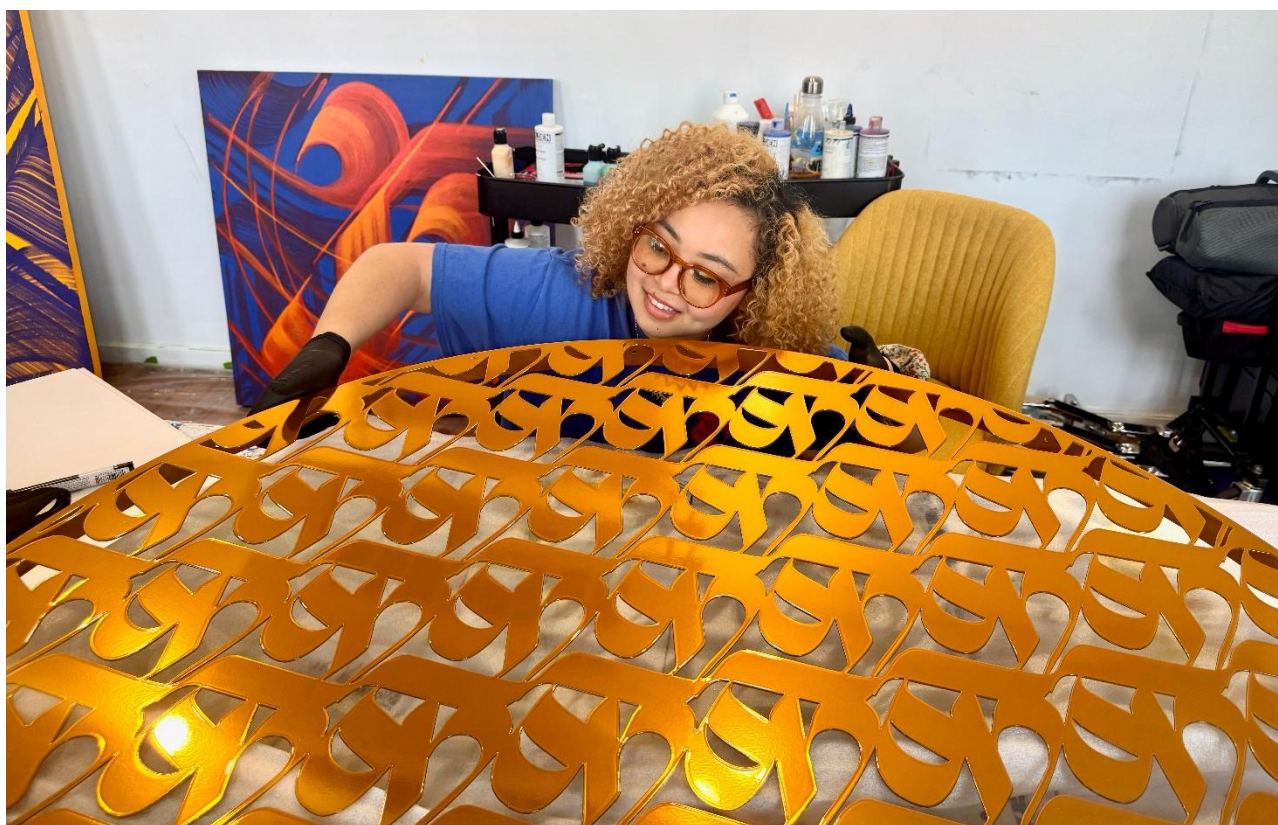


For Immediate Release

A new public art installation by artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) opens on September 6 in Jackson Heights

The commissioned sculpture is a collaboration between the Rubin Museum and the New York City Department of Transportation Art Program (NYC DOT Art)



New York, NY, August 12, 2025 – On September 6, the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art, in partnership with the New York City Department of Transportation Art Program, NYC DOT Art, will unveil a new temporary public art installation by Nepalese artist IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha) in Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights, Queens. For her first public art sculpture, IMAGINE has created a six-foot-tall installation in the shape of a golden arch made of repeating rows of *Ka*, the first letter of the Nepali alphabet. Titled *About a Living Culture*, the artwork is a celebration of the artist's Nepalese heritage and inspired by the diverse Himalayan cultures of the neighborhood. *About a Living Culture* will be on view **September 6, 2025, to January 4, 2026**, in Diversity Plaza at Roosevelt Avenue and Broadway in Queens.

IMAGINE, who is from Nepal and currently works in Boston and Kathmandu, creates sculptures, paintings, and public murals around the world that often incorporate her native language and blend the aesthetics of Sanskrit scriptures with graffiti art. Her distinctive style accentuates the Devanagari script—used to write languages such as Nepali, Sanskrit, and Hindi—creating meditative artworks that transform spaces.

For *About a Living Culture*, IMAGINE continues her exploration of the repeating Devanagari script, with cut-out steel renderings of the letter *Ka*, but this time the artwork takes a sculptural form and is combined with the symbol of the archway. In Nepal, vernacular architecture often incorporates arched thresholds that guide movement through space and reflect visual and symbolic connections to traditional daily rituals. These structures quietly shape rhythms of everyday experiences. IMAGINE's sculpture invites New Yorkers into a space of reflection and belonging as they travel through Diversity Plaza, a bustling social, cultural, commercial, and transit hub (home to the E, F, M, R, and 7 subway lines) located in one of New York City's most diverse and densely populated neighborhoods. Pedestrianized in 2012, Diversity Plaza attracts millions of locals and tourists annually and serves as a central gathering space for the growing Tibetan and Nepalese communities.

"This sculpture is an homage to the Himalayan diaspora's living traditions. Through the interplay of light, form, and script, it creates a contemplative space that honors ancestral roots while embracing the diverse narratives of Jackson Heights," says artist IMAGINE.

"It's no secret that public artwork thrives when it represents the community it serves—and IMAGINE's magnificent sculpture will help foster a sense of pride and belonging for the Tibetan and Nepalese communities of Jackson Heights, while also welcoming the millions of people who pass through Diversity Plaza each year, said NYC DOT Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez. "We thank IMAGINE and the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art for enlivening our streets through public art."

"Jackson Heights is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the world, with a growing and vibrant Himalayan community. Diversity Plaza is a public space for cultural celebrations and civic engagement, and I'm proud that we will soon have public art there that reflects the beauty of our immigrant neighbors. I'm thankful to DOT, IMAGINE, and the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art for investing in Diversity Plaza, making art accessible in our community, and for celebrating Jackson Heights," **said Council Member Shekar Krishnan, District 25.**

About a Living Culture is IMAGINE's second installation with the Rubin Museum. In 2024, her work was featured in the group show and final exhibition in the Rubin's 17th Street building, *Reimagine: Himalayan Art Now* (March 15–October 6, 2024), which later traveled to Wrightwood 659 in Chicago (November 8, 2024–February 15, 2025).

"I am thrilled to collaborate once again with the remarkable IMAGINE for her newest sculpture in New York City," says Michelle Bennett Simorella, Rubin Museum Director of Global Projects and Collections. "In our new model as a decentralized, global museum, the Rubin is committed to supporting living artists and making Himalayan art accessible in innovative ways. This partnership with NYC DOT Art builds on this vision in one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city. It's wonderful to bring IMAGINE's art to life and provide New Yorkers of all backgrounds with a moment of inspiration."

A central component of the Rubin's transformation into a decentralized, global museum is the formation of strategic partnerships, increasing the number of people who can access and experience Himalayan art in New York and globally. This new model also includes traveling exhibitions such as *Gateway to Himalayan Art*, which is touring nationally and next opens at the Flaten Art Museum at St. Olaf College in September; expanded resources for artists and scholars, including the annual Rubin Museum Himalayan Art Prize, grant programs, and Rubin Museum Distinguished Lecture of Himalayan Art at the Met; multimedia educational initiatives like Project Himalayan Art; Mandala Lab curriculum lessons taught in New York City classrooms; and long-term loans and collaborations such as the Rubin Museum Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room at the Brooklyn Museum, which opened on June 11 and is on view for six years.

About a Living Culture is a NYC DOT Art Community Commission in partnership with the Rubin. Community Commissions is a signature NYC DOT Art initiative in which the agency collaborates with community-based organizations to commission artists to design and install temporary public art on NYC DOT infrastructure citywide.

Support

The supporter list for the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art's NYC DOT Art Community Commission at Diversity Plaza is in formation.

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Transportation and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.



About IMAGINE (a.k.a. Sneha Shrestha)

IMAGINE (born 1987, Kathmandu, Nepal; lives and works in Kathmandu, Nepal, and Boston, MA) is a Nepalese artist who incorporates her native language into her work and meshes the aesthetics of Sanskrit scriptures with graffiti art. She is a recipient of the 2025 James and Audrey Foster Prize, and her work will be presented at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, beginning August 28, 2025. The Harvard Art Museums recently acquired her sculpture *Dwarpalika*, and it will be on long-term view beginning December 2025. Her work has been exhibited at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She was recognized as one of the 25 millennial artists of color impacting Boston by WBUR in 2019; as one of the 100 most influential women in Nepal by the Nepal Cultural Council in 2018; and as Outstanding Artist of the Year by the Center for Arts at the Armory. IMAGINE received her master's from Harvard University and is an educator and social entrepreneur. She passionately supports Asian art by working as the arts program manager at the South Asia Institute at Harvard.

About the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art

The Rubin is a global museum dedicated to presenting Himalayan art and its insights. Founded in 2004, the Rubin serves people internationally through exhibitions, participatory experiences, a dynamic digital platform, and partnerships. Inspired and informed by Himalayan art, the Rubin invites people to contemplate the human experience and deepen

connections with the world around them in order to expand awareness, enhance well-being, and cultivate compassion. The Rubin advances scholarship through a series of educational initiatives, grants, collection sharing, and the stewardship of a collection of nearly 4,000 Himalayan art objects spanning 1,500 years of history—providing unprecedented access and resources to scholars, artists, and students across the globe. rubinmuseum.org

About NYC DOT Art

The New York City Department of Transportation’s Art Program (NYC DOT Art) partners with community-based, nonprofit organizations and professional artists to present temporary public art on NYC DOT property throughout the five boroughs for up to eleven months. Artists transform streets with colorful murals, dynamic projections and eye-catching sculptures. Sidewalks, fences, triangles, medians, bridges, jersey barriers, step streets, public plazas and pedestrianized spaces serve as canvases and foundations for temporary art. Since 2008, NYC DOT Art has produced over 500 temporary artworks citywide. For more information, visit nyc.gov/dotart and @nyc_DOTArt on Instagram.

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Image:

Sneha Shrestha, courtesy of the artist