

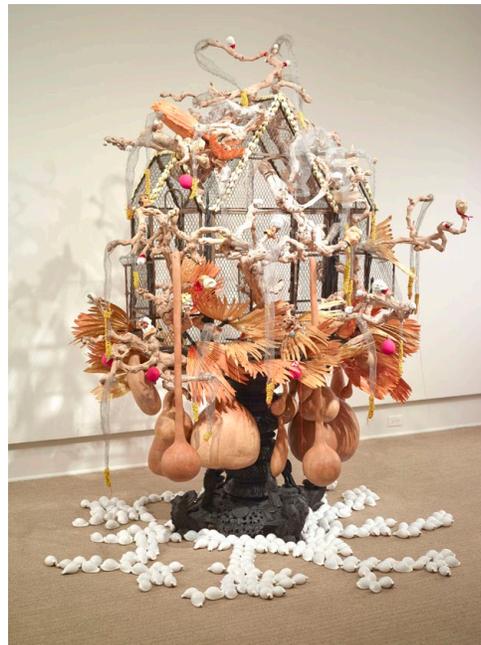
Fowler

MUSEUM AT UCLA

Rina Banerjee: Make Me a Summary of the World

December 8, 2019–May 31, 2020

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Los Angeles—The Fowler Museum at UCLA presents *Rina Banerjee: Make Me a Summary of the World*, the artist's first mid-career retrospective that brings together her sprawling installations, exquisitely crafted sculptures, and ethereal paintings. The exhibition offers an opportunity to experience almost 20 years of Banerjee's work, including a re-creation of her installations from the 2000 Whitney Biennial and 2017 Prospect New Orleans, as well as a selection of sculptures featured in the 2017 Venice Biennale, *Viva Arte Viva*.

Banerjee is a voracious gatherer of things. In a single sculpture, one can find African jewelry, a Chinese feather fan, Italian Murano glass, Japanese and Korean fabrics, and South Asian antiques, all joined together in conversation and conflict. Through her assemblages, she makes visible the transnational movement of people, objects, and ideas, an approach and aesthetic greatly influenced by her own global trajectory.

Banerjee was born in India, immigrated to London as a young child, and then, at age 7, moved with her family to the United States, which has been her home ever since. Since 2000, she has lived and worked in New York. Today, Banerjee is considered one of the most important artists of North America's post-colonial Indian diaspora.



“Although Banerjee has exhibited extensively in Europe and South Asia, this critically acclaimed retrospective, which premiered at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2018, gives her original, vibrant, and provocative multi-media oeuvre the spotlight it deserves in the U.S.,” said Marla C. Berns, Shirley & Ralph Shapiro Director of the Fowler. “Banerjee’s art resonates with the Fowler’s mission, rejecting the idea that identity is based on one culture or gender. Instead, she embraces a multiplicity of experiences and a constant dance of negotiation and adaptation. This is reflected in her riotous use of color and discordant materials, which make her work beautiful and unsettling at the same time.”

Rather than progressing chronologically, the exhibition is modeled on Banerjee’s own non-linear practice. Within the Fowler’s exhibition space, large installations serve as focal points for exploring overlapping themes that coincide with important issues of our time: colonialism and globalism; immigration and identity; gender and sexuality; climate change and the natural world. Several of Banerjee’s mixed media sculptures are situated in other museum spaces, where they instigate dialogues with objects in the Fowler’s collection.

In *Make Me a Summary of the World*, Banerjee acts as our guide to a new adventure, revealing her version of the world while asking that as travelers, we bring our own associations and experiences to the journey. At a time of increasingly factious politics and instability, Banerjee’s reflections on the splintered experience of immigration and the tangled inequities of our globally connected world feel ever more vital. At the same time, the artist’s long and poetic titles with idiosyncratic spellings resist the worldwide domination of the English language.

“For 20 years, Rina has been using her work to disrupt conventional notions of identity, delving into the complex territory of cultural fragmentation and self-identification, which makes her an important voice today,” said exhibition cocurators, Jodi Throckmorton, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and Lauren Schell Dickens, Curator at the San José Museum of Art. “We’re particularly excited to see her retrospective travel to the Fowler Museum at UCLA, located within a region that is home to so many diasporic groups.”

Exhibition Catalog and Travel Venues

Make Me a Summary of the World is accompanied by extensive programming and a full-color, 160-page catalog co-published by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and the San José Museum of Art, California, the two organizing venues. After the exhibition closes at the Fowler, it will travel to the Frist Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Nasher Museum at Duke University, in Durham, North Carolina.

About Rina Banerjee

Born in Kolkata, India in 1963, Banerjee was raised in the United Kingdom and the United States. She received her bachelor's degree in polymer engineering from Case Western Reserve University in 1993 and, upon graduation, took a job as a polymer research chemist. After several years, she left the profession to pursue her master of fine arts from Yale University. She currently lives and works in New York City.

Banerjee has exhibited in galleries worldwide, with notable solo exhibitions at the Freer|Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and the Musée Guimet, Paris. Her important group exhibitions have included the Venice Biennale (2017); Prospect.4, New Orleans (2017); Busan Biennale, South Korea (2016); Asian Art Biennale, Taiwan (2015); Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Australia (2012); and the Whitney Biennial (2000).

Her works are also included in more than 30 private and public collections, such as the Whitney Museum of American Art; Brooklyn Museum; Hammer Museum; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; and Centre Pompidou.

Credits

Rina Banerjee: Make Me a Summary of the World is co-organized by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the San José Museum of Art. Major support for this exhibition is made possible by the William Penn Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Exelon Foundation and PECO, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Lead support for the presentation at the Fowler Museum is provided by The Martha and Avrum Bluming Exhibition Fund. Additional support is provided by the Shapiro Endowment Fund, Fowler Contemporary Council Fund, Pasadena Art Alliance, Barbara Timmer and Catherine Benkaim, the George R. and Nancy Ellis Endowment Fund, Carla Kirkeby, Betty and Richard Seid, Janis and William Wetsman and the Wetsman Foundation, L.A. Louver Gallery, Charlotte Chamberlain and Paul Wieselmann, and Connie McCreight.



Related Programs

Opening Night Lecture with Artist and Curators

Saturday, December 7 | 6–7pm

Exhibition cocurators Jodi Throckmorton, Curator of Contemporary Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and Lauren Schell Dickens, Curator, San José Museum of Art, will present on Rina Banerjee's distinct bodies of work—sculpture and works on paper. Banerjee will then join them for a conversation about materials, themes, and her unique installation strategies. Opening party to follow from 7–9pm. [RSVP at rinabanerjee.eventbrite.com](https://www.rinabanerjee.eventbrite.com).

About the Fowler Museum

The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on works from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the indigenous Americas—past and present. The Fowler enhances understanding of world cultures through dynamic exhibitions, publications, and public programs, informed by interdisciplinary approaches and the perspectives of the cultures represented. The work of international contemporary artists is presented within complex frameworks of politics, culture, and social action.

Museum Information

308 Charles E Young Dr N | Los Angeles, CA 90024 | fowler.ucla.edu

Admission to the Fowler is free

Hours: Wed 12–8pm and Thu–Sun 12–5pm

Parking available in UCLA Lot 4: 398 Westwood Plaza at Sunset Blvd. (\$3/hr; max \$13/day)

Rideshare drop-off: 305 Royce Drive

CAPTIONS

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Rina Banerjee (b. 1963), *Make me a summary of the world! She was his guide and had traveled on camel, rhino, elephant and kangaroo, dedicated to dried plants, glass houses—for medical study, vegetable sexuality, self-pollination, fertilization her reach pierced the woods country by country*, 2014. Wood rhino, Chinese umbrellas, sea sponges, linen, beads, pewter soldiers, grape vines, glass chandelier drops, acrylic horns, wire, nylon and bead flowers. 7 x 4 ft. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/ Brussels. © Rina Banerjee. Image courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

Rina Banerjee (b. 1963), *Her captivity was once someone's treasure and even pleasure but she blew and flew away took root which grew, we knew this was like no other feather, a third kind of bird that perched on vine intertwined was neither native nor her queens daughters, a peculiar other.*, 2011. Anglo-Indian pedestal 1860, Victorian birdcage, shells, feathers, gourds, grape vines, coral, fractured Charlotte doll heads, steel knitted mesh with glass beads, Kenyan tourist sculptures, apple gourds. 7 x 7 x 6 ft. Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Purchased with funds from the Michel Roux Acquisitions Fund, 2016.20. © Rina Banerjee. Image courtesy Rina Banerjee Archives.

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Rina Banerjee (b. 1963), *Learn of their discovery, their complex physiological construction and fierce competition they grew attached and grew abnormally became lively with each others fondness for excitation*, 2013. Acrylic on watercolor paper, 30 x 44 in. Private Collection, Miami. © Rina Banerjee. Image courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.