

Ranjani Shettar

Dewdrops and Sunshine



NGV'S NEW CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE: CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS



Throughout 2011 the NGV has celebrated its 150th anniversary year with a fantastic calendar of broad ranging exhibitions, events and a major redevelopment plan that has seen new exhibition spaces open at both venues; NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

The NGV's vast collection comprising over 70,000 works provides endless

opportunities for change and growth and Contemporary Exhibitions will present additional opportunities to display international and Australian contemporary art.

Frances Lindsay, Deputy Director, NGV said: "The new space will feature a range of innovative exhibitions by leading artists from Australia, Asia Pacific and beyond. It's location on the ground floor will highlight the centrality of contemporary art to the NGV."

Daryl West-Moore, Manager of Design, NGV said that the open white cube design of Contemporary Exhibitions gives it the capacity to accept a variety of contemporary art practices and is perfect for the inaugural exhibition of work by international installation artist, Ranjani Shettar.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Ranjani Shettar was born in 1977 in Bangalore, India, where she continues to work and live. Shettar graduated from the College of Fine Arts, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, with BFA and an MFA.

Shettar has had solo exhibitions at venues such as the Hermes Foundation, Singapore (2011); the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2009); the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2008–09); the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2008); Artpace, San Antonio (2006); and Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi (2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011).

Ranjani's work is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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THE WORKS

Interplay (2011)

For this exhibition, Shettar has created a new non volume, three dimensional work titled *Interplay* which consists of two components, or nets, anchored to the wall and floor. One features beeswax orbs in shades of orange and yellow, while the other net is in shades of blue. The warm and cool colours create a contrast that suggests sunlight streaming through morning mist or dewdrops, or an afternoon sun shower on a hot summer day.



Flame of the forest (2011)

Here, Shettar explores a contrast of finishes by juxtaposing untreated wood and painted lacquered wooden elements. Inside an expertly carved and joined teak wood wheel sprout gleaming orange nodules. The title of the sculpture, *Flame of the forest*, refers to the tree of the same name that grows in India (and elsewhere) that has orange and crimson blossoms and is considered sacred by Hindus. Not only

does the tree metaphorically evoke fire because of its intensely colourful flowers, but its wood is used in fire rituals in temples and homes; both ideas are seemingly the subject of Shettar's sculpture, as the orange tear-drop shapes inside the wooden wheel suggest both flowers and flames.

Fire in the belly (2007)

Fire in the belly consists of biomorphic shapes made from acacia wood, painted with automotive paint, and suspended from the ceiling. Despite a near industrial perfection of surface and colour, the untreated acacia beneath is destined to crack over time, the paint flaking off where the wood opens itself up to the elements. The title refers to the beacons of fluorescent green light that emanate from the abdomens of fireflies.



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THE WORKS (cont)

***Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles* (2007-08)**

Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles is inspired by the genetic propensity of some humans to sneeze when exposed to bright sunlight. The installation resembles a group of floating bubbles. *Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles* is made of stainless-steel armatures wrapped in muslin. The muslin is stiffened through applying tamarind kernel paste, which also provides varying degrees of opacity and translucency as light interacts with the sculpture. Finally, Shettar added a coating of lacquer to give the work a beige patina. She has borrowed the use of tamarind kernel paste was borrowed from Indian toy and idol makers, who use the paste in creating objects, and also from the textile industry, where the paste is used to make fabric rigid.



***Touch me not* (2006-07)**

In terms of materiality, *Touch me not* is indebted to craft tradition, as Shettar hired craftspeople to make the wooden, pin-backed, delicately finished beads that feature so prominently in the work. Like *Heliotropes*, *Touch me not* poetically investigates plant kinetics, but in this case, movement is not activated by sunlight, but by other forms of stimuli. Here, Shettar uses thousands of beads secured to stainless-steel stalk-like pins to evoke a plant with many tiny leaves that, when brushed up against or affected by the wind, are drawn inward.

***Heliotropes* (2005-06)**

Heliotropes is composed of limb-like structures made of vulcanised latex that conjure plant stalks with openings reminiscent of mouths. The title of the work is based on plants that turn their leaves to the sun. The sculpture evolved in response to natural light in the artist's studio. The stalks resemble a living organism, part plant, part animal, bringing together the simultaneous opacity and translucency of skin. *Heliotropes* relies on the flatness and whiteness of the gallery wall as a stage or screen that provides a contrast to the work's organic rawness. As with many of Shettar's sculptures, shadows play an integral role in the work as they add further formal complexity to the limb-like structures.



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THE WORKS (cont)

***Transitions* (2003)**

Transitions highlights Shettar's interest in forms that suggest biology, and in particular, cells or microbes. The orange gulaganji seeds attached to the surfaces of *Transitions* are reminiscent of cellular nuclei, and the elongation of several of the wooden shapes resembles the metamorphosis that cells undergo during reproduction. Shettar has explained that the sculpture has just as much to do with formal considerations as biological ones: 'I was trying to float forms in thin air, at least virtually, using fishing line... suspending heavy wood, each on a string by itself, created a dynamism to the whole composition. There is an element of chance in how you see the sculpture, in terms of how it positions itself in space according to movement of air in the space'.



PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In Conversation: With Ranjani Shettar and Alex Baker

Fri 4 Nov, 6pm

Join us for this rare opportunity to hear from Ranjani Shettar how she transforms a wide array of unusual materials into magical forms that suggest natural phenomena.

Speaker Alex Baker, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art, NGV & Ranjani Shettar, artist

Cost \$25 Adult / \$20 NGV Member / \$22 Concession & Student (bookings essential, champagne on arrival)

Venue Exhibition space, Ground Level, NGV International

Event Code P11261

Bookings 8662 1555

Artbeat Party – Natural Phenomena

Fri 11 Nov, 8.30pm - midnight

Be among the first to see the new contemporary space at NGV International at this Artbeat party.

Join us for an exclusive viewing of the inaugural exhibition *Ranjani Shettar: Dewdrops and Sunshine*, a contemporary curator talk and live performances by World's End Press and DJ Michael Kucyk.

Amazing giveaways on the evening from Jellybean bikes, Crumpler and Moritz beer.

Only 250 tickets available.

Venue NGV International

Bookings 8662 1555

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Captions

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Heliotropes 2005–11
vulcanized rubber latex, cotton thread, stainless steel
215.9 x 426.7 x 165.1 cm (variable)
Collection of the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Touch me not 2006–07
lacquered wood, pigment, stainless steel
243.8 x 1097.0 x 15.2 cm (variable)
Collection of the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Fire in the belly 2007
wood, enamel paint
304.8 x 396.2 x 348.0 cm (variable)
Collection of the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Transitions 2003
Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), silicon, nylon, *gulaganji* seeds
152.4 x 99.1 x 91.4 cm (variable)
Private Collection
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: NGV Photo Services

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles 2007–08
stainless steel, muslin, tamarin kernel paste, lacquer
487.7 x 731.5 x 426.7 cm (variable)
Collection of Talwar Gallery New York/New
Delhi and the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Interplay 2011
wax, lacquered wood, pigments, cotton thread
441.3 x 435.6 x 497.8 cm (variable)
Collection of Talwar Gallery New York/New
Delhi and the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

Ranjani SHETTAR

Indian 1977–
Flame of the Forest 2011
teak, lacquered wood and pigments
61.0 x 61.0 x 29.2 cm
Collection of Talwar Gallery New York/New
Delhi and the artist, Bangalore
© Ranjani Shettar
Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi

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