

PRESS RELEASE

THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART LAUNCHES
SECOND SEASON OF AWAKEN PODCAST
ON OCTOBER 4

Seven episodes explore the transformative power of emotions using a mandala as a guide.

Hosted by singer and songwriter Raveena Aurora



Listen to the trailer at RubinMuseum.org/AWAKENpod
[Podcast Launch Party](#): Friday, October 7, 6:00–10:00 PM

September, 29, 2022, New York, NY — On **October 4**, the Rubin Museum of Art will launch the second season of its [AWAKEN](#) podcast, hosted by singer and songwriter **Raveena Aurora**.

AWAKEN is a Webby Honoree podcast about the dynamic path to enlightenment and what it means to “wake up.” The new season takes inspiration from the Rubin Museum’s Mandala Lab installation, which opened in October 2021, and explores the transformative power of emotions using a Tibetan Buddhist mandala as a guide. In seven episodes, writers, artists, activists, and Buddhist teachers wrestle with five challenging emotions known as *kleshas* in Sanskrit—anger, pride, attachment, envy, and ignorance—and explore what these states can teach us if we get curious.

Guests include writer **adrienne maree brown**, emotions scientist **Tracy Dennis-Tiway**, psychiatrist **Mark Epstein**, artist and activist **Madame Gandhi**, Zen Buddhist priest **Ruth Ozeki**, scientist and Buddhist monk **Matthieu Ricard**, celebrated Buddhist teacher **Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche**, renowned chef **Eric Ripert**, and author and meditation teacher **Sharon Salzberg**.

“During this time of radical change and rise in mental health crises, navigating our emotions has become mission critical,” says Rubin Museum Chief Programmatic Officer Tim McHenry. “The Tibetan Buddhist approach and Western science show us that emotions contain important information that can fuel positive change. At the Rubin Museum, and in particular in the Mandala Lab installation, we’ve been exploring the power of understanding our emotions through art, hands-on experiences, and Buddhist wisdom. Storytelling is the new vehicle to understanding with the second season of our AWAKEN podcast.”

Following the release of the first two episodes on October 4, episodes will drop weekly on Tuesdays and be available for streaming on major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Stitcher, as well as at RubinMuseum.org/AwakenPod.

The first season of AWAKEN premiered in June 2021 with ten episodes hosted by acclaimed musician and performance artist Laurie Anderson. Using artworks as a jumping off point, it featured stories of personal transformation from comedian Aparna Nancherla, writer Alok Vaid-Menon, meditation teacher Tara Brach, and more. The season was a 2022 Webby Honoree in the Arts & Culture category.

The Rubin launched its first podcast series, [Mindfulness Meditation Podcast](#), in 2015, and to date it has over 340 episodes. This ongoing series is a recording of the Rubin Museum’s weekly meditation practice led by a prominent teacher and inspired by an artwork from the Museum’s collection. Mindfulness Meditation Podcast was named one of five best podcasts for better mental health by [The Guardian](#) in 2022 and the best meditation podcast for creatives by [Healthline](#) in 2021.

“With Season 2 of AWAKEN we aim to inspire self-discovery with the art from the Rubin and tell rich stories that resonate with our listeners,” says AWAKEN producer Dawn Eshelman. “Because when we better understand ourselves and our emotions, we can better understand how to make change in our communities and our world.”

AWAKEN Season 2 episode dates and descriptions:

October 4, Episode 1: Entering the Mandala

What is a mandala? Like many Tibetan Buddhist artworks, a mandala is a visual catalyst that can lead to awakening. In the first episode, we introduce the mandala, come to understand what it represents, and experience how it may be used as a guide for exploring ourselves, each other, and the world.

October 4, Episode 2: Pride

Pride can be celebratory—a powerfully affirming emotion. But its dark side can bring a sense of supremacy, with so much self-importance that there isn’t room for other views, other ways of life. It can even be a little lonely to be so rigid. In Buddhism, pride is one of the five afflictive emotions that can cloud our understanding of the world, along with attachment, envy, anger, and ignorance.

When we get curious about pride, ask questions, and move beyond certainty, what is welcomed in? In this episode, curiosity creates possibility.

October 11, Episode 3: Attachment

From the point of view of psychology, attachment is vital to the mental well-being of a developing human. From the Buddhist point of view, however, attachment is the mind state that trips us up constantly. It pulls us out of the present and into grasping after an imagined future or clinging to the past, leaving us with nothing but dissatisfaction. But what if we could open our grip and truly be in the moment?

October 18, Episode 4: Envy

No one wants to admit they are envious, yet in the age of social media, envy is a bitter taste in everyone's mouth from time to time. But envy transformed can point you in the right direction and show you your heart's desire. Can envy be channeled into changing an isolating experience to one that actually connects us?

October 25, Episode 5: Anger

We all experience anger, starting from a very early age. But if we pay attention to the emotion can it provide a sense of clarity to help us see what is important? And if we can learn to "hold our anger like a baby," as Thich Nhat Hanh says, what becomes possible?

November 1, Episode 6: Ignorance

While we often don't think of ignorance as a feeling, it is the core afflictive mind state, or *klesha*, according to Tibetan Buddhism. Its antidote, awareness, resides at the heart of the mandala. It is a reminder of where we want to go, or return to, the awakened state of curiosity and, as Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche says, "the wisdom of all-encompassing space." Is awareness the key to awakening?

November 8, Episode 7: Exiting the Mandala

In this final episode, we return to the mandala, our visual guide on the path to awakening. We might survive without the wisdom we have gained by examining our emotions, but what is possible—for ourselves, our relationships, and our world—if we stay curious?

ABOUT RAVEENA AURORA

Raveena Aurora is a singer and songwriter whose music pays homage to her heritage as a first-generation descendant of genocide survivors and Reiki healers. Her music incorporates influences from Bollywood and celebrated Indian artists as well as Western artists like Sade, Corinne Bailey Rae, and Minnie Riperton. Raveena aims to build fully realized worlds in each of her projects, with conceptual experimentations in sound threaded together by stories of healing and self-realization meant to be experienced from start to finish. Her critically acclaimed 2019 debut full-length EP, *Lucid*, was followed by her latest offering, *Asha's Awakening*, released in 2022. For Raveena, music is meant to be "a complete expression of the self," which is seen through her eclectic style of music.

ABOUT THE MANDALA LAB

Located on the Museum's third floor, the Mandala Lab is an interactive space for social and emotional learning designed to inspire connection, empathy, and learning for visitors of all ages. It features five thought-provoking, playful experiences with contributions from fifteen artists, including videos accompanied by scents, a site-specific commissioned sculpture that invites collective breathing, and curated percussion instruments dipped in water. Each activity aims to harness the power of difficult emotions and transform them into corresponding wisdoms and skills. A travelling version of the Mandala Lab debuted at the Wellbeing Summit in Bilbao, Spain, this past June.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

AWAKEN is produced by the Rubin Museum of Art with Dawn Eshelman, Tenzin Gelek, Jamie Lawyer, and Christina Watson in collaboration with SOUND MADE PUBLIC including Tania Ketenjian, Emma Vecchione, Philip Wood, and Jeremiah Moore.

Music by Hannis Brown and Alexis Cuadrado.

SUPPORT

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ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

The Rubin Museum explores and celebrates the diversity of Himalayan art, ideas, and culture across history and into the present. With its globally renowned collection, the Rubin fosters understanding and appreciation of this extraordinary region by connecting its art

and ideas to contemporary issues that are relevant in our visitors' lives today. Largely inspired by the philosophical traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Rubin offers innovative exhibitions and programs that examine provocative ideas across the arts and sciences. In doing so, the Museum serves as a space for reflection and personal transformation, opening windows to inner worlds so visitors can better navigate outer ones.

www.RubinMuseum.org

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