

PRESS RELEASE

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WACO THEATER CENTER PRESENTS 3RD ANNUAL WEARABLE ART GALA Saturday, June 1st

Emmy Award Winning Actress & Comedienne Tiffany Haddish to Host

LOS ANGELES, (March 4, 2019) /PRNewswire/ WACO Theater will host the Third Annual Wearable Art Gala on **Saturday, June 1, 2019**. Co-Artistic Directors Tina Knowles Lawson and Richard Lawson founded the event, which is presented by **SheaMoisture**, to celebrate art and raise funds for the non-profit gallery and performance complex **WACO Theater Center**.

The theme for the 2019 Gala is ***A Journey to the Pride Lands***, based on the upcoming Walt Disney feature, THE LION KING, opening nationwide July 19th. Gala guests are encouraged to create their own wearable art attire inspired by the ideals of African tradition that are at the heart of the upcoming film which stars Donald Glover as Simba, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter as Nala, James Earl Jones as Mufasa, Alfre Woodard as Sarabi, and Chiwetel Ejiofor as Scar. The film is directed by Jon Favreau and utilizes pioneering filmmaking techniques to bring the treasured characters to life in a whole new way.

WACO Theater center proudly welcomes back beauty and personal care brand **SheaMoisture** as the Presenting Sponsor for the 2019 Wearable Art Gala. The brand has been a consistent supporter of WACO programs since 2016, working closely with the Center to passionately foster art and education initiatives for underserved youth.

One of Los Angeles' coveted annual events, the Wearable Art Gala celebrates African American artists, culture and tradition. Fine art pieces will be auctioned to raise money for WACO's mentorship programs, **Tina's Angels** and **Richard's**

Warriors which consist of enrichment and leadership initiatives that empower inner city students ages 12-14, exposing children to all aspects of art and life that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience,” says Lawson.

Wearable art is a unique intersection of fashion and self-expressive art that implements a unique theme. Co-Artistic Director Knowles Lawson hopes that Gala patrons will challenge their imagination and create their own fashions based on the themes of THE LION KING. “As a designer, I am constantly inspired by themes I discover from paintings, sculpture, photography, nature and films such as THE LION KING, said Knowles Lawson. “We are in a beautiful moment when black art and fashion are challenging societal norms, transforming the world of music and entertainment and truly being appreciated on a global scale.”

WACO Co-Artistic Director Richard Lawson celebrates THE LION KING for uniting audiences and diverse cultures, ages and demographics. “It’s a blessing to share such a cinematic work with our students and raise funds that will benefit local communities as well as encourage a deeper understanding of narrative art,” says Lawson. “Children see that captains of the industry can be creative and operate outside of their comfort zone, and not be like everyone else. That gives young people hope.” Also, since the first Gala in 2017, Lawson has witnessed the impact the event has had on conservative businessmen who by the second Gala were eager to display their own imagination and creativity in their wearable art attire.

La La Anthony, Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Solange Knowles, Bianca Lawson, Kelly Rowland, and Michelle Williams will serve as Honorary Chairpersons for the third annual Gala. Business and entertainment industry leaders serving on the Gala’s Host Committee include Kawanna Brown, Vanessa Bell Calloway, Cheryl Creuzot, Babe Evans, Melba Farquhar, Lela Rochon Fuqua, Steve Jones, Mai Lassiter, Holly Robinson-Peete, Robi Reed, Eula Smith and Jo-An Turman. WACO’s Board of Directors include Glynn Turman, Ralph and Melba Farquhar, Angeliki G. Jack, John Wiseman and Steve Pamon.

2019 GALA HIGHLIGHTS

WACO will pay tribute to **Felicia Horowitz** with the 2019 Everyday People Award in recognition of her passionate advocacy for women’s rights, LGBTQ rights, harm reduction and violence prevention, and her determination to unite people cross-culturally through technology, community, and radical inclusion. Felicia’s philanthropic efforts are made possible through her role as the founder and CEO of the Horowitz Family Foundation.

Emmy-winning actress and comedienne **Tiffany Haddish** will serve as the Gala's master of ceremonies. Television personality, best-selling author, and women’s and diversity advocate, **Star Jones** returns as the Gala’s celebrity auctioneer for the third year.

The Lawsons' Louisiana Creole ancestry will again be a focal point of Gala festivities. The evening's cuisine will include an array of Creole specialties designed as a formal 4-course dinner and presented by executive chef **Damon Stalworth** of D's Original Take Out Grill, Los Angeles.

Entertainment will include **The Mudbugs** Zydeco brass band, **DJ Millie**, live performers and dancers, as well as interactive and wearable art installations by several designer including **Crystal Paris**.

WACO THEATER CENTER

Last fall, the Lawsons celebrated the one-year anniversary of opening a state-of-the-art theater complex in Los Angeles which houses Richard Lawson Studios. WACO theater stages productions throughout the year, such as the recent 50th anniversary production of the Pulitzer Prize winning play, *No Place to be Somebody*, by *Charles Gordone*. Lawson served as Director and Knowles Lawson as Hair and Makeup Designer. The pair is committed to providing a creative center where art can truly occur and provide actors, artists and youth a place to celebrate their own talent and artistry.

ART AUCTION

The Gala will include a silent and live auction curated by Arthur Lewis and Hau Nguyen featuring fine art by artists Harmonia Rosales, Gherdai Hassell among many others. Artists who previously donated works to WACO include art luminaries Kehinde Wiley, Lauren Halsey, Sadie Barnette, Bethany Collins, Genevieve Gagnaird, Samuel Levi Jones, Robert Pruitt, Eduardo Sarbia, Radcliffe Bailey and designers Cynthia Bach and Lorraine Schwartz who donated jewelry designed for and worn by Beyoncé.

Last Spring, WACO hosted its Second Annual Wearable Art Gala with Presenting Sponsor **SheaMoisture**, raising over \$1.2 million in funding for outreach efforts to support arts and culture programming, and mentorship programs in Los Angeles. The evening was hosted by GET OUT breakout star Lil Rel Howery. Guests included Tyler Perry, Earvin Magic and Cookie Johnson, Octavia Spencer, Samuel L. Jackson, Latanya Jackson, Kelly Rowland, Bianca Lawson, Lala Anthony, Debra Lee, Holly Robinson Peete, LisaRaye McCoy among many others. 2018 honorees included Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and Gloria Carter, Jay-Z's mother who was the recipient of WACO Theater Center's Everyday People Award.

ABOUT WACO THEATER CENTER

WACO Theater Center is dedicated to the empowerment of artists within a diversified pool of LA communities. The founders' mission is to create a space **Where Art Can Occur**. For more information on programs, classes and upcoming productions and events, visit www.WACOTheaterCenter.com and follow @WacoTheater on Instagram and Facebook, @waco_theater on Twitter.

TICKET DONATIONS AND SPONSOR TABLES

Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsor-level tables as well as \$1,500 tickets and a limited number of \$1000 tickets are available. WACO Theater Center is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations will be directly applied to WACO's programs. For tickets, visit www.wacothatercenter.com

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Press and media, please apply for event credentials here:
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