

Sukanya Mani

Weight of Shadows

Presented by Teen Museum Studies



Sukanya Mani, *The Bangle Project*, 2022. Donated bangles, monofilament, metal frame, string.
Courtesy the artist. Photo: Pratima Murali.

For the 2022 Teen Museum Studies program, high school participants were guided through a competitive application review process and chose St. Louis-based artist Sukanya Mani. Mani's exhibition draws upon her extensive work with domestic abuse survivors and her experiences as a South Asian immigrant to shed light on the magnitude of domestic abuse on a local scale. Her work serves as a vehicle to tell the stories of the survivors with whom she interacts.

Mani's site-specific installations play with material and mark-making techniques to encourage viewers to examine issues of personal and collective safety from a new perspective. She transforms Tyvek®, watercolor

paper, immigration documents, and pamphlets for domestic abuse survivors into three-dimensional sculptures to signify hope and resilience. According to the artist, "I have used paper as a representation of legal safety. In the telling of stories within the domestic violence community, I found that having the right documents can often be the difference between



Audio Tour

Visit camstl.org/audio to hear directly from Learning and Engagement and the artist.

freedom and continuing to live with abuse.” She additionally draws upon her Indian heritage by joining donated bangles together to represent a promise between local women to create a safe space for survivors. Mani’s artwork serves as a call to action for her audience to volunteer, donate, and educate themselves and their communities through local organizations.

Sukanya Mani (she/her) is a St. Louis-based, Indian-born interdisciplinary artist. Her work explores how creativity impacts space, often through the act of cutting. Operating between abstraction and representation, Mani’s recent work involves cutting paper into patterns that fragment and unite the female body, rendering it both familiar and strange. Transforming the violent act of cutting into an act of creation is central to Mani’s approach. In addition to her cut paper pieces, Mani’s work also includes large-scale outdoor sculptural pieces and immersive, multi-part installations that highlight the relationship of individual elements to each other. Her work can be found nationally and has been given to both permanent and temporary homes in the City of Poplar Bluff, Lee’s Summit, Ballwin, Manchester, Chesterfield, Ellisville, and Brentwood.

Teen Museum Studies is a summer intensive internship that engages high school students in direct exposure to museum careers, develops collaboration and critical thinking skills, and offers the chance to select and work with a St. Louis-based artist to organize an exhibition that premieres at CAM in September. This immersive program provides avenues for artistic engagement beyond studio practice and hands-on experience working with artists, museum staff, and creative peers.

Teen Museum Studies is generously supported by The Strive Fund; The Dana Brown Charitable Foundation, US Bank, Trustee; Anonymous; Crawford Taylor Foundation; and the Mary Ranken Jordan and Ettie A. Jordan Charitable Foundation.



Sukanya Mani: Weight of Shadows is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Ezra Birman, Olivia Bussmann, Finn Kanak, Ava Lamb, Sarah Reifschneider, Lear Rose, Lila Summers, Sanai Todd, Frankie Williams, and Zaviera Wolfe with support from Brandon Barr, Teen and Adult Programs Manager.



Sukanya Mani, *Between the Visible and the Invisible*, 2022. Tyvek®, immigration documents, pamphlets, and plexiglass. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Pratima Murali.

Related Programs

Artist Talk: Sukanya Mani

Saturday, September 24, noon

Take action here:



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