



Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director
Rice University, Moody Center for the Arts
Houston, Texas

THE SEARCH

The Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University seeks a collaborative, visionary, interdisciplinary arts leader to serve as its second Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director (Executive Director). Founded in 2017 as an interdisciplinary catalyst for artistic education, exhibition, research, and practice at Rice University, the mission of the Moody Center for the Arts (Moody) is to encourage creative thinking and original expression, enrich curricular innovation, and promote cross-campus and community collaboration through transformative encounters with the arts. In support of its mission, the Moody is also a public-facing institution designed to connect Rice to the greater Houston community through the creative intersection of art and ideas. The Moody mounts three exhibitions a year in its galleries, curates numerous temporary and permanent public art installations throughout Rice's campus, and hosts performances, conversations, classes, and hands-on workshops.

Reporting to the Provost and leading a team of 12 and a budget of \$3.5M, the Executive Director will work broadly across a range of constituencies at Rice, including deans, faculty, students, administration, donors, alumni, and members of the Houston community to chart the next chapter of the Moody as a place of arts education, invention, experimentation, and creation. Major priorities for the next Executive Director include developing a bold strategic plan for the Moody's next chapter, amplifying interdisciplinary collaboration across campus, strengthening and diversifying its financial base, raising the Moody's visibility as a leading arts venue in Houston and beyond, leading and empowering staff, and advancing the Rice Public Art Initiative.

The Executive Director is responsible for all activities of the Moody and represents the Moody to various external constituencies, most notably the Advisory Board, alumni and friends of the arts, public audiences throughout the region, and the museum and arts professions at large, cultivating donors and patrons to secure philanthropic support. Overall, the Executive Director provides strategic leadership for the Moody, ensuring that the institution's mission is clearly understood and that its objectives are fully articulated and effectively pursued within the context of Rice University's goals and mission.

Rice has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in the recruitment of its next Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director of the Moody Center for the Arts. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

RICE UNIVERSITY

Located on a 300-acre forested campus in Houston, Texas, 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 and computing, humanities and arts, music, natural sciences, and social sciences, and is home to centers and institutes such as the Baker Institute for Public Policy and Kinder Institute for Urban Research. Internationally, the university maintains the Rice Global Paris Center, a hub for innovative collaboration, research, and inspired teaching located in the heart of Paris, and Rice Global India in Bengaluru, India. With 4,793 undergraduates and 4,185 graduate students, Rice's undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio is just under 6-to-1. Its residential college system builds close-knit communities and lifelong friendships, just one reason why Rice is ranked in the top 10 for best quality of life by the Princeton Review.

"Letters, Science, Art" adorns the Rice University seal—and indeed, the arts permeate every facet of Rice's campus. Leading academic programs in architecture, art history, music, and the visual and dramatic arts, combined with an extraordinary collection of public art, the award-winning Moody Center for the Arts, and the recently opened neighboring Sarofim Hall - which consolidates Rice's visual arts programs into a single state-of-the-art space - make for a campus that is rich in artistic collaboration and curricular innovation. The Moody, Sarofim, and the Brockman Hall for Opera together create an arts district on campus and serve as one of the most visible campus gateways.

The importance of the arts at Rice is highlighted in the current Momentous 10-year strategic plan, which includes cultivating, curating, and performing musical and creative arts as one of its key objectives. To learn about the current Momentous 10-year strategic plan, please visit: <https://momentous.rice.edu/>.

THE MOODY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

The [Moody Center for the Arts](#), designed by Michael Maltzan Architecture, opened in 2017 thanks in part to a \$20M gift from the Moody Foundation to serve as an interdisciplinary catalyst for artistic education, research, and practice. The Center features secure and open gallery spaces, including a sprung dance floor, a modular theater, a concert space, a media gallery, a maker space, and classrooms. From the Moody Foundation's inaugural gift and generously endowed Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Directorship to the annual *Dinner for the Moody*, philanthropy is essential to the breadth of activities and programming at the Moody. Today, the mission of the Moody is to encourage creative thinking and original expression, enrich curricular innovation, and promote cross-campus and community collaboration through transformative encounters with the arts.

The Moody is a public-facing institution designed to connect Rice to the greater Houston community through the creative intersection of art and ideas. All of its programs are free and open to the public. By centering these efforts on generative partnerships with artists, scholars, and students from various disciplines, the Moody presents unexpected and ever-changing entry points into the arts, bridging communities and areas of interest in support of its mission.

Core to its commitment to education and engagement, the Moody offers two signature programs each season: Dimensions Variable, a series that invites artists and partners of various disciplines to respond to the exhibition on view, and Artists-in-Dialogue, an open and public conversation between artists, practitioners, and researchers in disparate but complementary fields. The organization is also host to the Leslie and Brad Bucher [Artist-in-Residence](#), inviting a living artist to engage with the campus community.

In addition to regular performances in the Lois Chiles Studio Theater, there are three community events each year: Spring Fling, an outdoor concert featuring live music; Summer Jam, which offers games, refreshments, and an indoor farmers market; and Moody Movie Night, presenting a popular film screened outdoors on our lawn. These open and free programs are complemented by ongoing workshops in the [Moody's Makerspace](#) that support the research of Rice students, faculty, and staff.

Outside of the slate of seasonal exhibitions and programs, the Moody curates, facilitates, and maintains the permanent [Rice Public Art collection](#), now featuring more than 85 works installed across Rice's 300-acre campus, including the Suzanne Deal Booth Centennial Pavilion, James Turrell's Twilight Epiphany Skyspace. Temporary public art interventions include [Off the Wall](#), a yearly installation in the Brochstein Pavilion; the Moody Project Wall hosted in the building's flex space; [Platform](#), a global invitation to artists to create an installation in response to the architecture and areas of study found on Rice's campus; and the [Tent Series](#).

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Reporting to the [Provost](#), the Suzanne Deal Booth Executive Director will work broadly across a range of constituencies at Rice, including faculty, students, administration, donors, alumni, and members of the Houston community to chart the next chapter of the Moody as a place of arts education and creation. The Executive Director oversees a budget of approximately \$3.5M. Supporting the Moody Center are 12 full-time staff members, 12 volunteers, and 55 student workers. The Center has 40,000 square feet of programming and administrative space and 10,000 square feet of maker space.

In leading the Moody, the Executive Director is expected to address the following intersecting key opportunities and challenges:

Develop a bold vision for the next chapter of the Moody.

As the Moody's current strategic plan concludes, the next Executive Director will collaboratively develop a visionary, interdisciplinary, bold plan for the Moody's next chapter that aligns with the University's [Momentous](#) strategic plan goals and priorities. The Executive Director will lead the team to identify and

implement measures that will sustain and enhance programmatic excellence, continue to integrate with the university's teaching and research mission, sustain and expand robust engagement with the Houston arts community, and ensure financial sustainability. They will develop long-term initiatives that elevate excellence in exhibitions, public art, programmatic content, and engagement, with clear objectives for measurable success.

Celebrate, amplify, and extend interdisciplinary collaboration across campus.

The Executive Director will be the chief liaison for the Moody with the university and an eager partner with colleagues. They will widely engage in communication with leaders and students across schools, programs, and disciplines to strengthen and broaden campus collaboration and identify new opportunities to work together. While focusing on its integration with the university's mission, the Moody is well-positioned to emphasize its reputation and role as a strong partner to catalyze collaborations that will generate and expand artistic activity, research, and education at Rice University. Overall, the Executive Director will continue to be an active resource for all members of the campus community, further positioning the Moody as an integral part of the student, staff, and faculty academic experience.

Nurture donor engagement to further strengthen and diversify the Moody's financial position.

The next leader will serve as the chief fundraiser to continue to grow resources to support and expand programming, collaboration, endowment, and capital needs. The Executive Director will deepen existing relationships and establish new connections throughout and beyond the Rice and Houston communities to further build philanthropic support and engage current and new Advisory Board members. Providing compelling storytelling to promote understanding of the Moody and its mission is a key priority. The Executive Director will also bring a detailed approach to financial planning, resource allocation, and revenue to ensure efficiency in management and serve as an effective advocate within the university to demonstrate impact, effectiveness, and needs of the Moody.

Ensure meaningful and robust community engagement.

Houston is home to a vibrant arts and cultural scene, of which the Moody is a part. Neighbors include Project Row Houses, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and The Menil Collection. The Executive Director will represent the Moody in the greater community as an active arts leader and partner. In addition to serving as the face of the Moody, the Executive Director will prioritize outreach to expansively connect with audiences and facilitate welcoming relationships. Serving as a hub for bringing the university and community together will raise the Moody's profile and build its capacity for engagement in Houston, the region, and nationally.

Support and advance the Rice Public Art Initiative.

The Rice Public Art Initiative underscores the unconventional approach and creative spirit of scholarly inquiry at Rice University. The Executive Director plays a key role in the Moody's facilitation of the acquisition, installation, maintenance, and access to these works, as well as identification of creative

endeavors. The Executive Director will partner with artists and stakeholders across campus to engage communities at Rice, Houston, and far beyond.

Lead, develop, and empower the Moody's dedicated staff.

The Moody is home to a team of dedicated professionals. The Executive Director is responsible for building and developing staff, demonstrating a full understanding of their work, and promoting institutional cohesion and a cooperative, shared sense of the Moody's future. The Executive Director will be a collaborative, values-driven leader who maintains clear communications, including through delegation of responsibilities and appropriate authority, maintaining transparency in decision-making, and regular supportive interaction with the full team. The Executive Director will be present and attentive to orchestrate and facilitate the Moody's workflow and mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- A passion for the Moody's interdisciplinary artistic, educational, and programmatic mission. The ability to build rapport with and command the respect and support of students, faculty, artists, curators, colleagues, and the public;
- A visionary approach to elevating the Moody's national reputation in the art world through community engagement and the role of the Moody in contemporary society. Demonstrated experience in increasing the visibility and impact of a civic institution;
- A deep understanding of museum best practices, including collections management, exhibition development, community engagement, public art, and educational programming;
- Experience building and managing budgets while driving sound financial and policy decisions within an organization of ideally comparable complexity and similar funding streams;
- A strong record of success in donor relations and fundraising;
- Experience leading, serving, and working with an engaged Advisory Board;
- Exceptional communication skills, encouraging and facilitating dialogue around challenging issues with grace, humility, and integrity;
- A collaborative and transparent leadership style that fosters trust and accountability;
- The skills to create a stimulating, healthy, and productive work environment for a variety of people and situations;
- Commitment to the mission of Rice University and an understanding of operating within an academic institutional environment;
- Seven or more years of leadership experience in an educational/museum/non-profit venue; and
- A graduate degree is preferred.

HOUSTON AND THE COMMUNITY

The fourth-largest city in the U.S., Houston is home to vibrant performing and visual arts communities, with major art museums located in the immediate vicinity of Rice University, including the Menil Collection, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and the Contemporary Art Museum Houston. Houston is one of only six American cities with resident professional companies in all four major performing arts: ballet, opera, theater, and symphony. Houston's Museum of Fine Arts houses an extensive collection containing more than 51,000 artworks dating from antiquity to the present, and the city's Museum of Natural Science is an impressive five-venue complex that houses the Burke Baker Dome Theatre, Wortham IMAX Theatre, Cockrell Butterfly Center, and four floors of natural science exhibits. Additionally, Houston is home to the Menil Collection art museum, a 30-acre neighborhood of art.

The city boasts more Fortune 500 company headquarters than any city except New York and Chicago. Rice is adjacent to the Texas Medical Center, the world's largest medical complex, employing more than 65,000 people and located across the street from Rice's main campus. NASA's Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, where human spaceflight training, research, and flight control are conducted, is only twenty-five miles from the heart of the city. The city is also considered a center of innovation and industry, often dubbed the energy capital of the world.

Houston's 52,912 acres of park space ranks first among the nation's 10 most populous cities. Thanks to mild year-round temperatures, 300 miles of interconnected bikeways, and the 2012 introduction of the Houston B-Cycle share program, biking is one of the best ways to see the city. The Armand Bayou Nature Center, Hermann Park, Memorial Park, the Houston Zoo, Cypress Trails, and the Mercer Arboretum and Botanical Gardens are just some of the many serene and beautiful outdoor landmarks to explore, many of which are adjacent to campus.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/rice-university-moody-center-arts/suzanne-deal-booth-executive-director>.

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Rice University is an Equal Opportunity Employer with commitment to diversity at all levels and considers for employment qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, genetic information, disability or protected veteran status.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Rice University, Moody Center for the Arts. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Rice University, Moody Center for the Arts would supersede any conflicting information in this document.