

RICE PUBLIC ART ANNOUNCES FOUR NEW WORKS
BY WOMEN ARTISTS



Natasha Bowdoin, *Power Flower*, 2021

(HOUSTON, TX – January 26, 2021) In support of Rice University's commitment to expand and diversify its public art collection, four original works by leading women artists will be added to the campus collection this spring. The featured artists are Natasha Bowdoin (b. 1981, West Kennebunk, ME), Shirazeh Houshiary (b. 1955, Shiraz, Iran), Beverly Pepper (b. 1922 New York, NY, d. 2020 Todi, Italy), and Pae White (b. 1963, Pasadena, CA). Three of the works are site-specific commissions. The Beverly Pepper sculpture is an acquisition of one of the last works by the artist, who died in 2020.

Alison Weaver, the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director of the Moody Center for the Arts, said, "We are honored to add these extraordinary works to the Rice public art collection and are proud to highlight innovative women artists. We look forward to the ways these unique installations will engage students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors in the spaces where they study, learn, live, work, and spend time."

Natasha Bowdoin's site-specific installation will fill the central hallway of the renovated M.D. Anderson Biology Building, Shirazeh Houshiary's glass sculpture will grace the lawn of the new Sid Richardson College, Beverly Pepper's steel monolith will be placed adjacent to the recently completed Brockman Hall for Opera, and Pae White's hanging sculpture will fill the rotunda of McNair Hall, home to the Jones Graduate School of Business. The four works will be installed in the first four months of the year and be on permanent view beginning May 1, 2021.

Natasha Bowdoin, *Power Flower*, 2020

Acrylic on cut wood panel and wall

Power Flower, a new permanent installation for Rice's M.D. Anderson Biology Building, is a celebration of the natural world. The work, an immersive large-scale installation of brightly colored, cut and painted organic forms, calls forth an unruly garden, teeming with life. Bowdoin's painting is abundant with dizzying patterns inspired by florals and vegetation interwoven with motifs reminiscent of turtle shells, fish scales, snake skin and moth wings.

The result generates a visually lush landscape, an environment that appears in flux as it grows along Anderson Hall. Interested in how artists and naturalists have sought to understand, identify, depict, and define the natural world over time, Bowdoin here creates a spacious ecosystem that resists easy containment and immediate identification. *Power Flower* is a commemoration of the natural world, both real and imagined. It embodies exuberance and intensity while conveying an ecologically-minded message, encouraging viewers to consider their own connections to the world around them.

This commission is made possible by Rice University's department of Facilities, Engineering and Planning.

Shirazeh Houshiary, *Seif*, 2020

Glass and stainless steel

Upon visiting the Rice campus in early 2020, Shirazeh Houshiary was inspired by the light of the Texas sun and how it filters through the canopy of oak trees on campus. Looking closely at the University's buildings and the prevalence of handmade, clay bricks, she chose to create a tower constructed from colored glass bricks, handmade in Murano, Italy. Twisting in a helix-like form to a height of more than ten feet, the resulting sculpture is both an homage to the light and ever-changing colors of the Texas sky and an acknowledgement of the man-made world that surrounds us.

The title *Seif* refers to the long, narrow sinuous ridge of sand at the crest of a dune formed by the shifting dynamics of wind. These same directional forces are embodied within the sculpture, where centripetal and centrifugal movements rise and fall.

According to the artist, "the opaqueness of the work fosters separation and shadow, while its transparency offers connectedness through visibility and light. The desire for simultaneous visibility and invisibility, materiality and immateriality, presence and absence are characteristics of the human psyche and can nurture dream-like images, like those that dwell in glass."

Located in the lawn adjacent to the newly completed Sid Richardson College on the east side of campus, the work will both filter the sunlight as it crosses the sky and be lit from below at night, creating a softly glowing beacon for students and visitors to the area. Sited according to the artist's wishes, *Seif* will be installed in a harmonious dialogue with the surrounding trees.

This commission is made possible through Rice University's percent-for-art program, the Booth Art Preservation Fund, Shahla and Hushang Ansary and Franci Neely.

Beverly Pepper, *Occam's Wedge*, 2020

Cor-Ten steel

Occam's Wedge is titled after William of Occam (c. 1287–1347), an English Franciscan friar, philosopher and theologian best-known for the problem-solving principle Occam's razor. Also known as the law of parsimony, Occam's razor states that when presented with two competing hypotheses about the same prediction, one should select the theory that makes the fewest assumptions. This approach appealed to Beverly Pepper who created minimalist forms on a monumental scale to explore the intricacies of human feeling.

Sited in the lawn adjacent to the newly completed Brockman Hall for Opera, *Occam's Wedge* is one of several works that engage the form of the vertical wedge. As she did with the circle and the triangle, Pepper experimented repeatedly with the wedge form at varying scales throughout her lifetime. These iterations on the same theme echo musical variations in which the fundamental idea is repeated in altered forms throughout a composition.

This acquisition is made possible by Rice University's percent-for-art program and the Shepherd School of Music.

Pae White, *Triple Virgo*, 2021

Ink on polished and electroplated stainless steel elements, cable

Pae White has created a site-specific installation for the rotunda of McNair Hall, home of the Jones Graduate School of Business. Responding to the existing architecture, ambient light, and the relationship between the elements and the viewer, colorful disks suspended from the ceiling form a dynamic, ever-changing sphere. Echoing the international background and global outlook of the students, faculty, and staff of Rice University's Jones School of Business, the suspended sculpture invokes the broader world, ideas of the future, and the scale of thought that can inspire positive change.

According to the artist, "My hope is that the artwork will reference a globe in flux, a globe where nothing is solidified or congealed – a colorful, shifting sphere of excitement, intrigue and agility. Surprise blushes of color and unexpected pattern groupings that change depending upon one's viewing position reference a world of rewarding mysteries and surprises; a world worth exploring."

This commission is made possible by the Jones Graduate School of Business.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Natasha Bowdoin (b. 1981, West Kennebunk, ME, lives and works in Houston)

A graduate of the Tyler School of Art (MFA in Painting, 2007) and Brandeis University (BA in classics and studio art, 2003). Bowdoin has held a number of artist residencies including at the Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston (2008-2010), the Roswell AIR Program (2013) and the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art (2012). Bowdoin has had numerous gallery and museum exhibitions over the past decade throughout the United States and Europe, including recent solo exhibitions: *In the Night Garden* at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth (2020-21), *Sideways to the Sun* at the Moody Center for the Arts (2019) and *Maneater* at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams, MA (2018-20). Most recently Bowdoin represented Texas in the international group exhibition *Paper Routes: Women to Watch 2020* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.

Known for her cut paper, collage-based work, and her large-scale, immersive installations Bowdoin investigates the potential intersections of the visual and the literary, channeling the experience of reading into the activity of drawing, while reimagining our relationship to the natural world.

Shirazeh Houshiary (b. 1955, Shiraz, Iran, lives and works in London)

After moving to London in 1974, Houshiary studied at the Chelsea School of Art in 1976–79 and became a junior fellow at Cardiff College of Art in 1979–80. She rose to prominence in the 1980s as part of the New British Sculpture movement. She was nominated for the Tate Gallery's Turner Prize in 1994. In 1997, she was awarded a professorship at the London Institute. Houshiary draws on various sources ranging from poetry, Islamic art, Renaissance painting, and neuroscience, to mathematics, and her practice includes sculpture, painting, installation, and video art. Her recent sculptures—with repetitive, rhythmic configurations of bricks—conjure transparency and opacity, and convey continuous movement inspired by nature.

Houshiary has worked on many site-specific projects, including the 2008 commission for the east window of St. Martin-in-the-Fields church, located in London's Trafalgar Square. Houshiary's works have been shown in exhibitions worldwide, including the 2013 and 2017 Venice Biennales, the 2012 Kiev Biennale in Ukraine, and the 2010 Biennale of Sydney.

Beverly Pepper (b. 1922 New York, NY, d. 2020 Todi, Italy)

One of the few women of her generation to create large-scale sculptures and one of the first artists to work with Cor-Ten steel, Beverly Pepper was a pioneer of shape and form. From her studio in the Umbria region of Italy, she created innovative three-dimensional works for more than 60 years. Often working at monumental scale, her sculptures convey a visual lightness that belies their physical weight. The scale and tension inherent in her chosen forms invite viewers to engage bodily with the dynamism of their presence.

A graduate of the Pratt Institute, New York, Pepper's work is in the collections of Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among many other institutions. Houstonians can see her monumental work *Polygenesis (Houston Sentinels)* (1982) in the plaza of the Four-Leaf Towers in Uptown.

Pae White (b. 1963, Pasadena, CA, White lives and works in Los Angeles)

Pae White's practice often explores the spaces between ordinary objects, subverting expected relationships and inviting viewers to reconsider established perceptions. Through installations that are both playful and poetic, her work explores the intersection between everyday materials and universal ideas through diverse media including aluminum, ceramic, clay, glass, marble, paper, porcelain, thread and neon.

White received an MFA from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and a BA from Scripps College in Claremont, California, and has studied at the Skowhegan School in Maine. She has been featured in numerous solo museum exhibitions around the world, and her work is in the permanent collections of international institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Jumex Collection, Mexico City; the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and the Tate Modern, London, among many others. White lives and works in Los Angeles.

About Rice Public Art

Established as a University-wide arts initiative by President David Leebron in 2008, Rice Public Art presents and commissions public artworks, exhibitions, and programs that are accessible to all and which underscore the caliber and spirit of scholarly inquiry at Rice University. The collection, which reaches across the Rice campus, is always free and available to students, visitors, and the general public.

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

Social Media: @theMoodyArts | #MoodyHTX

Phone: +1 713.348.ARTS

Address: Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University
6100 Main Street, MS-480, Houston, TX 77005
(University Entrance 8, at University Boulevard and Stockton Street)

Hours & Admission:

The exhibition spaces are open to the public and free of charge Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 5pm, and closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays. Events and programs are open to the public through an advance reservation system. For schedule, tickets and prices, 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 a best value among private universities by Kiplinger's Personal Finance. Read ["What they're saying about Rice."](#)

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