

MOODY CENTER FOR THE ARTS ANNOUNCES ITS FALL 2020 SEASON
STATES OF MIND: ART AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY
TO COINCIDE WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



Rodney McMillian, *Untitled (The Supreme Court Painting)*, 2004–06, Acrylic on canvas, 216 x 216 inches.
Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. © 2020 the artist. Photo: Gene Ogami.

(HOUSTON, TX – July 29, 2020) Alison Weaver, the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director of the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University, announced today the reopening of the galleries on September 18 with the fall exhibition *States of Mind: Art and American Democracy*, on view through December 19, 2020.

Reflecting on some of the most pressing topics facing American democracy, *States of Mind* is timed to coincide with the 2020 presidential election in order to encourage dialogue around current social and political issues. Many of the works on view examine the status of our country's founding principles of freedom and equality, while others engage with questions of voting access, gun control, and immigration policies—three issues that are common throughout the United States and of particular concern to Texas. *States of Mind* does not attempt to cover the myriad complexities of a democratic government but rather to invite viewers to consider timely yet recurrent questions around these themes.

Each artist in *States of Mind* offers a discrete and potent account of how political issues directly affect our daily lives. By illuminating challenging, often entrenched policies, they seek to stimulate discourse and propose social change.

States of Mind reflects the Moody's mission to cultivate interdisciplinary conversation through the arts. Alison Weaver, the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director, says, "As the political process unfolds, the exhibition will underscore the fundamental role art plays in fostering a dynamic dialogue in the community, especially during this divided time."

Organized by Ylinka Barotto, Associate Curator, *States of Mind* features emerging artists, some of whom are showing work in Texas for the first time such as **Janiva Ellis** and **Camilo Godoy**, together with established figures such as **Cady Noland** and **Hank Willis Thomas**, among others. The presentation includes paintings, sculptures, installations, videos, and works on paper, providing an intergenerational take on certain aspects of the U.S. democratic system.

The works in *States of Mind* span the last three decades, and some were created in direct response to the current presidential administration—a period during which many of these issues have been brought to the fore. Installed throughout the Moody's galleries, *States of Mind* is designed by exhibition designer and architect Aviva Rubin. Using the cube as a metaphor for democracy, Rubin deconstructs the geometric shape to echo the exhibition's theme of an imperfect system. The golden walls throughout the galleries point to the aspiration of improving and perfecting government, even as so many of the artworks expose frail social realities.

Highlights from the exhibition include works that question the state of long-standing democratic institutions such as **Rodney McMillian's** *Untitled (The Supreme Court Painting)* (2004–06), made in reaction to the decisive role the Supreme Court played in the 2000 presidential election of George W. Bush over Al Gore. The painting points to the collapse of American values, represented by the iconic building seeming to melt into the ground. The flaccid portrayal of the neoclassical architecture subverts the building's innate strength, calling out the shortcomings of the justice system as a whole and specifically its failure to protect African Americans. **Chris Burden's** *L.A.P.D Uniforms* (1993), originally created in response to the police brutality during the beating of Rodney King and the subsequent Los Angeles riots in 1992, continues to resonate. Imposing in scale, the uniforms reflect on the outsize power of the police force and instances of its repressive conduct.

Addressing issues of voting access, **Aram Han Sifuentes** will create a site-specific installation that encourages the public to think about voting as an inclusive act of civic participation. *Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't for the 2020 Presidential Election* consists of a booth where visitors can cast ballots that question the electoral system, who is excluded from it, and what would happen if those marginalized people were allowed to take part in the democratic process.

Gun control is central to Israeli artist **Yael Bartana's** video *The Undertaker* (2019), which is being presented in the United States for the first time. Filmed in the streets of Philadelphia on the occasion of Bartana's performance *Bury our weapons, not our bodies!*, the video uses historical references as well as contemporary expressions of public protest to address the pervasiveness of gun violence in our culture. Mexican artist **Teresa Margolles's** *El Brillo* series (2019) consists of three elegantly hand-embroidered black-velvet garments adorned with glass shards from shootings at the Texas-Mexico border and from the artist's hometown of Culiacán. The series addresses the violence inextricably connected to the international distribution of U.S.-made guns.

Immigration is a critical issue for many artists in the exhibition. **Guadalupe Maravilla's** *Disease Thrower #9* (2019) is a personal account of the displacement, alienation, and uncertainty the artist confronted as an undocumented child migrating to the United States. Maravilla sees the totemic work as a healing conduit to address individual traumas, illness, and disquietudes, as well as the shared circumstances encountered by other migrants.

Two public interventions will take the project beyond the borders of the campus into the city of Houston. Over the course of two days during the exhibition's opening, artist **Jenny Holzer's** *IT IS GUNS* (2020) will travel throughout the Rice campus and the city of Houston. With LED messages displayed on three sides of a box truck, the work calls on viewers to take action against gun violence in the United States. **Catherine Opie's** *Political Collages* (2019) is a new body of work created in response to current political and social uncertainties. Animated sequences of images collected from popular magazines will appear on freestanding vertical monitors not only at the Moody and across campus but also dispersed in public locations around the city, thereby connecting the exhibition to the greater Houston community.

Leslie and Brad Bucher Artist-in-Residence

The fall 2020 Leslie and Brad Bucher Artist-in-Residence will be **Coco Fusco** (b. 1960, New York, NY) an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose work uses performance and video along with audience participation to address gender, race, identity, politics, and war. Given the restrictions of COVID-19, the residency will take place virtually, with Fusco remotely participating in a series of talks and classes through online platforms.

The Moody's COVID-19 Response

In response to COVID-19, the Moody will follow CDC guidelines and the directions of Rice University. Visitors will be required to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing of six feet or more. Entry to the galleries will be limited to support social distancing. All events will require RSVPs, which will be available through the Moody website. In addition to increased cleaning protocols, visitors can expect low-touch entry and exit points and a limited number of people in all public areas.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Opening Receptions

Friday, September 18, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

States of Mind will open over two, socially distanced evenings. Music will be provided by DJ Sun outdoors on the Moody patio. Houston Poet Laureate Leslie Contreras Schwartz will perform the poem-sound piece “anthemic” composed in response to the exhibition during the 7-8 p.m. timeslot on September 18.

Space is limited and registration is required.

Register for timed entry to this free event [here](#).

Artists-in-Dialogue

Thursday, October 22, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

A virtual conversation with artist Catherine Opie will be hosted by the Moody's Executive Director Alison Weaver.

Register for the Zoom conversation and receive the link to this free event [here](#).

Moody Movie Night

Friday, December 4, 7 p.m.

Saturday, December 5, 7 p.m.

Projected outdoors on the building's west wall, the film *Election* (1999) starring Matthew Broderick and Reese Witherspoon, directed by Alexander Payne, will be shown on Friday, and *The Candidate* (1972) starring Robert Redford and directed by Michael Brunswick, on Saturday. Bring your own blanket and popcorn for a socially distanced outdoor viewing experience. Space is limited and registration is required.

Register to attend the free screening of *Election* (1999) [here](#).

Register to attend the free screening of *The Candidate* (1972) [here](#).

Concurrent programs will be scheduled throughout the season.

For more information about the Moody's programs, please check the Moody website: moody.rice.edu.

This exhibition is made possible by the Moody Center for the Arts Founder's Circle with additional support from the Elizabeth Lee Moody Excellence Fund for the Arts. Jenny Holzer's *IT IS GUNS* (2020) is supported by Rice University's Arts Initiatives Fund.

ARTISTS IN THE SHOW INCLUDE:

Yael Bartana, b. 1970, Kfar Yehezkel, Israel; lives and works in Amsterdam and Berlin

Adriana Corral, b. 1983, El Paso; lives and works in Houston

Paul Stephen Benjamin, b. 1966, Chicago; lives and works in Atlanta

Monica Bonvicini, b. 1965, Venice; lives and works in Berlin

Chris Burden, b. 1946, Boston; d. 2015, Topanga, California

Margarita Cabrera, b. 1973, Monterrey, Mexico; lives and works in El Paso

Tony Cokes, b. 1956, Richmond; lives and works in Providence
Janiva Ellis, b. 1987, Oakland; lives and works in Los Angeles
rafa esparza, b. 1981, Los Angeles; lives and works in Los Angeles
Barbara Ess, b. 1948, Brooklyn; lives and works in New York and Elizaville, New York
Kevin Jerome Everson, b. 1965, Mansfield, Ohio; lives and works in Charlottesville, Virginia
Camilo Godoy, b. 1989, Bogotá; lives and works in New York
Felix Gonzalez-Torres, b. 1957, Guáimaro, Cuba; d. 1996, Miami
Jenny Holzer, b. 1950, Gallipolis, Ohio; lives and works in New York
Tomashi Jackson, b. 1980, Houston; lives and works in New York and Cambridge, Massachusetts
Lynn Hershman Leeson, b. 1941, Cleveland; lives and works in San Francisco
Nery Gabriel Lemus, b. 1977, Los Angeles; lives and works in Pasadena
Guadalupe Maravilla, b. 1976, San Salvador; lives and works in Brooklyn
Teresa Margolles, b. 1963, Culiacán, Mexico; lives and works in Mexico City and Madrid
Rodney McMillian, b. 1969, Columbia, South Carolina; lives and works in Los Angeles
Star Montana, b. 1987, Los Angeles; lives and works in Los Angeles
Cady Noland, b. 1956, Washington, D.C.; lives and works in New York
Catherine Opie, b. 1961, Sandusky, Ohio; lives and works in Los Angeles
Trevor Paglen, b. 1974 Camp Springs, Maryland; lives and works in Berlin
Sandy Rodriguez, b. 1975, National City, California; lives and works in Los Angeles
Aram Han Sifuentes, b. 1986, Seoul; lives and works in Chicago
Xaviera Simmons, b. 1974, New York; lives and works in Brooklyn
Stephanie Syjuco, b. 1974, Manila; lives and works in Oakland
Hank Willis Thomas, b. 1976, Plainfield, New Jersey; lives and works in Brooklyn
Wilmer Wilson IV, b. 1989, Richmond; lives and works in Philadelphia

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 | #StatesOfMindMoody

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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