



THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN AND THE LOREN HOTEL ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP AND NEW MURAL AT THE JONES CENTER

Austin-Based Artist Manik Raj Nakra Commissioned to Create New Mural at The Contemporary's Jones Center with Funds Provided by The Loren at Lady Bird Lake As Part Of New Partnership

AUSTIN, TX (July 12, 2023) – [The Loren at Lady Bird Lake](#) and [The Contemporary Austin](#) are proud to announce their collaborative partnership starting with the new Jones Center mural by Austin-based artist, [Manik Raj Nakra](#). As part of the luxury hotel's commitment to supporting the arts and local community, The Loren will be sponsoring the mural on the corner of Congress Avenue and 7th Street, which will be unveiled in early December. The Loren looks forward to embarking on a long-standing partnership with The Contemporary to support their mission to offer exhibitions, educational opportunities, and events that start conversations and fuel the city's creative spirit.

"When we opened the hotel last year, I knew immediately we wanted to integrate ourselves into the community and support the local arts," said Stephen King, CEO & founder of The Loren Hotels. "Part of Austin's charm is exemplified by how local artists can transform a blank wall into a masterpiece that can be enjoyed by visitors and locals from all walks of life. We wanted to be a part of what makes this neighborhood so special and look forward to continuing to support The Contemporary in their ongoing efforts to back artists and their works."

From installations and light fixtures, to paintings and photographs, The Loren Hotel Group has always strived to integrate art into their portfolio of hotels, starting with their flagship property, The Loren at Pink Beach in Bermuda. Featuring a selection of works by more than 20 leading artists from around the world, guests can discover the essence of a private museum experience through guestrooms and common areas. The Loren at Lady Bird Lake carries on the tradition with artwork whose symbiosis of color, natural light, and architecture reflect the hotel's organic integration with its exterior setting. Gathering inspiration from The Loren's management company, C12 Capital gave the designers and art advisors a thematic starting point of science, strength, stability, and abundance. These themes became the foundation for the collection with works by local artists Andy Coolquitt and Claire Oswald, as well as other artists including Matthew Ritchie, Rachel Eulena Williams, and Jana Schroeder, Ernesto Neto. In the future, the brand's third property, The Loren at Turtle Cove in Turks & Caicos will add to the growing collection of bespoke art.

"We are delighted to have found a supportive and like-minded partner in The Loren at Lady Bird Lake," said Sharon Maidenberg, Executive Director and CEO for The Contemporary Austin. The Loren team's deep commitment to the arts and the cultural vibrancy of Austin is a great fit for us, and their generous support has enabled us to work with Manik in this important way. We are thrilled to bring a new ambitious work to the exterior facade of the Jones Center, which we believe to be - alongside our galleries,

sculpture park, and rooftop - an iconic space for artist projects. We are so pleased to see a locally based business show their support for art and artists.”

Nakra will work with The Contemporary’s Head Curator, Alex Klein, to conceptualize the piece and begin painting the mural this fall; visitors can stop by the corner of Congress Avenue and 7th Street to take in the completed work in early December. Originally from Olympia, Washington, Nakra made his way to the University of Texas at Austin and graduated in 2004. His paintings, drawings, and installations address the ancient world as his own. Nakra’s work applies a contemporary lens onto Indian iconography, colonial anachronisms, artifacts from early civilizations, and the mythologies of ancient cultures to explore power, lust, ceremony, and self-sabotage. These themes, handled with striking graphics, patterns, and stark compositions, illuminate the historically rooted, but contemporarily relevant, narratives regarding beauty, paranoia, revelation, and man’s existential relationship to nature.

Nakra has a longstanding relationship with The Contemporary Austin, having participated in The Crit Group program and the resulting group exhibition, which was his first museum show. The mural allows The Contemporary to provide the next level of support for this compelling Austin-based artist and introduce his work to a wider audience.

In addition to supporting the mural, The Loren will be working with Nakra directly and displaying his artworks throughout the newly-opened [Cafe at The Loren](#). The Cafe at The Loren joins Nakra’s esteemed client list including Converse, The Oxford American, Cosmopolitan India, Facebook, Urban Outfitters, and Soho House amongst others. The display will kick off this August and run through the duration of Nakra’s Jones Center mural.

As The Loren supports The Contemporary Austin’s mission to provide a space for public art, Nakra joins the ranks of past featured artists including Deborah Roberts, Daniel Johnston, and Jenny Holzer. While Nakra’s mural is on display this fall, visitors can stop by the Jones Center to view [This Land](#), a curated group exhibition about landscape and how it records the social and environmental effects of colonialism and capitalism and the second installment of [HOST](#), an exhibition of work by Austin-based artist Aryel René Jackson.

For more information on the Manik Raj Nakra mural and other programs at The Contemporary Austin, please visit <https://thecontemporaryaustin.org/> and follow the museum on social media at @contemporaryatx. For more information about The Loren, visit <https://www.thelorenhotels.com/austin> and follow the hotel on social media at @thelorenhotels.

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THE LOREN AT LADY BIRD LAKE:

The Loren at Lady Bird Lake in Austin features 108 well-appointed guest rooms and suites, all with lake and city views. The Loren at Lady Bird welcomes guests to a greenhouse in the park, complete with destination restaurant Nido, milk + honey spa, 24-7 access fitness center, Cafe, rooftop terrace with infinity pool and signature event space with 180-degree views. The hotel was recently awarded two highly-esteemed travel accolades after being included in both [Conde Nast Traveler's](#) and [Travel + Leisure's](#) 2023 List of Best New Hotels in the World. Ideally located in close proximity to downtown Austin, guests can easily explore the city via the pedestrian bridge across the street from the hotel or complimentary e-bikes available upon request. The Loren at Lady Bird Lake joins the brand’s flagship property, The Loren at Pink Beach in Bermuda, which opened in 2017. For more information please visit <https://www.thelorenhotels.com/austin>

THE CONTEMPORARY AUSTIN

As Austin's only museum solely focused on contemporary artists and their work, The Contemporary Austin offers exhibitions, educational opportunities, and events that start conversations and fuel the city's creative spirit. Known for artist-centric projects and collaborations, The Contemporary invites exploration at both its urban and natural settings—downtown at the Jones Center on Congress Avenue, lakeside at the Laguna Gloria campus (including the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, the Art School, and the historic Driscoll Villa), and around Austin through the Museum Without Walls program.

MANIK RAJ NAKRA

Manik Raj Nakra's (b. 1982, Olympia, WA; lives and works in Austin, TX) paintings, drawings, and installations take inspiration from ancient mythology to reflect on humankind's existential relationship to nature in the present. His work is often characterized by a colorful palette employing a graphic language referencing traditional Indian iconography and ancient artifacts and architecture. Although his subjects are located within historically rooted narratives, they invite viewers to reflect on the contemporary relevance of themes such as power, imperialism, lust, spirituality, and ecology. For the past decade, Nakra has consistently exhibited his artwork in solo and group exhibitions throughout Texas. He received his BA from the University of Texas at Austin in 2004.

ABOUT THE MURAL PROGRAM

Via the museum's mural program, the Jones Center facade is transformed and activated as a prominent exhibition space. The presence of a mural at the museum's central public location— blocks away from the state's capitol building— activates the local environment and offers an extraordinarily accessible contemporary art experience amid downtown city life. Austin residents, workers, and visitors can live with a contemporary artist-created mural for an extended period of time—contemplating it at different times of day, developing a new relationship with an artist's work, and experiencing contemporary art as a regular part of their lives—irrespective of ever stepping foot inside the museum. The mural at The Contemporary, presented alongside Jim Hodges' *With Liberty and Justice For All (A Work in Progress...)*, distinguishes the corner of 7th & Congress as a highly visible public art experience that is an integral part of all Congress Avenue has to offer.

ORIGIN OF THE MURAL PROGRAM

The mural program was born out of the challenges of the pandemic, as The Contemporary was driven to think creatively and resourcefully about how to connect the public with unique contemporary art experiences even during periods of social distancing. The program was launched with a new work by Austin-based artist Deborah Roberts (2021), followed by a large-scale mural of work by the beloved and iconic Daniel Johnston (2022), and most recently featured a text-based piece by internationally renowned artist Jenny Holzer (2022)—each project presented in concert with an exhibition.