



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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MARIAN BLAKEMORE PLANETARIUM KICKS OFF NEW LECTURE SERIES, *RELATIVITY*

The Museum of the Southwest Hosts Bill Wren of the McDonald Observatory to Discuss Documentary The City Dark and the “Disappearing Night Sky”

Saturday, February 18, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. the Museum of the Southwest encourages the community to attend the Marian Blakemore Planetarium’s inaugural session of *Relativity*, a new lecture series focused on astronomy, physics and more. The night will commence with a showing of award-winning documentary *The City Dark*, followed by a discussion of the film led by Bill Wren, longtime employee of the McDonald Observatory, and Cindy Luongo Cassidy, an owner of Green Earth Lighting.

The City Dark examines light pollution and the alleged affects of “the disappearing night sky” on humanity. It premiered in competition at the 2011 South by Southwest Film Festival, where it won the Jury Prize for Best Score/Music. In the documentary, filmmaker Ian Cheney asks, “Do we need the dark?” Cheney explores the possible repercussions of our glittering globe—everything from the threat of killer asteroids in Hawaii to increased breast cancer rates. After the showing, join Bill Wren and Cindy Luongo Cassidy in a discussion of the ideas presented in the documentary. Bill Wren is a dark sky advocate and will address the challenges of keeping West Texas skies clear and dark. Cindy Luongo Cassidy inspects exterior lighting and lighting plans for compliance with local ordinances and performs audits of existing outdoor lighting to identify and help rectify lighting that is not dark-sky friendly, and has taken part in various lectures with Bill Wren in the past.

“*Relativity* is our new program at the Planetarium to try to reach out to the Permian Basin with timely and topical information about astronomy,” explains Andrew Kerr, director of the Blakemore Planetarium. “It has a dual meaning, as we want to make astronomy relative to everyday life today, while we honor the past accomplishments of science which made our present possible.” *Relativity* was designed as an educational program of the Museum and is proposed to take place monthly. It is free to Museum members; otherwise a donation of \$5 is suggested.

The Museum of the Southwest is a nonprofit organization located in Midland, Texas. *The Museum of the Southwest seeks to excite the senses through discovery in art, culture and science.* Founded in 1965, the Museum is comprised of an Art Museum, a Children's Museum, a state of the art Planetarium and an outdoor Sculpture Park. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, and closed Monday. The Blakemore Planetarium is closed Sunday and Monday. For more information on the Museum, membership and upcoming exhibitions and events, call 432.683.2882 or send an email to info@MuseumSW.org.

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For more information, images, or to schedule an interview, please contact Chelsea Dey at 432.683.2882 x 304 or cdey@MuseumSW.org.