

Moody Center for the Arts Announces the Summer 2025 Exhibition *Figurative Histories*

Featuring the works of Texas-based artists Letitia Huckaby,
Earlie Hudnall, Jr., David McGee, and Delita Martin
May 30 – August 16, 2025



David McGee, *Weight and Balance* (detail). Image courtesy of the artist and Inman Gallery. Photo: Allyson Huntsman.

March 11, 2025 [Houston, Texas] --The Moody Center for the Arts announces its Summer 2025 exhibition, *Figurative Histories*, on view from May 30 through August 16. Featuring works by Letitia Huckaby, Earlie Hudnall, Jr., David McGee, and Delita Martin, this presentation spotlights a select group of Texas-based artists whose work is figurative in nature and characterized by a heightened sensibility toward personal histories and socio-political events. The selected works center on the human body, specifically the Black body, as a means of mining the past to more fully understand the present.

With imagery inspired by friends, family members, neighbors, and local communities, the compositions of these four artists employ a wide range of media, including photography, watercolor, and printmaking, in order to claim space for their subjects. Acknowledging the historical absence of Black bodies in Western art, their works invoke generational interconnections and highlight untold stories based on the artists' personal experiences of living and working in Texas.

“We’re honored to present four outstanding Texas artists whose works contribute to the national discourse about our country’s past and our collective future,” said Alison Weaver co-curator and Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director, Moody Center for the Arts. “We hope *Figurative Histories* will inspire a sense of belonging and empathy, as visitors explore the intangible aspects of the human condition featured throughout this exhibition of extraordinary works.”

By highlighting domestic settings, private spheres, communal places, and the individuals who bring them to life, *Figurative Histories* makes a case for facing the past, acknowledging its impact on the present, and working toward a more equitable future. *Figurative Histories* is curated by Alison Weaver, Executive Director, and Frauke V. Josenhans, Curator, Moody Center for the Arts.

[Access promotional photos and artist biographies in the Figurative Histories Press Kit](#)

[Request a press pass to the Behind-the-Scenes tour on Thursday, May 29, 11:30 a.m. CST](#)

About the Exhibition



Earlie Hudnall, Jr., *Dr. T. F. Freeman and Dr. M.L. King*. Courtesy of the artist.

The exhibition will begin with a presentation of more than forty black-and-white photographs by Earlie Hudnall, Jr. Taken over the past four decades, Hudnall’s images capture individuals, especially in the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Wards of Houston, documenting their lived experiences with an empathetic eye, while highlighting issues of social justice. His iconic photograph *Dr. T. F. Freeman and Dr. M.L. King* (2013), taken in

Houston's MacGregor Park, will be displayed on a fifteen-foot banner. The image features Dr. T.F. Freeman, a legendary philosopher, debate coach, and pastor who taught at Texas Southern University for more than seventy years, standing in front of the memorial statue of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by sculptor Ken Washington. King Jr. attended a lecture by Dr. Freeman at Morehouse College in 1947, a fact that gives the photograph added poignancy and underscores how Hudnall's work deepens our understanding of the world. According to Hudnall, "there is always a continuity between the past and the future. It is this commonality that I strive to depict in my work."

Entering the Brown Foundation Gallery, visitors will discover works by Letitia Huckaby, Delita Martin, and David McGee. One section will feature eight portraits from Letitia Huckaby's *A Living Requiem* series. These large-scale silhouettes, each printed on fabric and presented in custom frames, will be visually anchored by a floral-patterned wall covering inspired by wallpaper found in a historic plantation in North Carolina. The series celebrates Charley and Kate Thorp, who contributed to the establishment of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth through their care and tireless labor. Charley, formerly enslaved by the school's first landlord, his wife, and their seven children were unable to attend TCU, as the school did not admit Black students until 1964, but they were indispensable to its early development. The artist photographed Thorp's descendants against intricate fabrics as a tribute to their ancestors' legacy. According to Huckaby, "*A Living Requiem* is an anthem, a rousing and uplifting song or hymn of praise and gladness dedicated to the resilience and lineage of the Thorp family."



Letitia Huckaby, *Dalores*. Courtesy of the artist.

Seven large-scale watercolors from David McGee's *Avenging Angels* series will be displayed adjacent to more than one hundred works on paper from his *Tarot Cards* series. McGee's monumental, vibrant paintings feature women in richly adorned, sumptuous dresses that recall the Antebellum South. The figures assume postures that affirm their presence and convey their inner strength. The artist incorporates elements from the natural world, such as birds and fruit, as well as man-made objects, such as weights and measures, as symbols of both the legacy of repression and the power of freedom. The *Tarot Cards* reference the tradition of fortune-telling and the concurrent desire to divine insights into the past, present, and future. Combining text and image, they explore the emotional weight of race, language, and art history as a means of examining our individual and collective histories. Highlighting the visual power of representation, the artist explains,

"There are no didactics in the *Avenging Angels* series or the *Tarot Cards* drawings, just a rerouting of words and images, that is meant to reset the viewer's assumptions. The intent is to open and broaden the range of emotions [in which] historical images cement themselves."

New works by Delita Martin, shown for the first time at the Moody, are drawn from her series, *The Song Keepers*, a visual narrative that reclaims and honors the presence of Black women in history, memory, and spirit. Through layered portraiture, Martin combines printmaking, painting, and collage to create images that exist between the real and the ethereal. These women, adorned in rich patterns and symbolic textures, embody strength, resilience, and ancestral connection. According to Martin, "By merging personal and collective histories, my work explores the liminal space between the physical and spiritual realms, where Black women's stories are both seen and felt. The figures in *The Song Keepers* command space, not just in their physicality, but in the power of their presence. They serve as vessels of remembrance, bridging the past with the present and inviting the viewer to witness the quiet, yet profound, legacy of their existence."

Concurrent with the gallery exhibition, the Moody will host The Reading Room, a Black art reference library and destination for discovery founded by Houston-born art worker, writer, and creative entrepreneur Amarie Gipson. Visitors will be invited to explore The Reading Room's impressive collection of art books designed to inspire visual arts literacy and cultural awareness while celebrating the past, present, and future of Black creativity.

A special playlist of music inspired by the history of live performance in Houston and the works on view will be available to visitors through a QR code. Assembled by artist and musicologist Tierney Malone, this compilation offers a sonic accompaniment to the visual histories on view in the galleries.

Figurative Histories is made possible by the Moody Center for the Arts Founders Circle, the Moody Center for the Arts Excellence Fund, the H. Russell Pitman Fund for the Moody Center for the Arts, the Kilgore Endowment Fund, the Tamara de Kuffner Fund, and the Sewall Endowment.



Delita Martin, *These Roots Run Deep*, detail. 2025. Courtesy of the artist.

Special Events



Summer Jam 2024, photo by Frank Hernandez.

Organized in conjunction with the *Figurative Histories* exhibition, public programming will be offered at the Moody throughout the summer. All events are free.

Friday, May 30, 6 - 8 pm

Opening Reception with the Artists

View the exhibition and hear from the four featured artists. Enjoy free beverages, listen to the historic playlist compiled by artist Tierney Malone, and peruse The Reading Room.

Saturday, May 31, 2 - 4 pm

Artists Panel Discussion + Reception

Join a discussion featuring the four exhibiting artists, moderated by Rice Assistant Professor of Art History Olivia K. Young. The hour-long panel will be followed by a reception with light refreshments.

Fridays, June 6, 13, 27, 12 -1 pm

Wellness Series

In June, enjoy meditation and yoga in the Moody's galleries on Fridays at noon. This program is offered through a collaboration with Rice's Gibbs Recreation Center.

Thursday, June 26, 5 - 7 pm

Pride Happy Hour

Celebrate Pride Month with a performance by Pride Chorus Houston. Enjoy free beverages and after-hours viewing of the *Figurative Histories* exhibition.

Saturdays, June 7, 14, 21, 28, 12 - 4 pm

ArtLab

Stop by the Moody on Saturday afternoons to participate in a creative, drop-in workshop inspired by the works on view.

Saturday, July 19, 12 - 5 pm

Summer Jam Community Day

Cool off and get creative at the Moody's annual Summer Jam featuring family-friendly art activities, galleries to explore, an indoor farmer's market, local food vendors, and more.

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

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

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

Press Contact

Erin Rolfs | +1 713-348-4115 | erin.rolfs@rice.edu



Moody Center for the Arts

Rice University

6100 Main Street, MS-480

Houston, TX 77005-1827

moody.rice.edu

713-348-ARTS



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