

## PRESS RELEASE

THE RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART INVITES THE PUBLIC  
TO CONTRIBUTE FOLDED LOTUSES TO  
THE LOTUS EFFECT,  
A PARTICIPATORY INSTALLATION ABOUT GRATITUDE AND  
TRANSFORMATION



**New York, NY, June 18, 2020** — Today the **Rubin Museum of Art** launches a new participatory installation, **The Lotus Effect**, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lotuses take root in murky waters and burst into beautiful bloom above the surface. For **The Lotus Effect**, the Rubin invites members of the public to fold a lotus flower and dedicate their origami creation to someone or something that has helped them overcome a challenging time. When the Rubin reopens, people can contribute their folded piece to an installation in the Museum that will serve as a community-built symbol of gratitude and powerful reminder that collectively we can emerge from difficult moments.

“The Lotus Effect uses art-making as a tool to connect people to each other in order to inspire hope and resilience, and to remind individuals that even in impossible circumstances, change and transformation can lead us to moments of beauty and bloom,” says Chief Experience Officer **Jamie Lawyer**. “Our society is facing critical social, economic, and health challenges, which bring up many emotions: anxiety, loneliness, sadness, grief, and frustration. We hope that as we all rise to the many challenges that lie ahead, the lotus can be a reminder that beauty can emerge from the toughest conditions.”

Countless lotuses are represented in scroll paintings (thangkas) and sculptures in the Rubin Museum's collection. These flowers often appear in the hands of gods and goddesses, as decoration on their thrones, and as part of vivid landscapes. In Tibetan Buddhism, lotuses are important symbols associated with many meanings including awakening, transformation, and compassion.

For The Lotus Effect, Brooklyn-based origami artist and engineer **Uttam Grandhi** has provided **video instructions** to create a folded lotus. Grandhi was part of the Rubin Museum's 2019 Block Party, where he created an AR experience inspired by artworks in the Museum's collection. Most recently, in collaboration with researchers from MIT he founded OpenPPE in response to COVID-19, inventing an origami-based, low-cost N95+ filtration face mask that can easily be replicated anywhere in the world without advanced machinery or skills.

## **HOW TO PARTICIPATE**

While the Rubin is closed, participants can share photographs of folded lotus creations on social media using the **#TheLotusEffect** and tagging **@RubinMuseum**.

When the Museum reopens, participants can mail folded lotuses to the Museum or physically drop them off. They can also email photographs of their lotuses to [visitorexperience@rubinmuseum.org](mailto:visitorexperience@rubinmuseum.org) to be included in a digital slideshow.

### Mailing address

The Lotus Effect  
Rubin Museum of Art  
140 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10011

For more information on how to participate, visit [RubinMuseum.org/TheLotusEffect](http://RubinMuseum.org/TheLotusEffect).

## **SUPPORT**

The Lotus Effect and educational programs are made possible through the generosity of Agnes Gund, New York Life Insurance Company\*, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Tiger Baron Foundation, Con Edison, The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

The Year of Impermanence at the Rubin Museum is made possible by Bob and Lois Baylis, Fred Eychaner, Christopher J. Fussner, Agnes Gund, Matt and Ann Nimetz, Rasika and Girish Reddy, and Shelley and Donald Rubin.

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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](http://www.RubinMuseum.org)

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