MOODY CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND THE CULTURAL SERVICES OF THE FRENCH EMBASSY ANNOUNCE NIGHT OF PHILOSOPHY AND IDEAS ON THE THEME OF ECOLOGY

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION BY TIMOTHY MORTON AND LAURIE ANDERSON, ART EXHIBITS BY NATASHA BOWDOIN AND MICHEL BLAZY, AND PERFORMANCES BY OPEN DANCE PROJECT AND BAYOU CITY BRASS BAND

HOUSTON, TX [November 12, 2018] — The Moody Center for the Arts and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy will present A Night of Philosophy and Ideas 2019, a unique event bringing philosophers, musicians, artists, and authors from around the world together with the Houston community through a series of conversations and performances from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on January 26, 2019, at the Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University. The event is free and open to the public.

In honor of the Paris Climate Accord and the leadership of the French government in addressing climate change, the theme of the event will be ecology, with a keynote presentation by philosopher and Rice professor Timothy Morton and internationally renowned multi-media artist and performer Laurie Anderson. Known around the world for his thought leadership and publications on issues facing the global environment, Morton will launch the evening of debate with a talk titled, “It’s Not the End of the World. That Was a While Ago.” A Night of Philosophy and Ideas 2019 will explore how collective dialogue and cultural insights can prompt environmental action and motivate national and international change.
“On January 26, the Moody Center for the Arts will come alive with philosophical debate, music, dance, art, film screenings, readings, and much more,” said Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director Alison Weaver. “We will open our doors to Houston at 7:00 p.m. and stay up past midnight for a marathon of engagement with one of the most challenging and critical topics of our time: ecology and the environment.”

“Following the Climate Accord in Paris, we are reminded of the importance of natural ecosystems and the role cultural spaces can play in allowing us to reflect on the most urgent questions within our shared global community,” said Bénédicte de Montlaur, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy in the United States. “A Night of Philosophy and Ideas will bring environmental issues to the forefront, allowing us to engage in dialogue with experts in Buddhism, literature, psychology, history, and much more. We have brought together an exceptional group of philosophers, musicians, artists, and authors to forge links and provoke ideas that will resonate long after the sun rises on January 27.”

Taking place for the first time in Houston, A Night of Philosophy and Ideas has been held in diverse international cities, including Paris, New York, London, and Berlin, and serves to link Houston to the larger international discourse. Throughout the night and into the early morning, philosophers and performers will present topics and debate ideas on a wide range of issues pertaining to ecology, including how environmental concerns intersect with ethics, religion, anthropology and social justice.

Participants will also enjoy musical performances, film screenings, and interactive performance artworks. NASA oceanographer Josh Willis will perform as Climate Elvis, addressing the science of climate change through popular performance. Artist Jae Rhim Lee will demonstrate the benefits of committing our bodies to a greener Earth through a special burial suit seeded with mushrooms. Open Dance Project will perform periodically in the galleries throughout the night. The evening will culminate in an exuberant midnight performance by Bayou City Brass Band.

The Moody has commissioned Houston-based artist Natasha Bowdoin (b. 1981) to create a site-specific work that will fill the 24-foot wall of the Central Gallery. Known for her collage-based works made of cut paper and other materials, 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.

An exhibition of new work by the French artist Michel Blazy (b. 1966) will be on view in the Moody’s Brown Foundation Gallery. Exhibiting for the first time in Texas, Blazy is known for working with live and mutating materials in projects that bring attention to the natural transformation of matter over time, often with elements of poetry and humor.

The acclaimed documentary film, Living in the Future’s Past, will play in the Lois Chiles Studio Theater. This beautifully photographed original work, created by Susan Kucera and narrated by Academy Award winner Jeff Bridges, asks the question, “What kind of future do we want to live in?” and brings new insights into the environmental challenges confronting the modern world.

Throughout the event, refreshments by event sponsors Phoenicia Specialty Foods and Buffalo Bayou Brewery will be available for purchase in the Café Philosophes, staged in the Moody’s open creative studio. Free coffee will be provided throughout the evening by Katz Coffee.

A full list of events may be found at: https://moody.rice.edu/nightofHTX.
The 2019 A Night of Philosophy & Ideas is co-presented by the Moody Center for the Arts and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy. It is produced in connection with La Nuit des idées, a project of the Institut français, Paris. La Nuit des idées is a worldwide event taking place in over 100 cities in January 2019.

The program is made possible with support from Rice University’s Arts Initiative Fund, Humanities Research Council, and Creative Ventures Fund. The visual identity was created by La Rêveuse.

About the Cultural Services of the French Embassy
The Cultural Services are a division of the French Embassy in the United States. The Cultural Services were first imagined in the 1930’s by Paul Claudel. In 1945 General de Gaulle appointed Claude Lévi-Strauss as the first Cultural Counselor, with the mission of providing Americans (individuals and organizations) with access and resources to engage with French culture and promote it in their own communities.

Today, under the leadership of Bénédicte de Montlaur, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy and Permanent Representative of French Universities in the United States, the Cultural Services of the French Embassy promotes the best of French arts, literature, cinema, language, and higher education across the US. Based in New York City, Washington D.C and eight other cities across the country, the French Cultural Services brings artists, authors, educational and university programs to cities nationwide. It also builds partnership between French and American artists, institutions, and universities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Website: frenchculture.org
Social Media: @fr.culturalservicehtx
Phone: +1 713.985.3263
Address: Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Houston
777 Post Oak Blvd., suite 600, Houston, TX 77056

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 | #atTheMoody
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](http://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](http://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.

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