

St Luke's  
Exhibition  
Guide

24 June–  
24 September  
2023

# Rana Begum Dappled Light

The Box

Gallery Copy  
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# Rana Begum

## Dappled Light

Rana Begum was born in 1977 in Bangladesh, moving to England at the age of eight. She studied painting at the Chelsea College of Art in London, graduating in 1999, and received an MA in Painting from the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2002. In 2020, she was elected a Royal Academician (RA).

Begum is best known for her works that explore form, light and colour: blurring the boundaries between sculpture, painting and architecture.

In her early works Begum took inspiration from the repeated geometric patterns found in Islamic art, the simple shapes of minimalism and the contemplative and refined work of abstract painters Agnes Martin and Mary Martin, minimalist artist Donald Judd and her mentor Tess Jaray, a British painter and printmaker.

*Dappled Light* marks a significant development in Begum's approach. Through more recent paintings, sculptures and installations, as well as a new film installation, she explores a more subtle use of light and colour.

Following presentations at the Mead Gallery at the University of Warwick, Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery in London and Concrete in Dubai, Begum's sculptures, paintings and installations are shown in St Luke's as well as spaces in our main building. In each one she has responded directly to the scale, architectural features and natural light.

# St Luke's

On entering St Luke's one of the first works *No.1270 Wall Drawing* (2023) celebrates the activity of individuals coming together in collaboration. Here in Plymouth, Begum has worked with members of the deaf community to create a pattern of blotted thumbprints that disperse from the centre.

In the middle of St Luke's, Begum has filled the double height space with a series of softly shaped mesh forms in layered colours, that appear to float like an indoor cloud. The constantly changing natural light from the coloured fused-glass window filters through the installation. It adds to a sense of transience as you move through, around and under the work.

In the more intimate spaces around the gallery, there are works that invite close inspection from different viewpoints. In the striking large-scale canvas *No.1271* (2023) Begum has applied several layers of spray paint to create brightly coloured discs. With no apparent underlying structure or pattern the work is a prism of colour dancing across the surface of the canvas.

As you move around the gallery, other wall-based artworks play with colour and light across different surfaces, such as the geometric pattern of automobile reflectors, the textured surfaces of *No.1213 Folded Grid* (2022) and painted mirror tiles of *No.1086 Tiles*.

A series of delicate watercolours were created during the Covid-19 lockdowns of 2020-21. Like many artists Begum had to adapt her practice to work in more modest ways. Using grid paper as a framework she applied small marks of watercolour paint, letting the brush gradually empty of paint before starting again.

During this time Begum also created her first film work. Inspired by a residency in St Ives, Cornwall where she used time lapse photography to observe coastal light, the 37-minute video depicts a single view of the Victorian cemetery next to her home. Filmed over the course of a year, it captures the dappled sunlight filtering through the emerging tree canopy as the seasons change. Like the large mesh 'cloud-burst' that acts as a central feature in St Luke's, the film confirms the new developments in Begum's practice with the exploration of organic forms and softer, more diffused light and colours.

*Rana Begum: Dappled Light* is curated by the Mead Gallery, University of Warwick UK.  
The exhibition is generously supported by the Henry Moore Foundation.

The Box has commissioned Rana Begum to create new works in response to three Sir Joshua Reynolds portraits. You can see these in *Reframing Reynolds: A Celebration* on the first floor of The Box, until 29 October 2023. You can also find out more about Rana Begum's artistic practice in our Bridge Gallery, also on our first floor.

You are welcome to photograph the artworks but please do not touch them as they are very fragile.

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- 1  
No. 1270 Wall  
Drawing (2023)  
Ink Thumb Prints

2  
No. 1081 Mesh (2021)  
Powder coated  
galvanised mild steel

3  
No. 1271 Painting (2023)  
Acrylic and spray  
paint on canvas

4  
No. 969 L Reflector (2019)  
Reflectors on aluminium
- 5  
No. 1213 Folded Grid (2022)  
Spray paint on jesmonite

6  
No. 1086 Tiles L (2021)  
Paint on mirror finish  
stainless steel

7  
WP391 (2020)  
Watercolour

8  
No. 1080 Forest (2021)  
Video 38 minutes

## Floor Plan

