Fowler
MUSEUM AT UCLA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fowler Museum at UCLA presents *Textiles as Monument*, a major exhibition reimagining memory, migration, and care through cloth

Opening August 9, 2026, *Textiles as Monument* features newly commissioned works and large-scale installations by contemporary artists Suchitra Mattai, Jagdeep Raina, and Swapnaa Tamhane

Los Angeles, CA— The Fowler Museum at UCLA presents *Textiles as Monument*, a major exhibition opening August 9, 2026, that reimagines what monuments can be; and whom they honor. Featuring works by contemporary artists Suchitra Mattai, Jagdeep Raina, and Swapnaa Tamhane**,** the exhibition explores how textiles can serve as powerful sites of memory, resistance, and belonging, offering alternatives to traditional monuments that have historically privileged permanence, authority, and singular narratives.

Rather than monumentalizing political power or conquest, *Textiles as Monument* asks what it means to honor communities whose contributions have often gone unseen, foregrounding stories often absent from public memory. Through large-scale installations, newly commissioned artworks, embroidery, weaving, and textile-based sculpture, the exhibition examines how cloth, soft, tactile, and deeply embedded in everyday life, can carry histories of movement, family, resilience, and collective memory across generations and geographies. Rooted in South Asian and diasporic histories, the featured artists transform these materials and inherited techniques into acts of commemoration that center care, labor, migration, intimacy, and survival.

"*Textiles as Monument* invites visitors to reconsider what, and who, we choose to remember," said Silvia Forni, Ralph and Shirley Shapiro Director of the Fowler Museum. "By focusing on textile practices often associated with domesticity, care, and inherited knowledge, this exhibition expands our understanding of monumentality itself. It reflects the Fowler's commitment to presenting global artistic practices that challenge dominant narratives and illuminate the many ways artworks give tangible form."

The exhibition features significant new commissions by all three artists; many created specifically for the Fowler Museum. Drawing from distinct cultural histories and artistic practices, Mattai, Raina, and Tamhane each approach textiles as a means of honoring lived experience, preserving memory, and reimagining monumentality itself.

Drawing from her Indo-Guyanese, Caribbean, and South Asian heritage, local Los Angeles-based artist, **Suchitra Mattai**, creates monumental woven environments using vintage saris and found materials to honor histories of migration, displacement, and resilience, particularly those of Indo-Caribbean communities shaped by colonialism and indentured labor. A newly commissioned immersive installation created for the exhibition transforms woven textiles into an architectural passageway that reflects on liberation, movement, and ancestral memory.

Jagdeep Raina turns to embroidery and quilt-making, and garment construction to memorialize forms of labor and lived experience that often remain invisible. Through newly commissioned works informed by research and conversations with communities in Los Angeles, Raina examines migrant and domestic labor, illuminating the lives and emotional realities of workers whose efforts sustain the city yet frequently go unrecognized.

Working in close collaboration with textile-makers in India's Kutch region, **Swapnaa Tamhane** foregrounds the expertise and artistry of makers whose knowledge has long shaped global textile traditions. Through installations inspired by domestic and working environments, Tamhane honors the ingenuity of textile communities while challenging colonial frameworks that have historically excluded these practices from dominant histories of art and design.

"Monuments often communicate permanence and authority, but they can also exclude, simplify, or erase," said Syona Puliady, curator of *Textiles as Monument*. "This exhibition explores how textiles offer another way of remembering, one rooted in intimacy, movement, labor, and care. Through their work, these artists remind us that histories are

not only preserved in stone and bronze, but also in materials touched, carried, repaired, and passed between generations."

Textiles as Monument asks visitors to sit with a different kind of permanence: not stone or bronze, but cloth- worn, mended, and remembered. Through immersive installations and richly textured works, the exhibition offers an invitation to reconsider how histories are carried, whose stores endure, and what forms remembrance can take.

Textiles as Monuments opens at the Fowler Museum at UCLA on August 9, 2026**.** Admission is free.

Exhibition Details

Textiles as Monuments
August 9, 2026
Curated by: Syona Puliady
Fowler Museum at UCLA
Free admission

Generous support for *Textiles as Monument* is provided by the Anne and John Summerfield Fund, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the Mary Jane Leland Textile Fund. Additional funding is provided by the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Foundation, Pasadena Art Alliance, Dr. Charles Knobler and Dr. Carolyn Knobler, Tad Freese and Brook Hartzell, Roberts Projects, Kim and Keith Allen-Niesen, and Connie McCreight. Additional funding for the publication is provided by the R.L. Shep Endowment.

About The Fowler Museum:
The Fowler Museum at UCLA explores global arts and cultures with an emphasis on Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Indigenous Americas—past and present. The museum 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. The Fowler Museum is one of three public arts institutions of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture.

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