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Ranjani Shettar: Dewdrops and Sunshine

NGV International

4 November 2011 – 26 February 2012

“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.” Ranjani Shettar



On 4 November, the National Gallery of Victoria will launch its newest contemporary art space with a spectacular exhibition of work by internationally renowned contemporary artist, Ranjani Shettar (1977 -).

Ranjani Shettar: Dewdrops and Sunshine will showcase the artist’s unique approach to sculpture including material experimentation, relationship to space, engagement with nature, exploration of tradition and resonance with modernism. Often transforming natural phenomena into magical forms, Shettar creates sculptures informed by a material openness that borrows from Indian craft traditions filtered through her own novel sensibility.

Dr Gerard Vaughan, Director, NGV, said: “We are delighted to be opening this new space dedicated to contemporary art in our 150th anniversary year. Visitors to *Ranjani Shettar* will be amazed by the diversity of the materials used, the biological and cultural concepts Shettar explores and the spatial engagement one has with the works – truly a phenomenal experience.”

Dr Alex Baker, Senior Curator, Contemporary Art, NGV, said: “Shettar’s choice of media in the creation of the art on view is a wide range of the organic and human-made, including tamarind kernel paste, muslin, lacquer, wood, automotive paint, fishing line, beeswax, dyed thread, latex rubber and steel.”

The NGV is also excited to announce that Shettar’s newest piece, *Interplay*, created especially for this exhibition, will be on display for the first time along with six other works dating from 2003 to present. These works include *Transitions* (2003), *Heliotropes* (2005-06), *Touch me not* (2006-07), *Fire in belly* (2007) and *Sun-sneezers blow light bubbles* (2007-08), and *Flame of the forest* (2011).

The works on display in this exhibition explore a wide spectrum of natural phenomena: the kinetic response of plants in the presence of sunlight and to sudden movement; the human sneeze as a reflex to bright light; the interaction of water and sunlight; and the fluorescence of fireflies.

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The artist's newest work, *Interplay*, is made of two netted components composed of coloured beeswax and lacquered wooden spheres connected by brightly dyed cotton thread. One of the components is in shades of blue and the second in warm yellows and oranges. The warm and cool colours create a contrast that recalls sunlight streaming through morning mist or dewdrops, or an afternoon sun shower on a hot summer day. Like Shettar's other bead and thread installations, *Interplay* suggests a drawing in three-dimensions.

The concepts of Shettar's newest work, *Interplay*, refers to both the exhibition's poetic subtitle – *Dewdrops and Sunshine* – which was the artist's suggestion – as well as a general concern Shettar explores in her work: an ongoing investigation of the relationship of water and light to living things.

Dr Baker said: "*Dewdrops and Sunshine* presents a sampling of Shettar's sculptural practice; all of the selections in some way reflect upon formal ideas of volume, suspension/attachment, light and shadow, as well as materiality. But Shettar is not simply a formal purist. It is her ongoing quest to present a synthesis of form and narrative through a vocabulary uniquely her own that makes her vision singular within the terrain of contemporary sculpture and installation art."

Shettar was born and resides in Bangalore, India and will be travelling to Melbourne to install the exhibition in the NGV's newest contemporary art space. Shettar will also be taking part in NGV Public Programs, visit ngv.vic.gov.au for more info.

Internationally, Shettar's work is represented in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Museum of Modern Art, New York. The artist has also exhibited at the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Hermes Foundation, Singapore; and Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi. Shettar has further been featured in international surveys such as the 2006 Sydney Biennale and 2008 Carnegie International.

Ranjani Shettar: Dewdrops and Sunshine will be on display at NGV International, St Kilda Road from 4 November 2011 – 26 February 2012. Open Wed–Mon, 10am–5pm. Entry is **FREE**.

For more information on NGV programs, please visit ngv.vic.gov.au.

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Captions: **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 the artist, Bangalore © Ranjani Shettar, Photo: Courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi.

