated by such changes may have to be covered by the tour member. If due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors, participants are required to spend any additional days or nights in the destination, they will be responsible for any additional expenses incurred. There are no refunds if a portion of the tour is missed due to flight delays, cancellations, traffic, or other unexpected occurrences. If a staff member is unable to participate, SBMA will make every effort to find a replacement with similar qualifications, and no refunds will be made. Should you decide not to participate in certain parts of the program, or are for any reason prevented from joining parts of the tour, no refunds will be made for those unused parts of the program. Many of the homes, collections, and private visits included in this itinerary are not ordinarily open to the public. To protect the privacy of our hosts, details may remain confidential until shortly before departure, and photography may be limited at certain locations. Final payment is to be made by check. The tour is based on a minimum of 17 and maximum of 22 participants. *SBMA's California Seller of Travel License #: 209026.*

RESERVATION FORM ~ Houston

SEND TO: SBMA Travel, 1130 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101

or **FAX TO:** (805) 966-6840

or **EMAIL FORM TO:** travel@sbma.net

or **RESERVE BY PHONE:** (805) 884-6431

Per person, double occupancy: \$5,420

For single occupancy, add: \$860

Plus Tour-Related Donation to SBMA: \$750 per person

To hold your space on the tour, a **\$1,200 per person deposit is required** (*refundable until October 1, 2026 minus a \$300 cancellation penalty*) paid by check or credit card. Final Payment will be due November 1, 2026 by check.) ***By placing a deposit, you acknowledge acceptance of all Terms and Conditions, including the payment schedule, cancellation penalty, and participation requirements.***

☐ A check for the deposit, made payable to “**SBMA**”, is enclosed.

☐ Please charge the deposit to my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ AMEX

Card number: _____ Expires: _____

Name as on card: _____ Security Code: _____

☐ I will be sharing a room with _____ **OR** ☐ Single Occupancy

I/we prefer ☐ one or ☐ two beds (based on availability)

☐ Please share any room requests or other requirements and/or limitations you have:

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ Cell _____ E-mail _____

IMPORTANT: A confirmation letter and optional travel insurance information will be mailed to you upon receipt of your reservation form and deposit. **SBMA is unable to make exceptions to the cancellation terms for any reason and highly recommends travel insurance** as an important way of protecting your investment.