



G R O U N D S F O R S C U L P T U R E

Grounds For Sculpture Exhibition Celebrates Rich Tapestry and Diversity of New Jersey's Indian Diaspora

Hamilton, NJ—March 23, 2023, updated May 23, 2023—A new exhibition now on view at Grounds For Sculpture provides a multi-faceted portrait of the Indian diasporic community in New Jersey, through first-person narratives, images, and objects. Titled *Local Voices: Memories, Stories, and Portraits*, it was created in partnership with 15 community members, led by artist, teacher, and journalist Madhusmita “Madhu” Bora. Local Voices is one of two concurrent exhibitions inaugurating the new *Perspectives* series at GFS and exploring the role of creating person-centered exhibitions, ensuring individual and communal agency in the art of storytelling.

Both Local Voices and the second exhibition, *Spiral Q: The Parade*, opened on April 23, 2023, and will remain on view through January 7, 2024, in Grounds For Sculpture's Domestic Arts Building. Spiral Q's focus is on the locally and nationally recognized puppet-making organization Spiral Q, with its rich history of take-to-the-street advocacy processions for social and political change.

“With the launch of the *Perspectives* series, Grounds For Sculpture is taking on new levels of engagement with our audiences as we organize artist-led, community-driven exhibitions to deepen our understanding of how we—as artists, individuals, and communities—are reflecting on our world and responding to subjects and issues of today,” said **Gary Garrido Schneider, Executive Director of Grounds For Sculpture**. “We remain committed to engaging and challenging visitors of all ages and backgrounds with exhibitions and collections that present the work of contemporary artists through sculpture, while developing greater understanding of our audiences through storytelling and listening to the voices of the communities around us.”

Kathleen Ogilvie Greene, Chief Audience Officer at Grounds For Sculpture and lead curator of both exhibitions, added, “Regardless of our race, ethnicity, language, or age, most of us carry stories that offer themes of love, loss, and resilience. This connectivity is the impetus for *Local Voices: Memories, Stories, and Portraits*. We stayed hyperlocal—both with the selected community and with storytelling sharing from a lived experience—to focus on the stories that connect us as human beings.

“Both Madhu Bora and Spiral Q have been amazing partners, and we are excited to present two distinct, yet connected, paths to storytelling: the individual narratives within one exhibition and the collective voice of a community in the other. I'm particularly delighted to be working on both shows with co-curator Quentin Williams, who brings his expertise as a curator, activist, and poet to the team.”

Grounds For Sculpture invited Bora—a folk and traditional artist, teacher, writer, and journalist, as well as an Assamese-American dancer and founder of Sattriya Dance Company—to gather oral histories that would present a range of uniquely personal stories from New Jersey's robust Indian diasporic community. The images, objects, and stories within the *Local Voices* exhibition are the result of her building relationships with individuals, the “storytellers,” over the course of 10 months. The selected 15 individuals were then invited to share their stories, select an object of meaning, and craft their image with full autonomy, to create a powerful exhibition.

As the organizing process continued, there were frequent conversations about the core theme and impact of storytelling from a first-person narrative. The storytellers were invited to participate in workshops, where they explored the power of sharing their lived experiences. They were encouraged to share as much or as little as they were comfortable sharing.

“Storytellers are those generous beings who reach into the realm of memory and share deeply personal experiences and reflections vulnerably,” Bora said. “When people whose stories are not often heard have an opportunity to speak their truth, they are empowered and we are all made the better for it. We hope that through this exhibition our audience will be inspired to connect with their own histories, roots, memories, and share those with others.”

The *Local Voices* exhibition showcases portraits on view, hanging banners, personal objects of meaning, and video and audio clips of personal stories. Participants in this project reflect a broad scope of this community through the lenses of language, religion, ability, region of origin, caste, education, immigration, and sexual orientation.

Related Programs

Public programs accompanying *Local Voices* have so far included an afternoon performance by Sattriya Dance Company on Saturday, April 29. Pop-up performances by multidisciplinary artists will respond to the exhibition this summer and a storytelling workshop and panel discussion will take place later in the year.

Grounds For Sculpture is also working with the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) as a preservation partner, to ensure that the stories shared within this exhibition will be archived permanently for the benefit of future generations.

Local Voices: Memories, Stories, and Portraits and *Spiral Q: The Parade* are made possible by major support from Marjorie Ogilvie and Miller Parker (PNAA Foundation) and The Gordon and Llura Gund Foundation. Additional generous support is provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Brooke Barrie Art Fund, Drs. Umesh and Sunanda Gaur, Holman, NRG, and PSE&G. Support is provided in part by the Atlantic Foundation, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel & Tourism, and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

Hours and Ticketing

Both *Local Voices: Memories, Stories, and Portraits* and *Spiral Q: The Parade* are on view April 23, 2023 - January 7, 2024. Grounds For Sculpture is open Wednesday - Monday, 10-5 p.m. (closed Tuesday). For extended hours May - September, check the Grounds For Sculpture website: groundsforsculpture.org.

Advance timed ticket reservations are highly recommended to ensure entry. Capacity is limited and tickets often sell out on weekends and holidays. Member reservations are required on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) and holidays. Tickets are available up to two weeks in advance and are released on a weekly basis.

Follow Grounds For Sculpture and the exhibitions *Local Voices: Memories, Stories, and Portraits* and *Spiral Q: The Parade* on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and tag us using the hashtags #groundsforsculpture, #artistled, #communitydriven, and @groundsforsculpture.

About Grounds For Sculpture

Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) is a 42-acre not-for-profit sculpture park, arboretum, and museum, founded by the late Seward Johnson. Featuring over 300 contemporary sculptures by renowned and emerging artists in a beckoning, ever-changing landscape, Grounds For Sculpture combines art and nature to surprise, inspire, and engage visitors from all backgrounds in the artist's act of invention. In addition to its permanent collection, Grounds For Sculpture offers exhibitions in six indoor galleries, alongside experiential art, horticulture, and wellness programs for all ages. Located in Hamilton, New Jersey, Grounds For Sculpture is easily accessible from the New York City and Philadelphia metropolitan areas by public transit and is open year-round. For more information, visit groundsforsculpture.org.

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