



Be in the moment.

Open your mind.

For 45 years, the Rothko Chapel has been a beloved and internationally recognized Houston landmark.

The Rothko Chapel inspires people to action through art and contemplation, nurtures reverence for the highest aspirations of humanity, and provides a forum for global concerns. The Chapel is a sacred space that supports human rights and is a rallying place for all who are concerned with peace and freedom throughout the world.



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In 2015-16, more than 100,000 people from 98 countries visited the Chapel, and more than 9,000 participated in its educational, cultural, and spiritual programs.

From the Chapel's visitor comment book:

“On the 1st of August 2016 I started a journey on my bicycle from NYC to Houston, TX just to see the Chapel. I could have flown here but figured it would be a good journey. It certainly was. Today is the 25th of August and I have been in the Chapel for about 2 hours or so. As an artist and quite a spiritual person and considering the journey I made to get here I wanted to laugh & cry. I meditated and drew in my sketch book. Thank you, words cannot quite describe.” — Tom

Dear Friends —



On behalf of the Rothko Chapel, we extend our deepest appreciation for the great generosity shown this year in support of the Chapel's mission to engage the human spirit and our community through art, spirituality and the promotion of human rights. We are grateful to the hundreds of individual and institutional donors who ensure that the Rothko Chapel is open every day of the year—free of charge. The Chapel invites people from all backgrounds and walks of life to discover how best to address the diverse and complex needs in the world around us in ways that enhance mutual respect, understanding and collective action.

In order to meet the needs of the increasing number of program participants and visitors to the Chapel, we launched two very exciting initiatives in 2015-16. The first is a new communications plan that includes a more interactive website and social media presence, allowing us to expand our outreach and foster conversations both within, and far beyond, the Houston metropolitan area. The second is the initiation of our site development masterplan. This planning process will yield critical Chapel interior improvements and campus renovations that will enhance the visitor experience, while allowing us to fulfill the stewardship of the art entrusted to our care. As a first initiative, Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* was removed in January 2016 from the plaza and transported to the original foundry for conservation that should ensure its vibrancy for years to come.

The Chapel's public outreach featured significant programs that spoke to diverse viewpoints and multicultural experiences including our Spring Symposium on income inequality; the annual celebration of the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which explored the relationship of hip hop to Dr. King's message of social change and equity; and the 2015 Óscar Romero Award, which recognized two courageous, Honduran grass-roots human rights activists. Sadly, one of the honorees—Berta Cáceres—was murdered in March in Honduras. The Rothko Chapel became the sacred space in Houston where people gathered to mourn her loss and honor her life's work. Throughout the year, we also hosted numerous meditations, concerts and interreligious gatherings that collectively engaged and nourished many facets of the human spirit. As in years past, the Chapel was the site for numerous weddings, memorial services and other life cycle events that bear witness to the significance of this cherished space for Houstonians.

As detailed in this report, the Rothko Chapel continues to be a spiritually imbued sacred space where peace, justice and the highest aspirations of humankind are lifted up and cultivated daily. We thank you for your support and look forward to our future work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christopher Rothko".

Christopher Rothko
Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David Leslie".

David Leslie
Executive Director

Program Engagement



Throughout the 2015–16 season, the Rothko Chapel presented a wide range of programs that invited dialogue, reflection and action on the world’s most pressing issues. Our programs are occasions for individual and collective introspection and exploration of the sacred, and create contexts for investigating the interplay between art, spirituality, and human rights. Our public programs included discussions with community leaders, writers, poets and artists; concerts and spoken word performances; guided meditations; and yoga and tai chi.

Highlights



2015 Óscar Romero Award recipients Berta Cáceres (left) and Miriam Miranda (right) with board chair Christopher Rothko.



Vigil for Berta Cáceres, March 4, 2016



Berta Cáceres

“We don’t want to be martyrs, we don’t want any more martyrs in this country, but we also have the historical responsibility to show that we have the right to build a better world. And we can’t run away from that responsibility.”

—Miriam Miranda

2015 Óscar Romero Award

The biennial Óscar Romero Award recognizes courageous grassroots human rights advocacy. The award is named after Archbishop Óscar Romero of San Salvador, who was murdered in 1980 because of his work advocating for the poor of El Salvador. The theme for the 2015 Award was “Listening to Voices Not Silenced” and Honduran indigenous rights activists, Miriam Miranda and Berta Cáceres, shared the award.

In the weeks leading up to the November 12, 2015 Award ceremony, the Rothko Chapel presented a series of programs investigating the challenges and perils of advocating for indigenous human rights. On the day before the Award ceremony, Miranda and Cáceres had a moderated conversation with Univision news anchor Raúl Peimbert. The program in Spanish with simultaneous interpretation was presented at Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center.

“...I refuse to go into exile. I am a human rights fighter and I will not give up this fight.”

—Berta Cáceres

Tragically on March 2, 2016, Berta Cáceres was assassinated in her hometown of La Esperanza, Intibuca, Honduras. Cáceres’ life was under constant threat, as were the lives of many other indigenous leaders in Honduras, yet she made clear that she would not stop her advocacy for human rights and justice. The Chapel hosted a vigil to honor her life and witness on her birthday March 4.



“Still Dreaming” in honor of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday

On January 15, 2016 we hosted our annual program honoring the life and legacy of Dr. King. The program was moderated by Dr. Aundrea Matthews, Professor, Lone Star College, and featured artist Toni Blackman, hip hop artists David Banner and Bun B, and Rice University Professor Anthony Pinn. In addition to the conversation inside the Chapel, the program included a cypher on the plaza featuring local hip hop artists. More than 320 people attended.

2016 Spring Symposium

“Confronting Inequality: Alternative Economies, Resilient Communities” was the theme of the symposium held from March 31 to April 3, 2016. Speakers addressed strategies and tactics to eliminate economic inequality through creative, effective and equitable economic policies and programs. Author, conservationist, and activist Terry Tempest Williams opened the symposium, in which academic professionals, community activists, religious leaders, and artists also took part.



Last year, the Chapel offered 50 events and programs attended by more than 9,000 individuals.



Expanding the Chapel's Reach



Rothko Chapel in Medellín, Colombia

In the fall of 2015 the Rothko Chapel was invited by the Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín to participate in a new exhibition titled *De Lo Espiritual En El Arte. Obertura (Concerning the Spiritual in Art. Overture)* on view from July 20 – September 11, 2016. This exhibition provided the Chapel with the opportunity to share the essence of the Rothko Chapel with a different community and culture. The Chapel's contributions included a

meditative space (inclusive of a photo mural, benches, meditation rugs/cushions, and sacred texts) and an educational space (featuring the Chapel's history via a looping video, floorplan, and an interactive 360 video projection and Google cardboard glasses for a virtual experience). During the course of the exhibit the museum curated programs that offered meditations, lectures and concerts. Rothko Chapel director David Leslie presented a lecture titled "The Architecture of Justice—the Transformative Power of Sacred Spaces."



Interfaith Outreach

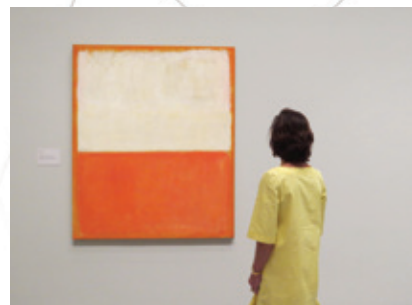
During the year, Chapel representatives visited numerous faith, cultural and service organizations around Houston to learn about the important work being done around the greater Houston area and to explore opportunities for continued partnership. The visits culminated with the Chapel's annual Interfaith Breakfast and Conversation at the Chapel in August where representatives from Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish,

Baha'i, Christian traditions and interfaith organizations came together to celebrate collective efforts over the past year and imagine possibilities for the future. Throughout the year numerous faith leaders led meditations and teachings at the Chapel, representing practices such as Shambhala, Quaker, Sikh, Sufi, Hindu, Christian, Bon Buddhist, Jewish, as well as modern meditations like Loving Kindness and Breath.



Mark Rothko: A Retrospective at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

This important exhibit that was on view from September 20 until January 24, 2016 brought a deeper understanding of the life and work of Mark Rothko. The exhibit also provided many collaborative opportunities between the Chapel and MFAH including a tour of the exhibit led by the Chapel's Board Chair, Christopher Rothko, and a series of monthly meditations led by Chapel Advisor Alejandro Chaoul in exhibit galleries. The audio tour included Rothko Chapel's Executive Director, David Leslie, among other area leaders and artists.



“The Rothko Chapel makes patently clear what I have learned is true of all Rothko works. They yield only what we put in... they will only speak to our inner worlds, when we are open to their invitation or suggestion. Ultimately, to understand a Rothko is to understand what the painting helps us see in ourselves.”

—Christopher Rothko, from his book *Mark Rothko: From the Inside Out*



Chapel Guild

The Chapel Guild was established in 2012 with 13 members and has grown to 40 members in 2016, with 6 also serving as Guides.

The Guild provided invaluable support for Chapel events and programs and last year contributed over 1,857 hours. Guild volunteers welcome guests, orient visitors to the space, support public programs, and help facilitate a deeper and more meaningful visitor experience through the Guide Program.

Social and educational enrichment opportunities are offered throughout the year in support of the Guild including lectures from top curators, tours of art exhibitions, and an annual sacred spaces tour.

“The Guild is a small, but dynamic group of diverse individuals with beautiful souls who cherish our stewardship of the Chapel as much as the friendships we form there.”

—Guild member Carrie Pillsbury



Communications

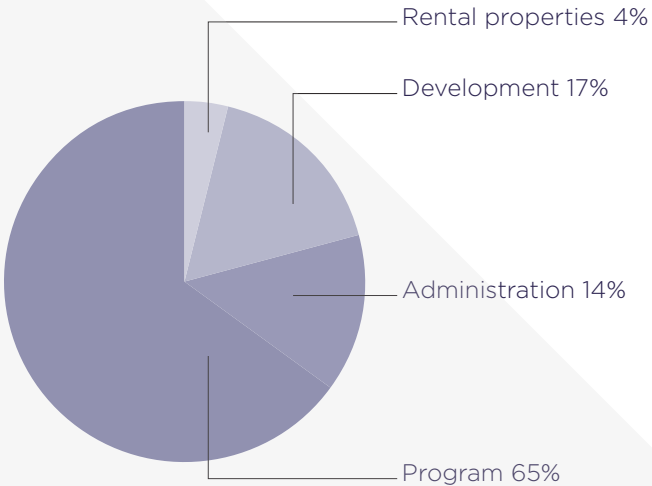
The Chapel secured the services of Langrand and Company in 2015 to help develop a more robust communications and marketing strategy. The project included an extensive community engagement component that led to the significant expansion of the Chapel's digital media presence, redesign of our website (which now receives an average of 24,000 hits per day), email newsletter, program brochures, and other collateral materials.

Thanks to these efforts, the Rothko Chapel has substantially extended its reach to visitors and program participants from many different communities across the region and beyond.

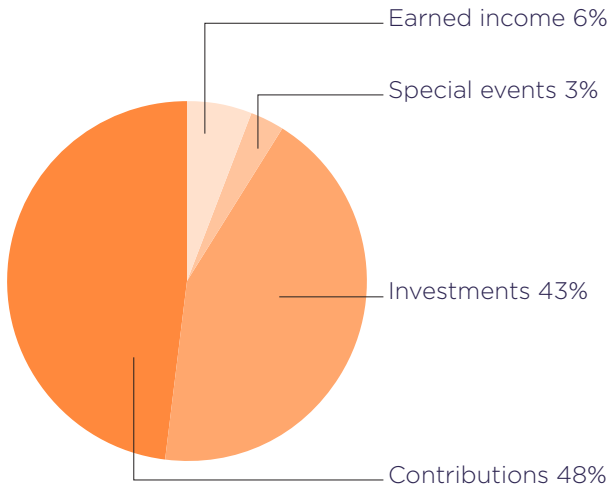
By the Numbers

For Fiscal Year 2016
July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

The data are derived from the audited financial statements of the Rothko Chapel as of June 30, 2016.



Operating Expenditures
\$1,432,275



Sources of Funding
\$1,753,075

Chapel visitors

100,000+

Program participants
and guided tours

9,000+

Volunteer hours

1,857

Our Supporters

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

The Rothko Chapel would like to thank those who have contributed in 2015-16.

Chairman's Circle \$25,000+

The Brown Foundation, Inc.
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Houston Arts Alliance
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Director's Circle \$10,000+

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We have made every effort to be accurate in our listing and apologize if any mistakes or omissions have been made.

Planning for the Future



In January 2016, the Rothko Chapel Site Planning Committee, chaired by Christopher Rothko, launched the planning process to address lighting improvements inside the Chapel, development of a master site plan and renovation of the reflecting pool. The most critical interior Chapel improvements aim to better control natural and supplement lighting to ensure that the paintings and the ambiance they create may be experienced to their full effect, regardless of time of day or the weather. The vestibule, interior acoustics, weather proofing and security systems will also be reconfigured for optimal functionality.

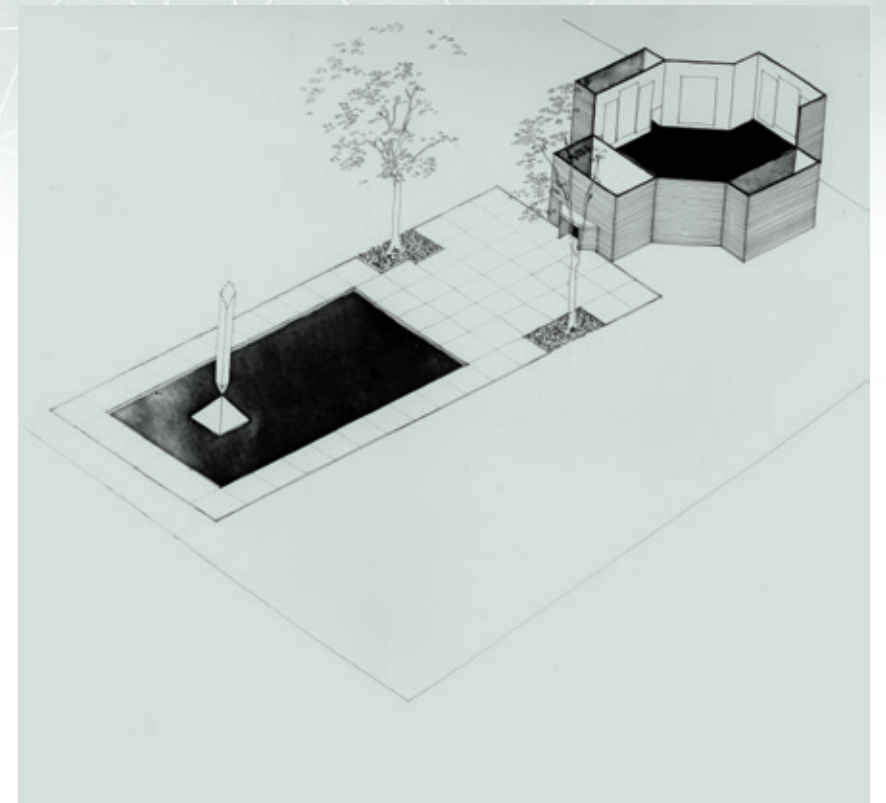
The site plan will provide specific recommendations for landscaping and appropriately sited and configured space for visitor services, community programs, archives, administration, guest housing for presenters, visiting scholars and artists. Taken together, these improvements will positively impact the visitor experience and our public programs.

A significant part of the work is the ongoing conservation of Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk*

and updating the reflecting pool to ensure that this landmark endures for future generations.

The *Broken Obelisk* was dismantled in late January 2016 and returned to the original foundry, Lippincott, LLC in Connecticut, where restoration was completed over a 10-month period. During this time, Lippincott, LLC redesigned and replaced components at the obelisk/pyramid juncture to optimize water drainage and to slow the rate of localized corrosion. The cost of restoring the sculpture was generously paid for by the Menil Collection. The conservation department at the Menil, headed by chief conservator Brad Epley and objects conservator Kari Dodson, oversaw the treatment program.

The overarching objective of the entire site development is to make improvements that will accommodate growth, allowing the chapel to respond more fully to existing needs while pursuing new opportunities. Expanded programming in the new and redeveloped spaces will enhance the visitor experience, while minimizing impact on the chapel's silent, sacred space.



Isometric drawing by Eugene Aubry.

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* Denotes both Guild and Guide roles

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Visit

Rothko Chapel
3900 Yupon Street
Open daily 10am-6pm

Contact

Office

713.524.9839

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