



EVERHART MUSEUM
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For Immediate Release

Date: May 7, 2021

Contact: Brent Guzik, visitor.relations@everhart-museum.org

Photos attached (for bios, see end of release):

Sujata Nair-Mulloth, Project Director: Director of the Kala School of Classical Indian Dance (Clarks Summit, PA)

Amy Skillman, Panel Moderator: Academic Director of the Masters of Arts in Cultural Sustainability at Gaucher College, Maryland

Nina Kouznetsov, Artist: Director of the St. Andrei Iconography Studio and classical pianist (Scranton, PA)

Geetha Menon, Artist: Artist of traditional Indian painting (Phoenix, AZ)

Satyavani Pippalla Akula, Artist: Artist, classical Indian dancer, Community Arts Advocate (Horseheads, NY)

Dr. Kathy Wang, Artist: Traditional Chinese multi-instrumentalist and practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine (Roaring Brook, PA)

***Everhart Museum Presents Online Exhibit and Virtual Panel Discussion
“Reflections of Home - Women Artists on Immigration and Adaptation”
May 16, 2021***

**Online Exhibit at 1:30 p.m. showcases the work of four women artists - two from Lackawanna County*

**Virtual Panel Discussion at 2:00 p.m. explores the experiences of women artists who have immigrated to the U.S. and how their cultural adaptations affected their art*

Scranton, PA - In partnership with the **Lackawanna County Arts & Culture Department** and the **PA Council on the Arts Folk & Traditional Initiative**, the Everhart Museum is pleased to present an online program entitled “Reflections of Home - Women Artists on Immigration and Adaptation.” On **Sunday, May 16 at 1:30 p.m.**, the program will kick off with an Online Exhibit featuring four female artists demonstrating traditional cultural art forms of the various places they are from. The exhibit will be followed by a panel discussion with the artists at **2:00 p.m.** During the Panel Discussion, the artists will discuss their experiences immigrating to the United States and the decisions they had to make in adapting or preserving elements of their cultural art

forms for new audiences and students. They will also explore how immigration shaped their identities as female artists existing between two cultures.

The artists being featured in the Online Exhibit and Panel Discussion are **Nina Kouznetsov** (traditional Byzantine iconographer and classical pianist), **Geetha Menon** (painter of traditional Indian styles), **Satyavani Pippalla Akula** (painter and classical Indian dancer), and **Dr. Kathy Wang** (multi-instrumentalist of traditional Chinese music).

“Reflections of Home” is the brainchild of **Sujata Nair-Mulloth**, a dancer, choreographer, and teacher of the classical Indian Dance form Barata Natyam. Nair-Mulloth’s own experiences of immigration to a new country allow her to reflect deeply on how she made modifications to her art so that it could be better understood and appreciated by American audiences and students. As the Director of the Kala School of Classical Indian Dance, she is constantly working to bring Eastern and Western cultures together. She feels deeply that there is beauty and power that results from merging identities. Sujata explains:

Women take on a large share of the responsibility of both maintaining their cultural tenets as well as ensuring that these are learned and practiced by future generations. They bring with them the grace and strife of their original culture. They identify and understand the grace and strife in their new home. This interplay leads to the creation of a new merged identity and culture which, in turn, has its own strife and grace. When this is translated into art it can communicate ideas, emotions, hopes, and fears. It then acquires a new cultural identity marked by difference, resilience, and a new authenticity.

One of the key elements of “Reflections of Home” is the Panel Discussion - an online conversation between women artists exploring together several concepts relevant to migration—one of them being the concept of “home,” a complicated notion. Although difficult to define precisely, “home” is often more than a location. It is a fragile fabric made up of a myriad of images, emotions, sights, and smells. This concept, an essential human need, is a global space shared by all humans. In a world where territories are consistently being drawn, redrawn, negotiated, contested, and even captured, “home” is a fluid idea. The emotional identification with “home” is a common experience, and exploring it provides interest to viewers of every culture.

Moderating the Panel Discussion will be **Amy Skillman**, folklorist and the Academic Director of the Masters Program in Cultural Sustainability at Gaucher College, Maryland. Skillman’s career has been spent in what she calls “the intersection of culture and tension.” Her work focuses on

paying close attention to the inevitable blending of cultures and helping to conserve cultural traditions as a means of mediating positive social change.

“Reflections of Home” Online Exhibit and Panel Discussion have been made possible by a grant from the **Lackawanna County Arts and Culture Department** in conjunction with the Everhart Museum’s Folk & Traditional Arts Partnership with the PA Council on the Arts.

The Online Exhibit Link - Live at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 16, 2021:

The Panel Discussion Link - Live at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 16, 2021:

<https://everhart-museum.org/reflections-of-home-may-16/>

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ARTIST BIOS

SUJATA NAIR-MULLOTH

Sujata Nair-Mulloth, a performer, teacher, and choreographer, is the founder and Artistic Director of The Kala School of Indian Classical Dance established in 1995. As a performer, Sujata has given recitals worldwide since 1979. As a teacher, she has taught Bharata Natyam in New Delhi India and in the United Kingdom and at The Conservatory at Wilkes University for the past 17 years. In her choreographies, Nair-Mulloth uses Bharata Natyam style to create thought provoking work that transcends cultural boundaries. A former journalist, Sujata also teaches in the Communications, Arts and Humanities departments of both Keystone College and Marywood University.

AMY SKILLMAN

Former PA State Folklorist and the current Academic Director of the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability Program at Gaucher College, Maryland, Amy Skillman works at the intersection of culture and tension, where paying attention to culture can serve to mediate social change. She advises artists and community-based organizations on the implementation of programs that honor and conserve cultural traditions, guides them to potential resources, and develops programs to help build their capacity to sustain these initiatives.

NINA KOUZNETSOV

Native to Ukraine, Nina Kouznetsov studied music in Kiev and received her Musicology degrees in Moscow, Russia. Since immigrating to the US, she has learned and practiced traditional egg tempera iconography for 30 years. Kouznetsov worked as a Choir Director at the Orthodox Churches in NEPA, free-lance iconographer, pianist, organist, and iconography/piano/voice

instructor at her studio in Scranton, PA.

GEETHA MENON

Geetha Menon is an artist from Phoenix, Arizona who has been involved with painting since 1984. Starting with watercolors and then moving to oils on canvas, she has specialized in portraiture. She also trained in the traditional Indian style of mural painting called “kerala.” After moving to the United States, Menon began experimenting with new materials and blending different styles of painting. She has experimented with Indian themes painted on porcelain, with coffee painting, and currently with another traditional Indian style of painting called Tanjore Painting, which utilizes gold leaf. Her themes are always based on traditional Indian styles, which gives unique styles of painting identities of their own.

SATYAVANI PIPPALLA AKULA

Satyavani Pippalla Akula is an Indian dancer and painter living and working in the Finger Lakes Region of New York. Growing up, she painted and danced but went on to pursue a career in the sciences. When she moved to upstate New York, the natural beauty of the region aroused the artist in her and she now has a studio in downtown Elmira. Akula’s various art forms and public art projects explore various aspects of human identity and connectivity, seeking to create a dialogue between the mindful and autopilot modes of living.

DR. KATHY WANG

Dr. Kathy Wang was born and raised in Beijing, China. Although her eventual vocation would be medicine, as a child she always had a great talent and love for music. Her traditional instrument of choice was the Guzheng (or Chinese zither), which dates from 700 B.C. Wang studied with noted Guzheng masters at Conservatory and was honored with many awards. She has performed around the world, including in Lhasa, Tibet and at Humboldt University in Berlin.

Since immigrating to the U.S. in the 1980s, Wang has used the music of China to build bridges between the East and West. As General Secretary of the Traditional Chinese Music Foundation of North Carolina, she presented the music, dance and culture of China to the diverse communities around Duke/Chapel Hill Research Triangle Park, and is now pleased to present the beauty and mystery of ancient Chinese music to the people of Northeastern PA. As a doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine, she uses the unique meditative moods of Guzheng music as part of the TCM healing process.

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The Museum is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and noon to 5:00 p.m. on

Sundays. For more information, contact the Museum at 570-346-7186 or email general.information@everhartmuseum.org.

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About the Everhart Museum: Founded in 1908, the Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science & Art, is the largest general Museum in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Everhart Museum is dedicated to the collection, care, and display of a diverse array of objects and specimens, including natural history, science, and fine arts. Through its exhibitions and programs, the Museum has become an invaluable regional resource for educational and cultural opportunities. General support for the Museum is received from the Lackawanna County Office of Education & Culture, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the City of Scranton. For more information on the Museum, visit our website at www.everhart-museum.org or contact us at 570-346-7186.

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Information about the Folk & Traditional Arts Partnership is on Museum's website at <https://everhart-museum.org/folk-traditional-arts-partnership/>

*This **Folk and Traditional Arts Partnership** was supported in part by the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts**, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the **National Endowment for the Arts**, a federal agency. The mission of the PCA is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.*