



Rothko Chapel

2022 Annual Report



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Fiscal Year 2022 / July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

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Dear Friends,

The major highlight of this year was the return to in-person programming in the Rothko Chapel. After an almost three-year hiatus due to the Chapel restoration and the COVID-19 pandemic, we gathered in the Chapel on February 19 – 20, 2022 for the premiere of Tyshawn Sorey's "*Monochromatic Life (Afterlife)*" composed for the Rothko Chapel's 50th Anniversary. While the performances were originally scheduled for 2021 in conjunction with the anniversary, the delay allowed us to continue to celebrate this golden anniversary in style concluding with the 50th Anniversary Illumination Gala in November!

Throughout the year, the Chapel presented a wide array of transformative programming at the intersection of spirituality, art and social justice. The highlight of the season was the "Beyond the Rhetoric: Civil Rights & Our Shared Responsibility" series that included panel presentations in the summer and fall and a two-day symposium March 31-April 1, 2022. The central theme explored through these programs was the future of civil rights in the United States. We remain grateful for the many activists, academics and civil rights leaders who provided important insights into the state of civil rights in this country and the diligence demanded from each of us to ensure the furtherance of the democratic ideals and principles that can make this country a place of possibility for so many people.

In our ongoing efforts to further international relations, on March 9 we convened a peace vigil on the Chapel Plaza in support of the people of Ukraine in the face of the Russian invasion. The vigil was presented in partnership with the Consulate General of France in Houston, Consulate General of Ukraine in Houston and Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston. The words spoken by those in attendance including the Ambassador of France to the United States and Ukrainian Counsel General made clear that the invasion of Ukraine would not go unchallenged and that through international solidarity, the end of the conflict would be realized. It was a gathering that testified to the truth that "we are always stronger together than apart."

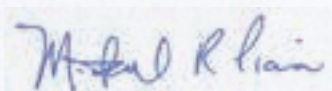
The vigil was followed by The Frances Tarlton "Sissy" Farenthold Endowed Lecture Series in Peace, Social Justice and Human Rights that featured noted Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy. The lecture is presented in partnership with the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Social Justice and Human Rights at the University of Texas Law School and reminds us again that the struggle for human rights is a global one that demands the vigilance and attention of all of us.

This year we also presented the “Songs for Justice” series that explored the role of music in sustaining and furthering social justice movements. Launched at the Chapel’s annual MLK Birthday Celebration, the series engaged musicians, musicologists, poets, librettists and activists from diverse organizations including the Community Music Center of Houston, Houston Grand Opera and Columbia University. The relationship between spirituality and music was further explored through a powerful concert on Earth Day featuring The Knights followed by a morning of sacred music from the ninth to twelfth centuries presented by Ars Lyrica on the Summer Solstice.

On the site development and related capital campaign front, designs for Phase II of the *Opening Spaces* site development project were completed this year resulting in final plans for the new Program Center, Administration-Archives Building, Meditation Garden and Guest House. Construction permit applications were submitted to the City of Houston in the spring. We anticipate approval by the end of 2022 with construction starting during the second quarter of 2023 with all work estimated to be completed by the end of 2024. There is still much to do and we remain deeply grateful for all the support given to date and look forward to additional generous gifts to the Opening Spaces Campaign furthering the Chapel’s mission and service goals.

As we prepare for the next year, we are grateful that the Chapel has returned to normal operations and that we are once again meeting and engaging visitors from all parts of the world. With anticipation, we look forward to seeing you at the Chapel and thank you for all you do in support of the Rothko Chapel.

Sincerely,



Michael Piana,
Chair



David Leslie,
Executive Director





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Beyond the Rhetoric: Civil Rights & Our Shared Responsibility

Since the Rothko Chapel first opened in 1971, it has diligently honored its original purpose to be a “focal point for people to gather and explore spiritual bonds common to all, to discuss problems of world-wide interest, and share a spiritual experience...respectful of the beliefs of others” (Rothko Chapel Articles of Incorporation). In keeping with this commitment and in conjunction with our 50th Anniversary, the Chapel presented a two-part series titled “Beyond the Rhetoric: Civil Rights and Our Shared Responsibility,” examining different understandings of and approaches to furthering human rights and civil liberties in the United States. The series began in the Summer of 2021 with four virtual lectures and panel presentations, and concluded with a two-day virtual symposium from March 31 to April 1, 2022.

The questions informing the series included: How have civil rights historically been understood and applied in this country? Who benefits from current civil rights framework, and who has been left out? Which civil rights and liberties are particularly at-risk today? How can we become more effective advocates and activists as we work to address injustice and create an equitable society? How can we rethink our approaches to the concept of rights, responsibilities, and civil liberties? And how can we sustain our passion for social justice and long-haul activism?



“Our moral goal should be to stop treating corporations like people, and people like things. Instead, we should be washing the feet of the poor by passing policies that push back the dirtiness of greed and injustice, and we should be promoting grace, love, and justice.”

– Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II

“We’re at this unique moment when growing numbers of Americans of all backgrounds, including middle class white Americans, are beginning to awaken to the possibility that democracy itself is under attack and that civil rights they have taken for granted could actually slip away.”

– Michelle Alexander



The 2021 virtual lectures explored both the historical contexts and contemporary conditions of urgent civil rights issues including:

Economic & Racial Justice in America

Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, President & Senior Lecturer of Repairers of the Breach and Co-Chair of the Poor People's Campaign in conversation with **Rev. Laura Mayo**, Senior Pastor at Houston's Covenant Church.

LGBTQIA+ Rights

JoDee Winterhof, Senior VP for Policy & Political Affairs at Human Rights Campaign and **Adri Perez**, Policy & Advocacy Strategist at ACLU of Texas in conversation with **Rev. Troy Treash**, Senior Pastor at Houston's Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church.

American Indian Perspectives on the Concept of Rights

Dina Gilio-Whitaker (Colville Confederated Tribes), American Indian Studies Lecturer at California State University San Marcos and **Dr. Tink Tinker** (Osage Nation/wazhazhe), Professor Emeritus of American Indian Cultures & Religious Traditions at Iliff School of Theology in conversation with **Suzanne Benally** (Navajo and Santa Clara Tewa), Executive Director of the Swift Foundation.

Immigrants' Rights

Sr. Norma Pimentel, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley and **Charles Kamasaki**, Senior Cabinet Advisor of UnidosUS in conversation with **Frances Valdez**, Executive Director of Houston in Action.

The spring 2022 virtual symposium examined how individuals, grassroots initiatives, and policy makers can work together to create a more equitable future. Speakers and panels covered the following topics:

Freedom of Speech

Panel discussion with **Michael Powell**, *New York Times* Reporter; **Joe Cohn**, Legislative & Policy Director at Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE); **Svetlana Mintcheva**, Strategy Consultant at National Coalition Against Censorship; and **Nabiha Syed**, President of The Markup

The Future of Civil Rights

Keynote Conversation featuring civil rights lawyer, advocate, legal scholar, and author **Michelle Alexander** in conversation with **Larry Payne**, Producer & Host of Dialogue Houston, HCC-TV, including poetry by 2022 Houston Youth Poet Laureate **Avalon Hogans**

Public Health & Civil Rights

Panel discussion with **Katy Atkiss**, Principal at Impetus Houston; **Dr. Umair Shah**, Secretary of Health at Washington State Department of Health; **Randi Weingarten**, President at American Federation of Teachers; and **Chrishelle Palay**, Director of Houston Organizing Movement for Equity (HOME) Coalition; including a contemplative practice led by **Juanita Rasmus**, Co-Pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church

Reimagining Policing & Prisons

Panel discussion with featured speaker lawyer, writer and organizer **Derecka Purnell** in conversation with **Jay Jenkins**, attorney at the Texas Center for Justice and Equity; **Keri Blakinger**, the first formerly incarcerated reporter for The Marshall Project; and **José Garza**, Travis County District Attorney



“Getting to the heart of understanding why people harm each other, why nations fight against each other, why companies have the power to exploit people, may help us figure out the better solutions to ending police and prison violence.”

– Derecka Purnell

“It’s so easy to give into the seduction of hopelessness, but hope is a discipline. We must ensure that we’re creating the conditions of leadership development for generations to come and to see it that way.”

– Greisa Martinez Rosas



Sustaining Activism

Interactive workshop with **Suzanne Benally**, Executive Director, Swift Foundation; **Sean Fitzpatrick**, Executive Director, Jung Center of Houston; **Matthew Russell**, Co-Managing Director, projectCurate; **Caron Tabb**, artist; and **John Vaughn**, Executive Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church

Voting Rights

Panel discussion with **Mimi Marziani**, President of the Texas Civil Rights Project; **Nina Perales**, Vice President of Litigation at the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund (MALDEF); and **Christopher Hollins**, former County Clerk of Harris County

Organizing for Change

Interactive session with **Marshall Ganz**, organizer and lecturer at Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; **Greisa Martinez Rosas**, Executive Director of United We Dream; **Krystal Two Bulls**, LANDBACK Campaign Director with NDN Collective; and **Thanu Yakupitiyage**, U.S. Communications-Digital Director at 350.org

“Beyond the Rhetoric” is part of a multi-year effort to further the Rothko Chapel’s programming and community engagement around the topic of social justice, while honoring the Chapel’s history both as a landmark of modern sacred art and as a celebrated site for transformative and inspirational experiences. View a summary report of these programs and experiences, highlighting each of the events presented, key topics to explore, and actions to consider in furthering civil rights at rothkochapel.org/experience/beyond-the-rhetoric-civil-rights.

Exploring Spirituality & Living Mindfully

Throughout the program season, the Chapel took moments to pause, reflect and gather in community around a series of significant days. Beginning in December with World AIDS Day, the Chapel hosted a livestream morning observance in support and solidarity with the millions of people living with and impacted by HIV/AIDS. The morning program included live music, personal testimonials, and guided reflection. Shadawn McCants, Owner and Clinical Director of Know and Live Counseling provided first-person testimonial on living with HIV and issues facing Black women in the HIV community. Jeffrey Campbell, Chief Program Officer at AIDS Foundation Houston, shared information on the state of the battle against HIV in Houston and Texas. Moments of reflection were led by Rev. Troy Treash, Senior Pastor of Resurrection MCC, and music was performed throughout by Kelsey Sham on harp.



In March, the Rothko Chapel hosted a contemplative offering, “Loss, Grief & Hope for the Future: Meditation on the Two-Year Anniversary of COVID-19 Pandemic.” Presenters shared reflections on the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and community impacts, meditations on engaging loss and grief, our hopes and visions for the future, and the power of ritual in processing our varied emotions and experiences of living through a pandemic. In a community ritual, attendees were invited to bring a small memento, photo, or item that has brought meaning to them since 2020 to place on an altar. Program facilitators included Dr. Alejandro Chaoul, Huffington Foundation Endowed Director of Mind Body Spirit Institute (MBSI) at the Jung Center of Houston and Rev. Laura Mayo, Senior Minister of Covenant Church in Houston.

In observance of Earth Day in April, the Chapel partnered with Ocean Music Action, a new nonprofit organization led by Houston Symphony Principal Harpist Megan Conley, for a concert outside on the Chapel’s plaza on the theme of the importance of the world’s water sources. A quartet of musicians from the Grammy-nominated chamber orchestra The Knights performed music of Debussy, Takemitsu, and Villa-Lobos alongside dancer Maile Okamura. Artwork by local marine conservation artist Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee was on display. The following morning, the artists led a volunteer cleanup of Buffalo Bayou in beautiful downtown Houston.



Observances concluded with the Chapel’s tradition of hosting programming on the occasion of the summer solstice. In the morning and midday, Ars Lyrica presented Contemplation in Light, featuring sacred music of the ninth through twelfth centuries performed by mezzo-soprano Cecilia Duarte and percussionist Jesús Pacheco. The experience included Gregorian chants and the music of Hildegard von Bingen, a German Benedictine abbess and Christian mystic. Selected pieces highlighted vocal lines of chant with added percussion instruments such as gongs, bells, vibraphone, and drums. The Chapel closed the summer solstice on the Plaza with an evening performance by longtime community partners Kaminari Taiko of Houston, a Japanese drumming ensemble.



Inspiring Action for Social Change Through the Arts

Songs for Justice: Exploring the Power of Music in Social Justice Movements

In conjunction with programming on the state of civil rights issues in the US, the Chapel presented a new series this season; ***Songs for Justice***, which included concerts and conversations exploring the role that music plays in furthering social justice movements and addressing today's inequities and injustices. The project included five performances and conversations focused on social justice advocacy, including the world premiere of a new work written for site-specific performance inside the Chapel.

The series began with the Chapel's annual observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on January 15, opening with a performance and discussion about music central to the US Civil Rights Movement. The Community Music Center of Houston Scott Joplin Chamber Orchestra conducted by Dr. Anne Lundy shared a selection of music central to Dr. King's transformative leadership and Black Americans' historic and contemporary struggles for equity. Dr. Shana Redmond, scholar of music, race and politics, and Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the Center for the Study of Ethnicity & Race at Columbia University, discussed the broader history surrounding the relationship between music and activism in the U.S., the importance of music in Rev. King's life, and the strategic use of music within the Civil Rights Movement. The program ended with a moderated conversation with Dr. Shana Redmond and Dr. Anne Lundy, facilitated by David Leslie, Rothko Chapel, Executive Director.

"Beyond its many pleasures, music allows us to do and imagine things that may otherwise be unimaginable or seem impossible. Music is more than sound, it is a complex system of meanings that mediate our relationships to one another, to space, to our histories and historical moments." – Shana Redmond

The series continued with the ongoing celebration of the Chapel's 50th Anniversary, featuring a new work co-commissioned with DACAMERA and the Rothko Chapel by musician and composer Tyshawn Sorey, titled "*Monochromatic Light (Afterlife)*." Sorey, an American composer, multi-instrumentalist, and Professor of Music at the University of Pennsylvania created new work inspired by the Chapel and Morton Feldman's 20th-century masterpiece, *Rothko Chapel*, composed in 1971 and premiered in 1972 for the opening celebrations. Sorey conducted both performances featuring Houston Chamber Choir; Davóne Tines, bass-baritone; Kim Kashkashian, viola; Steven Schick, percussion; and Sarah Rothenberg, piano/celesta. The debut performance was followed by a conversation between Tyshawn Sorey and Sarah Rothenberg on Sorey's creative process and intentions for the piece.

"My music is synonymous with meditation in that it is intended to expand one's consciousness and fulfillment through the act of listening as well as giving the experiencer the opportunity to heighten their sense of awareness...my music perfectly aligns with the intention of the Chapel, which has always served as a place for meditation." – Tyshawn Sorey



The next program in the Songs for Justice series was held on International Women's Day in partnership with Houston Grand Opera. Featuring the US premiere of "*Songs for Murdered Sisters*," a live performance of music by composer and pianist Jake Heggie, conceived and performed by baritone Joshua Hopkins, with original poems by celebrated Canadian novelist and poet Margaret Atwood. Co-commissioned by Houston Grand Opera and Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra, this work

featured eight songs written from poems by Atwood confronting violence against women. The live premiere at Rothko Chapel included a post-performance discussion with the composer and vocalist alongside Khori Dastoor, General Director and Chief Executive Officer of Houston Grand Opera, and moderated by Alexandra Smither, soprano and Communications Coordinator at Houston in Action.

A photograph of Arundhati Roy, an Indian author and activist, speaking at a podium during a lecture. She is wearing a red sari and gesturing with her right hand. Behind her is a backdrop for the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice, featuring a logo and the text "The Bernard and Audre RAPOPORT CENTER For Human Rights and Justice". To the right, the word "Rothko" is partially visible. The background is dark with some text visible, including "IN PEACE, ...".

Annual Frances Tarlton “Sissy” Farenthold Endowed Lecture Series in Peace, Social Justice and Human Rights

Co-presented by the Rothko Chapel & the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice at University of Texas at Austin School of Law, the seventh annual Farenthold Lecture engaged internationally renowned author and activist Arundhati Roy. Through her activism and writing, Roy is an outspoken critic of injustice and a decades-long advocate for peace and human rights. She spoke to an audience of over 800 people at UT-Austin on “Fascism, Fiction, and Freedom in the Time of the Virus.” Dedicating her lecture to activists jailed for protesting India’s Citizenship Amendment Act, Roy wrote and delivered a new piece, “Religious Nationalism, Dissent, and the Battle Between Myth and History.” Insisting on the complexity of history, she said, “any single story of individual or community catastrophe and misfortune, however true it may be, should not be told in ways that erase the other stories...To flatten a messy history, to rob it of nuance, to weaponize it, will have dire consequences.” Her message ended urgently: “This battle will have to be waged by every single one of us. The blaze is at our door.” After the lecture, Roy engaged in conversation with LBJ School of Public Affairs Professor Raj Patel, in which she read passages from a number of her works and answered audience questions. The program was followed by a book signing.

Visiting Muslim Scholars

We were pleased to meet with a delegation of Pakistani Muslim scholars visiting the United States to learn about best practices in promoting interfaith community harmony. The participants were K-12 teachers, and university faculty and community organization leaders. This visit was made possible by an exchange program sponsored by the United States Consulate General in Lahore, Pakistan, and the Visiting International Professional Program at Michigan State University.



The goal of the exchange program is to forge deeper understandings of the role that interfaith centers in the U.S. play both in the general society and in religious institutions and communities to further understanding, respectful dialogue and peace. These exchanges invite participants to reflect on their own leadership in their communities, and to develop and relay productive practices of peace and community-building through the interfaith initiatives they encountered.

Neighborhood Community Day

In partnership with Menil Collection for Neighborhood Community Day, the Rothko Chapel offered afternoon drop-in experiences. These featured music in the Chapel by French-Russian born, DACAMERA Young Artist violinist Clara Saitkoulov, and a book reading and signing by Jim Blackburn, author of *Earth Church*, at the Suzanne Deal Booth Welcome House.



A photograph of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie, standing at a podium on a stage. He is speaking into a microphone. Behind him is a large, dark artwork with a glowing, geometric, crystalline structure in the center. The artwork has the text "ILLUMINATION" and "ROTHKO CHAPEL'S 50th ANNIVERSARY GALA" on it. The stage is set against a backdrop of heavy red curtains.

The Rothko Chapel's 50th Anniversary Gala A Record Setting Success!

On a beautiful Saturday evening on November 6, we welcomed over 450 guests to the Post Oak Hotel to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Rothko Chapel and preview our future plans. The event raised over \$650,000 and made numerous new friends for the Chapel!

We celebrated the accomplishments of six extraordinary individuals: Lori Cohen & Christopher Rothko, Art Advocates and Champions for Justice; Daniella & Carlos Correa / The Correa Family Foundation, Community Leaders, and Champions for Youth; Reverends Juanita & Rudy Rasmus, Spiritual and Community Leaders.

The evening was a huge success, and we could not have done this without you! Thank you for investing in the Rothko Chapel to further the critical work that we do. Your donations directly supported our operations and service to the community - services that are vital to continue our mission. We give a special thanks to our evening's chairs Sanford L. Dow and Isabel & Ignacio Torras; our auction chairs Joyce Echols & Steve Wyatt and Christina & Troy Porter along with the curator of our art auction Barbara Davis of Barbara Davis Gallery.

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary, we also debuted at the gala the *Transformative Power of the Rothko Chapel* 50th Anniversary video. Special thanks to Mouth Watering Media for their vision and leadership in creating this moving tribute capturing the Spirit of the Chapel at 50.



Honorees Christopher Rothko and Lori Cohen



Honoree Danielle Correa and Co-Chair Ignacio Torras



Co-Chair Sanford L. Dow, Honorees Juanita and Rudy Rasmus



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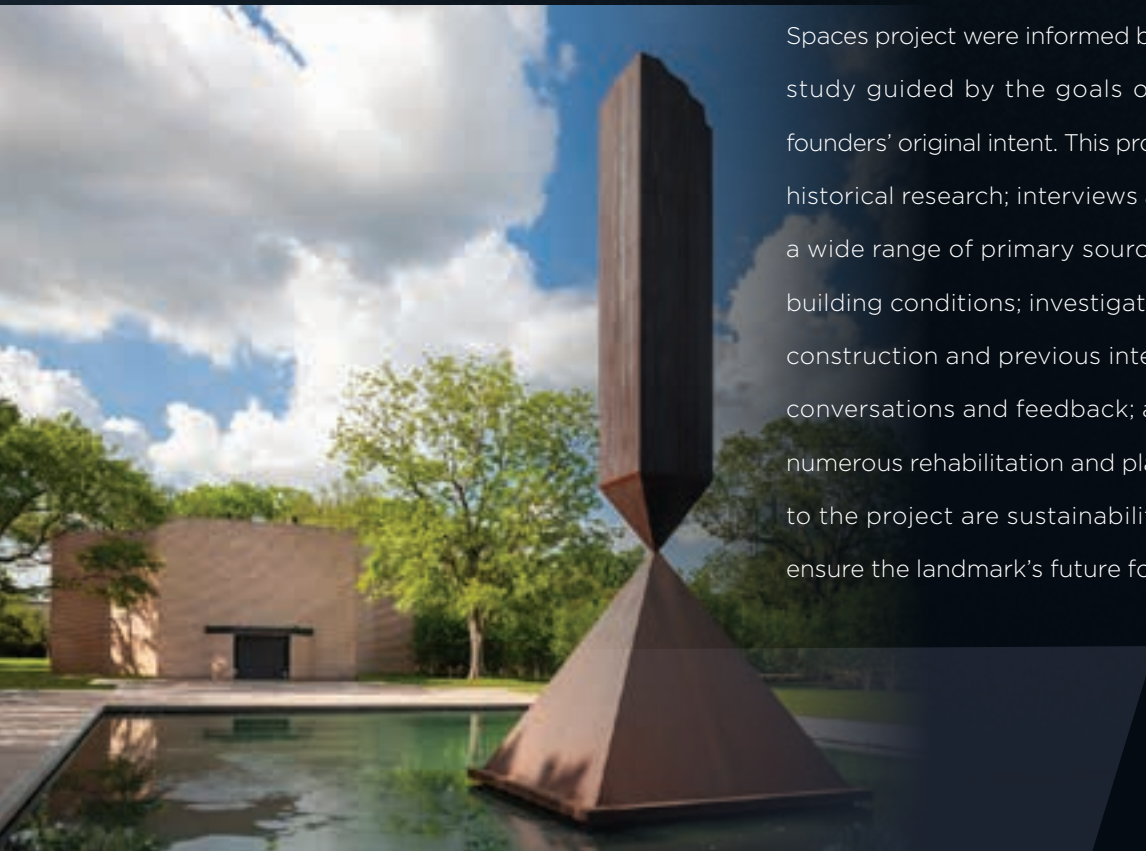


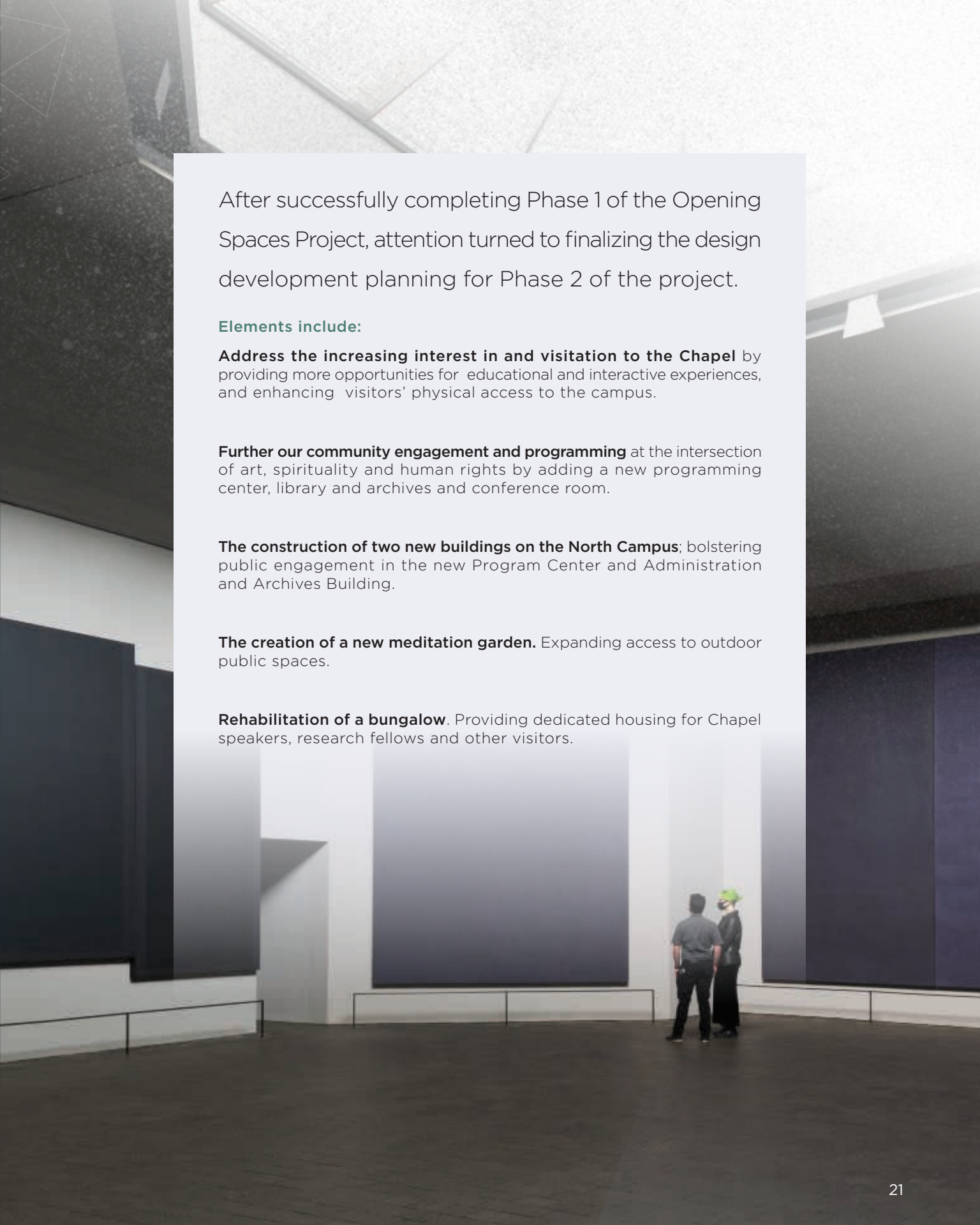
OPENINGspaces

A Campaign for the Rothko Chapel

As one of Houston's most beloved and iconic institutions, the Rothko Chapel plays a vital role in our city's cultural, spiritual and social justice ecosystem. The Chapel is dedicated to actively meeting the evolving needs of the nation's most diverse city, and it is this commitment that is driving our vision for the Chapel's growth as captured in the implementation of the Opening Spaces masterplan.

The design approach and materials for the Opening Spaces project were informed by a year-long feasibility study guided by the goals of the project and the founders' original intent. This process involved extensive historical research; interviews and consultations with a wide range of primary sources; analysis of existing building conditions; investigations into the building's construction and previous interventions; community conversations and feedback; and the preparation of numerous rehabilitation and planning options. Central to the project are sustainability plans and efforts to ensure the landmark's future for generations to come.





After successfully completing Phase 1 of the Opening Spaces Project, attention turned to finalizing the design development planning for Phase 2 of the project.

Elements include:

Address the increasing interest in and visitation to the Chapel by providing more opportunities for educational and interactive experiences, and enhancing visitors' physical access to the campus.

Further our community engagement and programming at the intersection of art, spirituality and human rights by adding a new programming center, library and archives and conference room.

The construction of two new buildings on the North Campus; bolstering public engagement in the new Program Center and Administration and Archives Building.

The creation of a new meditation garden. Expanding access to outdoor public spaces.

Rehabilitation of a bungalow. Providing dedicated housing for Chapel speakers, research fellows and other visitors.

Phase 2

scheduled completion 2024

Program Center

Accommodation for an enriched array of public programs, receptions, special events, private and community services, and presentations including symposia and workshops. The center will serve the Chapel's growing audiences, allow for more programming flexibility and scope, and provide space for new partnerships and expanded community outreach.

Administration and Archives Building

Includes offices, conference and meeting rooms, as well as library and archive space to support Chapel operations and research.

Guest House

A renovated bungalow will host Chapel speakers and special guests, as well as scholars-in-residence.

Mediation Garden

Visitors will find this newly created space next to Menil Park a peaceful refuge for meditation, prayer or quiet reflection.





OPENINGspaces

A Campaign for the Rothko Chapel Supporters

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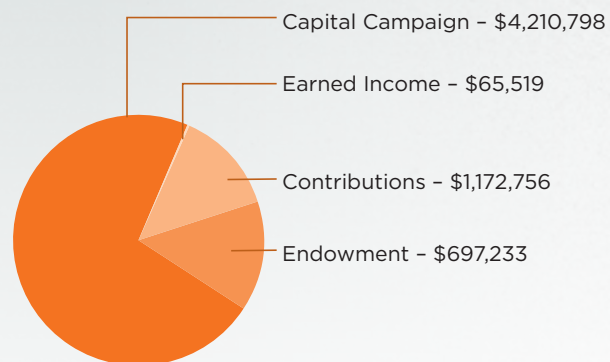
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As of June 2022

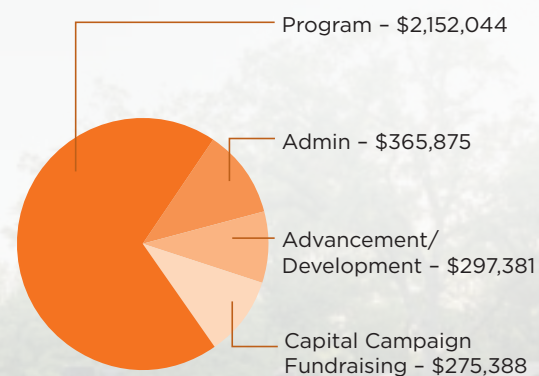
By The Numbers

Fiscal Year 2022



Revenue
\$6,145,022*

**Includes loss on disposal of property - \$1,284*



Expenses
\$3,090,688



Our Supporters

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

The Rothko Chapel would like to thank those who have contributed to the Annual Fund. For more information about making a gift, please contact the Advancement Office at 713.660.1409.

Chairman's Circle \$25,000+

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Thanks to the time, dedication, and generosity of the many individuals listed here, the spirit of the Rothko Chapel lived on in our community throughout the 18-month *Opening Spaces* restoration project and closure, and the COVID-19 Pandemic. From leadership, administrative staff and new visitor services team members, to interns, advisors and volunteers, the Chapel is able to sustain the community through trying times, provide a safe, quiet, and open space to connect to yourself and others, and illuminate our shared humanity.

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Rothko Chapel

Rothko Chapel

1409 Sul Ross

Houston, Texas 77006

Visit

Rothko Chapel

3900 Yupon Street

Contact

Office

713.524.9839

Mailing Address

1409 Sul Ross

Houston, TX 77006

rothkochapel.org

info@rothkochapel.org

