

For Immediate Release

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Moody Center for the Arts Announces Spring 2023 Exhibition

Narrative Threads: Fiber Art Today

On view January 13 - May 13, 2023

Opening Reception January 13, 6 - 8 p.m.



Diedrick Brackens, *the pondkeepers* (detail), 2020. Courtesy of Various Small Fires.

Houston [November 17, 2022]—The Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University announces the exhibition [*Narrative Threads: Fiber Art Today*](#), opening January 13, 2023 and on view through May 13, 2023. Celebrating a new generation of international artists at the forefront of fiber arts, the show includes work by Igshaan Adams, Diedrick Brackens, Christina Forrer, and Billie Zangewa, among others, as well as a commissioned, site-specific work by Orly Genger.

The twenty artists featured in the exhibition speak to contemporary issues of identity, gender, race, sexuality, and power through a medium with deep, multicultural roots that predate written history. *Narrative Threads: Fiber Art Today* explores this practice, specifically the ways in which fiber-based media can communicate both personal and political issues, through a selection of works that can be read as simultaneously autobiographical and socially critical.

“At the Moody, we’re interested in exploring how art and artists can shape our thinking about critical issues of our time,” said Alison Weaver, co-curator and the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director of the Moody Center for the Arts. “The works in *Narrative Threads* invite us to see how fiber, a historically peripheral medium in fine art circles, can speak to topics at the center of contemporary lived experience.”

Featured artists include Igshaan Adams, Hangama Amiri, Felipe Baeza, Diedrick Brackens, Josh Faught, Christina Forrer, Orly Genger, Ana María Hernando, Woomin Kim, Eric N. Mack, Maria Nepomuceno, Nnenna Okore, Patrick Quarm, Chiharu Shiota, Sagarika Sundaram, Ardeshir Tabrizi, Marie Watt, Qualeasha Wood, Billie Zangewa, and Sarah Zapata.

The exhibition will be activated through a season of performances in the galleries and in the Moody’s Lois Chiles Theater. The spring programming schedule kicks off on January 27 with a one-night-only performance of *Honor* written by Houston-born artist Suzanne Bocanegra and featuring actor Lili Taylor. The season also includes an original performative response to the exhibition orchestrated by artist and theater director Doug Fitch, on April 21, as a part of the Moody’s signature *Dimensions Variable* series.

See more information about the exhibition and our programming schedule below.



Maria Nepomuceno, *Little Delilah*, 2018. (C) Maria Nepomuceno, courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York
Photo: Jason Wyche.

More About the Exhibition

[Narrative Threads](#) offers a compelling survey of the many ways contemporary artists speak through fiber and textiles to broach personal, social, and political histories.

For several featured artists, who identify as women, LGBTQ+, and persons of color, textiles are often seen as carriers of cultural meaning that have the power to expand the breadth of voices represented in art and draw attention to personal experiences and histories of repression. Diedrick Brackens, for example, explores themes of African-American and queer identity through autobiographical works such as *the pondkeepers* (2020), which references a lake near his birthplace of Mexia, Texas, a site that evokes intimate childhood memories and systemic racial violence. In *Versperring (Barrier)* (2020), a multi-media tapestry by South African artist Igshaan Adams, geometric patterns drawn from traditional Islamic art trace the ways bodies move through space, specifically in his hometown of Bonteheuwel, a former segregated township in Cape Town, where the artist initially came to terms with his racial, religious, and sexual identity.

Swiss-born Christina Forrer also explores the narrative capacity of tapestries by integrating folk traditions with imagery from contemporary sources. This literal and figurative weaving of real and imagined, past and present, as in *Turnip Growing* (2022), enables Forrer to examine human relationships, intimacy, and tension in today's society.

Likewise, sewing, as a metaphor for repair and connection, is a poignant throughline in the exhibition. Malawian artist Billie Zangewa stitches together fragments of raw silk in her delicate textile collages, often depicting everyday scenes as a means of highlighting the unseen identities of women in domestic settings, while subtly critiquing male-centered, capitalist societies. *Body and Soul* (2021) features a black, female body in a posture of meditation, finding a moment of respite from the turbulence of daily life.

Engaging with the traditionally overlooked history of domestic activities, Orly Genger elevates the craft and community-building qualities of weaving through large-scale installations. In a site-specific commission for the Moody, Genger engages the architecture of the building and surrounding landscape through layers of recycled fishing rope. Through a collective process of placemaking, Genger reinscribes the tradition of monumental outdoor art through a handmade, fiber-based process.

On a more intimate scale, visitors will also encounter a focused presentation of thread drawings, featuring works by international artists Felipe Baeza, Chiharu Shiota, and Ardeshir Tabrizi. This installation stresses the fiber-based character of both paper and thread, blurring the line between applied string and the drawn or painted image on the surface.

Narrative Threads brings together works that are experiential, fragmentary, and fundamentally tactile, inviting viewers to consider new perspectives through diverse lenses.

The exhibition is curated by Alison Weaver, Executive Director, Frauke V. Josenhans, Curator, and Molly Everett, Assistant Curator. The exhibition design is by world: Xiaoxi Chen, Frank J. Mondragón, and Alejandro Stein.

Narrative Threads is made possible through the generous support of the Moody Center for the Arts Founders Circle and the Elizabeth Lee Moody Excellence Fund for the Arts.

[Download the press kit for Narrative Threads](#)



Orly Genger, *Honey*, 2018, installation views at LongHouse Reserve, photos by Jenny Gorman.

Exhibition Programming

Friday, January 13, 6 - 8 p.m. Opening Reception of *Narrative Threads: Fiber Art Today* at the Moody Center for the Arts

The event is free and open to the public

Friday, January 27, 8 p.m. *Honor: An Artist Lecture* at the Lois Chiles Theater, Moody Center for the Arts, free, registration is required to reserve a seat.

Houston-born artist [Suzanne Bocanegra](#) presents an original "artist talk" performed by film and television actor Lili Taylor, with vocalists from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Centered on a sixteenth-century tapestry of the same name in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Honor* weaves Bocanegra's personal narrative with her interpretation of the historic tapestry, in turn revealing a multitude of different characters and stories.

Friday, April 21, 6 - 8 p.m. *Dimensions Variable: Doug Fitch*

The event is free and open to the public

Visual artist, designer, and director [Doug Fitch](#) presents an original performance inspired by *Narrative Threads* as a part of the Moody's *Dimensions Variable* program, a signature series that commissions artistic responses to the exhibition on view. Fitch has created productions for the NY Philharmonic, Los Angeles Opera, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Santa Fe Opera among others.



Susan Bocanegra, *Honor: An Artist Lecture*, with Lili Taylor, at MOCA.

About the Moody Center for the Arts

Since its opening in 2017, the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University has dedicated its resources to encouraging creative thinking and original expression, enriching curricular innovation, and promoting cross-campus and community collaboration through transformative encounters with the arts. A public-facing institution, the Moody serves as a connection between the arts at Rice and the greater Houston community.

The Moody mounts three exhibitions a year in its award-winning building, curates numerous temporary and permanent public art installations throughout Rice's campus, and hosts performances, conversations, classes, and hands-on workshops. By centering these public and open initiatives on generative partnerships with artists, scholars, and students from various disciplines, the Moody presents unexpected and everchanging entry points into the arts which bridge communities and areas of interest.

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

Hours & Admission:

Exhibition spaces are open to the public and free of charge Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are 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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