



Rina Banerjee explores the idea that characteristics once thought to anchor **identity**—languages, political and economic beliefs, nationality, race, and sexuality—limit the ways individuals can define themselves or be defined by others. While the resulting ambiguity may seem to be a sign of cultural disarray, her works offer the possibility of a more inclusive and open-ended future.

Banerjee's **sculptures** and **installations** incorporate things like cowrie shells, Chinese umbrellas, Pyrex tubes, glass beads, alligator heads, and epoxy buffalo horn replicas. Their strong colors, patterns, and frequent allusions to South Asian cultures recall her heritage while critiquing the notion of the exotic "other" that is the legacy of colonial trade and exploitation, in India and around the world. Banerjee was born in Kolkata, India in 1963, and in 1968 moved with her family to England after her father was recruited to work there by a multinational company. In 1970, her father accepted a new position in New York City, and the family moved again. Growing up, Banerjee observed firsthand the dynamic interaction and creative adaptations occurring within immigrant communities.

Make me a summary of the world! . . ., 2014. Mixed media, 84 x 48 in.
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.
© Rina Banerjee. Image courtesy of Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels

**Frist Art
Museum**

919 Broadway
Nashville, TN 37203
FristArtMuseum.org/art-trunks

Rina Banerjee: *Make Me a Summary of the World* was co-organized by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and the San José Museum of Art, California.

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Objective

Using Rina Banerjee's art as inspiration, you will explore the theme of personal identity by creating a **collage** that tells viewers about yourself.

Materials

- An assortment of small objects and other potential collage items. These could include or be shaped from decorative papers, fiber supplies (like fabric or yarn), magazines, and photographs
- Scissors
- White 9 x 12 in. cardstock
- Glue or other adhesive
- Colored pencils
- Markers

Steps

1. Gather your materials.
2. Select items for your collage. Consider what each item says about your identity.
3. Think about how your items will fit together. You may want to cut, tear, or write on some of these items to connect them.
4. Arrange your items on the white cardstock. As you do so, think about your composition: What do you want to stand out as the focal point? Will you create patterns or repeated shapes? Are your items far apart, close together, or overlapping?
5. Use glue or some other adhesive to affix the items to the cardstock. Allow your collage to dry.
6. Use colored pencils and markers to embellish your collage. For example, you might want to add words that describe you, a favorite quote, or a poem. To accentuate your composition, you might want to draw lines or patterns around some of its elements. Or, perhaps there's a spot on the collage that should feature your self-portrait or a portrait of someone important to you.

Suggested reading and viewing

Watch the instructional video for this Art Trunk at FristArtMuseum.org/art-trunks.

Children

Whoever You Are, written by Mem Fox and illustrated by Leslie Staub

Same, Same but Different, written and illustrated by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

It's Okay to Be Different, written and illustrated by Todd Parr

Me on the Map, written by Joan Sweeney

Teens and up

America Street: A Multicultural Anthology of Stories, edited by Anne Mazer and Brice Particelli

The Arrival, written and illustrated by Shaun Tan

Studio Visit with Artist Rina Banerjee: youtu.be/y-RWCyeCjO0