

Moody Center for the Arts Announces New Public Art Interventions by Houston Artists

Large-scale, temporary, outdoor installations showcase the work of Karin Broker, Delita Martin, and Charisse Pearlina Weston, August 23, 2021 – May 3, 2022



Delita Martin, *The Gathering*, 2021, installation view, Rice University, photo: Jeff Fitlow

(HOUSTON, TX – August 30, 2021) -- Alison Weaver, the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director of the Moody Center for the Arts, announced a new season of public art interventions opening at Rice University this fall. Three newly commissioned works by Rice and Houston artists will activate the Provisional Campus Facilities (PCFs)—the tent-like structures that provide additional classroom and meeting space on campus—with site-specific installations designed to bring the community together, as we continue to navigate the global pandemic.

Starting this week, large-scale works by artists **Karin Broker**, **Delita Martin**, and **Charisse Pearlina Weston** will be featured on the south side of campus, across from Herring Hall on Loop Road. For the second round of commissions for the PCFs, each artist was invited to respond to the current moment and the campus environment with interventions intended to foster conversation and community in the academic year ahead.

According to Alison Weaver, “When students, faculty, staff, alumni, and public visitors return to campus this fall, they will discover new works by three extraordinary artists. Conceptually, these innovative interventions draw on the notion of coming together, sharing a platform, a table, or a conversation, while physically creating opportunities to safely interact with art and one another in an open-air setting.”

Domestic Melancholia, a vinyl installation by Karin Broker; *The Gathering*, a mixed media work and corresponding platform by Delita Martin; and *Plunge, Cry*, a video work by Charisse Pearlina Weston, will be on view throughout the academic year, from August 23, 2021 through May 3, 2022. Access to the site is free and open to the public.

The Installations

Karin Broker, *Domestic Melancholia*, 2021

Original drawing on Formica with Conte, 7' x 9'

Commission, the Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University

Karin Broker, a master printmaker and sculptor who taught visual art at Rice for more than four decades, is known for her large-scale Conte Crayon drawings on Formica panels. This presentation of *Domestic Melancholia* is a digitally enlarged vinyl reproduction of a 1999 drawing, enhanced by an electronically rendered table and chairs. Mounted on the north face of the PCF, this layered image represents a personal conversation between the artist and Melancholia, one of the four historic temperaments, evoking themes important to Broker’s practice, including separation from family and our relationship to nature and to domestic space.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, this work marks a renewed appreciation for meaningful, intimate conversations. Reminding the viewer of the once mundane activity of pulling a chair up to a shared table, *Domestic Melancholia* inspires reflections on the importance of dialogue and gratitude for communal experiences, especially during uncertain times.

Broker’s composition—specifically the thin severity of the table and chairs and the lush opulence of the flower arrangement—creates a contrast that signals the power of personal connection. Speaking of this juxtaposition Broker said, “I’m interested in the honesty of the person sitting across from me, occupying an intimate space where dialogue can enrich the gray areas of our lives. If you pull up a steel-like chair, our conversation might be abundant, like the flowers. If we pause to look up, to take in the fullness of what we have, and to consider the people we love enough to share it with, we might be surprised to see the world differently.”

This installation is made possible by Rice University’s Arts Initiative Fund and the Moody Center for the Arts.

Delita Martin, *The Gathering*, 2021

Original work: mixed media on paper: acrylic, charcoal, decorative papers, hand stitching, and relief printing

Commission, the Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University

As we adjust to a world that has been permanently altered by a global pandemic, visual artist Delita Martin created her first-ever public artwork, a two-part installation addressing the timely themes of community and self-care. The first part of the installation, an image digitally reproduced from an original work on paper and applied to the surface of the tent, prominently features the coneflower, a symbol of strength and healing in Native American and African-American cultures. Two figures, a modern woman and an ancient figure

wearing a traditional African mask, hold hands across space and time. They appear on a field of blue, a color Martin associates with spirituality, near multi-colored jars representing traditional medicines.

The second part of the installation, a platform adjacent to the tent, will be hand-painted by the artist, working together with Rice students, during the first weeks of the fall term. This feature extends the themes of the mural into three dimensions. The platform's hexagonal form echoes that of a honeycomb, a shape created by bees to support the life of the hive that in turn supports the broader ecosystem. Complemented by comfortable seating, the area is designed to invite students and visitors to safely congregate outdoors and to spend time in nature.

According to Martin, "*The Gathering* represents the intimate exchange with one's self, spiritually and organically, serving as the nucleus of this communal space and supporting connections."

This installation is made possible by Rice University's Arts Initiative Fund and the Moody Center for the Arts.

Charisse Pearlina Weston, *Plunge, Cry*, 2021

Black-and-white video, with sound, 10 min., 7 sec.

On view from sunset to sunrise

Commission, the Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University

Informed by her experience growing up in Hiram Clarke, a predominantly African American, working-class neighborhood in southwest Houston, Charisse Pearlina Weston (b. 1988, Houston) produces videos, sculptures, installations, photography, and writing that explore what she describes as the "delicate intimacies and reticent poetics underlying Black life."

Plunge, Cry includes close-up footage of the artist's feet on a wooden floor from Weston's 2015 video *Plunging into Time*. These clips are juxtaposed and blurred with abstracted imagery of recent glass installations made by the artist. Glass, often used by Weston to create layered or curvilinear sculptural compositions, conceptually demarcates the manifest or indiscernible boundaries of Black intimacies in response to—and in spite of—ongoing systemic violence. The inherent transparency of the glass is altered through an infrared filter, creating overlapping, opaque, hard-edged shapes that float in space—a metaphor for Houston's perpetually changing skyline.

The video is accompanied by field recordings and manipulated audio from a 2016 protest in Orlando, Florida in response to the murder of Philando Castile. That track is layered with the 1960 song "Cry, Cry, Cry" by Bobby "Blue" Bland, an artist recorded by the iconic Duke-Peacock Records, formerly located in Houston's Fifth Ward. Weston further altered Bland's track with a nod to the "chopped and screwed" sound pioneered in the 1990s by Houston musician DJ Screw, who influences Weston's approach to sound work. The outcome is a sequence of throbbing beats and cacophonous noises, set against a discordant tune. Borrowing improvisational elements ranging from the blues in the 1950s and '60s to hip-hop in the 1990s and beyond, the artist celebrates Houston's important role in the development of Black musical history. At the same time, by incorporating imagery that recalls the surrounding city's skyline, she points to the ruthlessly rapid pace of urban development that has often displaced or otherwise adversely affected Black communities.

Projected onto the temporary structures built on campus during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Plunge, Cry* serves as a "monument to Blackness and Black people that also acknowledges the risk and danger we face."

Charisse Pearlina Weston: Plunge, Cry is curated by Ylinka Barotto, Associate Curator, Moody Center for the Arts.

This installation is made possible by the Leslie and Brad Bucher Artist Residency Endowment, in support of artists who create site-specific works for Rice University.

The Artists

Karin Broker (b. 1950, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) received a BFA from the University of Iowa in 1972 and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin in 1980. Recently named a lifetime Honorary Member of Southern Graphics Council International, Broker has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and was named Art League of Houston's Texas Artist of the Year (1994).

Throughout her career, Broker has worked in drawing, printmaking, and sculpture, exploring themes of familial connection, aging, gender inequity, and violence against women. She has had solo exhibitions in Houston, Dallas, Denver, and Portland, as well as group exhibitions abroad in South Korea, Germany, Russia, and Iceland, among others. Collections holding her work include the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress, among others.

Broker recently retired after a distinguished 41-year career as a professor of printmaking and drawing in the visual art department at Rice University.

Delita Martin (b. 1972, Conroe, TX) is an artist and activist based in Huffman, TX, just outside of Houston. A multidisciplinary creator who draws, sews, collages, and paints on paper, Martin creates work that often depicts black women whose stories have been historically omitted from Western art. Combining modern and traditional materials and imagery, Martin constructs images frequently drawn from her personal history in order to generate new narratives and challenge societal norms.

Martin received a BFA in drawing from Texas Southern University and an MFA in printmaking from Purdue University and previously taught drawing at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In 2020, she launched the Black Box Press Foundation, an organization dedicated to supporting artists whose work inspires activism and social change. Martin's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is held in numerous private and public collections.

Charisse Pearlina Weston (b. 1988, Houston) is a conceptual artist and writer based in Brooklyn, New York. She has had solo exhibitions at Project Row Houses, Houston; Abrons Art Center, New York; and Recess, New York. She has received awards from the Artadia Fund for the Arts, Dallas Museum of Art's Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Fund, Puffin Foundation, and Graham Foundation, among others. In 2019 she was a Dedalus Foundation Fellow in Painting and Sculpture. Weston holds an MFA from the University of California, Irvine, and in 2019 participated in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She is a current Artist Fellow at the Museum of Art and Design, New York.

About the Moody Center for the Arts

Inaugurated in February 2017, the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University is a state-of-the-art, non-collecting institution dedicated to transdisciplinary collaboration among the arts, sciences, and humanities. The 50,000-square-foot facility, designed by acclaimed Los Angeles-based architect Michael Maltzan, serves as an experimental platform for

creating and presenting works in all disciplines, a flexible teaching space to encourage new modes of making and a forum for creative partnerships with visiting national and international artists. The Moody is free and open to the public year-round.

Website: moody.rice.edu

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6100 Main Street, MS-480, Houston, TX 77005

(University Entrance 8, at University Boulevard and Stockton Street)

Hours & Admission:

The Moody is currently closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Normal business hours will resume on September 18. Exhibition spaces are open to the public and free of charge Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays. Events and programs are open to the public. For schedule, tickets, and prices as applicable, visit moody.rice.edu.

Directions & Parking:

The Moody Center for the Arts is located on the campus of Rice University and is best reached by using Campus Entrance 8 at the intersection of University Boulevard and Stockton Street. As you enter campus, the building is on the right, just past the Media Center. There is a dedicated parking lot adjacent to the building. Payment for the Moody Lot is by credit card only.

For campus maps, visit www.rice.edu/maps.

About Rice University

Located on a 300-acre forested campus in Houston, Rice University is consistently ranked among the nation's top 20 universities by U.S. News & World Report. Rice has highly respected schools of Architecture, Business, Continuing Studies, Engineering, Humanities, Music, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences and is home to the Baker Institute for Public Policy. With 3,879 undergraduates and 2,861 graduate students, Rice's undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio is 6-to-1. Its residential college system builds close-knit communities and lifelong friendships, just one reason why Rice is ranked No. 1 for quality of life and for lots of race/class interaction and No. 2 for happiest students by the Princeton Review. Rice is also rated as the best value among private universities by Kiplinger's Personal Finance.

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