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Barbican announces plans for a spectacular site-specific commission by Indian sculptor Ranjani Shettar in its iconic Conservatory this autumn.

Ranjani Shettar: *Cloud songs on the horizon*

Opening **10 September 2023**

Media View: Friday 8 September 2023

www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2023/event/visit-the-conservatory

#RanjaniShettar @barbicancentre

The commission is realised in partnership with the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA)

We are delighted to announce that the Barbican's iconic Conservatory will host a spectacular new site-specific commission by Indian sculptor **Ranjani Shettar**, opening to the public on 10 September 2023.



L: Detail of *Cloud songs on the horizon*, 2023 © Ranjani Shettar, courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York / New Delhi
R: Conservatory, Barbican Centre, image: Max Colson

Cloud songs on the horizon, the artist's first major institutional show in Europe, will feature a series of new, large-scale suspended sculptures across the entirety of the Conservatory's 23,000 square foot space. A tropical oasis in the heart of London, the Barbican Conservatory is home to a vibrant mix of 1,500 species of plants and trees from across the world. Shettar's sculptures, currently in production in her studio in southern India, are each handcrafted by the artist and draw inspiration from the complexity of nature. They will employ a range of materials including wood, stainless steel, muslin, lacquer and techniques that have been adapted from traditional Indian crafts.

Shettar's commission, realised in partnership with the [Kiran Nadar Museum of Art \(KNMA\)](#), will be the first public-facing project commissioned by the Barbican's recently appointed Head of Visual Arts **Shanay Jhaveri**, initiating an ambitious programme of public art across the Centre's iconic site which is visited by more than a million visitors each year.

Since taking up his position in October 2022, Jhaveri has focused on bringing his unique vision to the Barbican's visual arts programme, exploring the interconnections between disciplines, periods, and cultures. Central to this will be inviting contemporary artists from around the world to create new work in response to the Barbican's unparalleled setting, which is recognised as one of the most significant architectural achievements of the 20th

century. Jhaveri's ambition is to showcase artistic interventions across the Barbican's public spaces and introduce the most dynamic, invigorating and stimulating art practices to our diverse audiences.

Launching the programme, Shettar's commission will be free to visit, enhancing public access to the Conservatory with increased visiting hours from September and throughout the installation's run. Special late-night openings every Friday will offer visitors a chance to explore the much-loved tropical oasis after hours and, on a series of forthcoming dates, the space will be open exclusively for community and school groups to enjoy, turning the Conservatory into a living classroom.

Speaking about the new commission, Barbican Head of Visual Arts Shanay Jhaveri says: *"Ranjani's installation inaugurates a new Barbican series of site-specific commissions which will allow artists to directly engage with the architecture and public spaces of this modernist icon. With these collaborations, the Barbican is offering itself to the most inspiring artists working today, platforming important, challenging new work for an ever-expanding audience. Their perspective and interventions will not only allow us to continue to grow our own appreciation of our building and legacy but will also crucially guide us in meeting and knowing our present moment – and there could not be a more perfect artist than Ranjani Shettar to start us on our way".*

Speaking about the choice of artist, he says: *"Over the past twenty years Shettar has evolved a distinctive, process-driven visual language that is entirely her own. Her suspended abstract forms transform enduring modernist preoccupations, through a profound sensitivity for materials and a deep embodiment of an ecological consciousness, all emanating from a local context. In their elegant quietude they achieve something astounding, gently raising our awareness, to query how is it that we are connected spatially, materially, emotionally to this world."*

Kiran Nadar, Founder and Chairperson, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art says: *"Ranjani Shettar's practice has been of particular interest to the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) since we first acquired and installed her work at the museum in 2011. We have been closely observing her artistic evolution that combines her rare sensitivity with patient working. The site-initiated project at the Barbican Conservatory is well aligned with our collaborative efforts at bringing visibility and critical attention to the huge talent of Indian and South Asian artists across the globe."*

Shettar's commission reflects Jhaveri's commitment to ensuring the Barbican's visual arts offer continues to showcase the best artists from around the world, delivering a diverse and international programme across the Barbican Art Gallery, The Curve and beyond.

Cementing the Barbican's long-standing track record for supporting artists, Jhaveri's vision is for the Barbican to be one of the UK's leading commissioners of new artistic work.

Longstanding initiatives such as The Curve programme, which champions many artists who have not yet had a major institutional show in the UK, will continue, and new opportunities will be introduced through an ambitious programme of art commissioning for the Barbican's public spaces.

Jhaveri is also focused on enabling a more cross-collaborative approach between creative disciplines spanning contemporary art, design, fashion, and architecture, and championing cross-departmental projects across the Barbican's core art forms – which as well as **Art & Design** include **Music, Cinema, Theatre & Dance** – and the **Barbican Renewal** programme. Projects are currently in development and will start to be evident in the Barbican's programme from next year.

The Barbican's world class programme of visual arts exhibitions includes three major exhibitions in its Art Gallery each year, including the recent critically-acclaimed ***Alice Neel: Hot Off The Griddle*** and forthcoming exhibition ***Carrie Mae Weems: Reflections for Now*** (22 June – 3 September 2023); as well as its free commissioning space The Curve, where recent exhibitions have included Iranian artist **Soheila Sokhanvari** and the current takeover by interdisciplinary design group **RESOLVE Collective** (until 16 July 2023).

Forthcoming 2023 exhibitions include ***Julianknxx: Chorus in Rememory of Flight*** taking place in The Curve from **14 September 2023 – 11 February 2024**, and ***RE/SISTERS: A Lens on Gender and Ecology*** taking place in the Art Gallery from **5 October 2023 – 14 January 2024**.

Today the Barbican also announced its Spring and Summer programme for 2024, which will include ***Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art*** (14 February – 26 May 2024), a major group exhibition exploring the transformative and subversive potential of textiles, and new work from **Soufiane Ababri** (13 March – 23 June 2024) for The Curve from **Francis Alÿs** (26 June – 1 September 2024) in the Art Gallery.

ENDS

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Press images available online

A link to the image sheets can be found [here](#). Please contact the press team for images.

Barbican press room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on our website at www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room

Admission and opening hours

Cloud songs on the horizon is open in the Barbican Conservatory from 10 September 2023 with regular opening hours on Friday evenings and Sundays. Full details on timings and tickets will be released in August 2023.

About the Barbican Conservatory

The [Barbican Conservatory](#) is open to the public on select days of the week, with free entry to explore this hidden botanical oasis. It is home to 1,500 species of plants and trees under a 23,000 square foot glass and steel roof that surrounds the Barbican Theatre's fly tower. Designed by the Barbican's architects Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, the Conservatory opened in 1984 and comprises a vibrant mix of temperate and arid plants ranging from areas as diverse as the rocky deserts and bushland of South Africa to the coastline of Brazil.

About Shanay Jhaveri, Barbican Head of Visual Arts

Shanay Jhaveri is the Barbican's Head of Visual Arts. Prior to taking up his position in October 2022, he was Associate Curator of International Art from 2016 – 2022 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and completed his PhD at the Royal College of Art in London. Among the many exhibitions Jhaveri has curated are the ground-breaking retrospective *Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee* at the Met Breuer in 2019, and Huma Bhabha's Met Roof Commission *We Come in Peace* in 2018. He has published widely in various art journals, and has written books including *Western Artists and India: Creative Inspirations in Art and Design*, *Outsider Films on India: 1950 – 1990*, and *America: Films from Elsewhere*.

About Ranjani Shettar

Ranjani Shettar (b. 1977 Bangalore, India) is an Indian sculptor who combines natural and industrial materials to create large-scale installations. She works with materials including beeswax, wood, organic dyes, vegetable pastes, lacquer, steel and cloth, creating immersive environments that are comprised of numerous non-representational forms and are inspired by her observations of the now-threatened natural environs of rural India. Living and working in Karnataka, India, she is known for her focus on nature and ecology. Shettar's works are in many prestigious museum collections and have been the subject of several solo presentations including at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (The MET) (2018), The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2019), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2011), The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) (2009), The Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX (2008-9) and The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Boston, MA (2008). Shettar's works have also been featured in exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), NY; Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi; 5th Moscow Biennale; 10th Liverpool Biennial, UK; 55th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, PA; 9th Lyon Biennial, France; 8th Sharjah Biennial, UAE; 15th Sydney Biennale, Australia; Art Tower Mito, Japan, Artpace, Texas; Cartier Fondation, Paris; Sainsbury Center, UK; Hermes Fondation, Singapore; Arthouse, NMACC, Mumbai; Wexner Center, OH; The Walker Art Center, MN; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Torino, Italy and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. For two decades Ranjani Shettar has been represented by Talwar Gallery, which has exhibited her works in ten solo presentations. In collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Shettar created a limited-edition project, Varsha and more recently was invited to create a special print for the MET 150, to commemorate The Metropolitan Museum of Art's 150th anniversary.

About Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

[Kiran Nadar Museum of Art \(KNMA\)](#) opened its doors to the public in January 2010. It is a pioneering private museum of Modern and Contemporary art in South Asia, with two branches in New Delhi and Noida. It is a not-for-profit institution that produces rigorous exhibitions, educational and public-focused programs, and publications. Through its work, KNMA emphasises institutional collaborations, and support networks for artists and creative communities, while extending its reach to diverse audiences. The museum houses a growing collection of more than 10,000 artworks, with a focus on the historical trajectories of 20th-century Indian art, alongside the experimental practices of young contemporaries. KNMA was established through the initiative of art collector and philanthropist Kiran Nadar and is supported by the Shiv Nadar Foundation. KNMA is geared to open its new stand-alone museum building designed by Sir David Adjaye in the National Capital Region of Delhi in 2026.

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](#) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 700 [staff](#) work

onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are our International Associate Ensemble.

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