



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YINKA SHONIBARE CBE: PLANETS IN MY HEAD EXPLORES THEMES OF POSTCOLONIALISM AND CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

After being closed for more than a year for renovations, remodeled sculpture galleries reopen in April with the much-anticipated exhibition Yinka Shonibare CBE: Planets in My Head.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — March 3, 2022 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation's premier botanic and sculpture experiences, is honored to present the landmark exhibition *Yinka Shonibare CBE: Planets in My Head*. Internationally renowned artist Yinka Shonibare was awarded the prestigious decoration of Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2019.

"Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is thrilled to host this major exhibition, one of Yinka Shonibare's largest in the United States," said David Hooker, President & CEO of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. "It will be a wonderful opportunity for hundreds of thousands of guests to experience works never before seen in the U.S. and learn more about this fascinating artist. We are extremely grateful to our presenting sponsors, Bill Padnos and Margy Kaye, the Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation, the Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park and the Meijer Foundation, for making this exhibition possible."

This exhibition presents a selection from the past three decades of Shonibare's body of work, including sculptures, paintings, photographs, print and film. Many of the works have never or rarely been shown in the United States. Specifically for this exhibition, the artist created *Food Man*, a sculpture that references West Michigan's rich agricultural tradition while raising questions about global food production and sustainability. Shonibare, a self-proclaimed "postcolonial hybrid" of British-Nigerian heritage, is one of the leading artistic voices in the global art world. Blending colorful Dutch wax batik with the fashion of upper-class Victorian culture, his sculptures often comment on current affairs and social justice.

Born in London to Nigerian parents and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, where he spoke Yoruba at home and English at the private school he attended, Shonibare has a bicultural heritage. His identity is shaped by the postcolonial experience of having two nationalities; of growing up located between center and margin of the British Empire.

Postcolonialism and hybridity define his artistic and political identity and are major themes in his prodigious artistic output. While Shonibare embraces cross-cultural mixing and exchange in his work, he never shies from alluding to the postcolonial scars of cultural imperialism and exploitation.

Yinka Shonibare's richly sensuous body of work at Meijer Gardens meet a unique environment of gardens and art. After visiting the sculpture galleries, venture along the BISSELL Corridor into one of our conservatories to see and smell plant species from climates around the world. Here, you'll find a landscape inspired by the Victorian love for and scientific interest in horticulture, within the Earl & Donnalee Holton Victorian Garden Parlor filled with plants and sculptures. During April, experience the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory filled with thousands of butterflies, another species Victorians liked to collect and exhibit, as part of the *Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming* exhibition.

As this sculpture exhibition reveals, Shonibare thinks globally and uses his artistic imagination to comment on colonialism, art history, environment, education, knowledge, food justice, and other subjects of universal concern.

EXHIBITION ACTIVITIES:

Fashion in Contemporary Art

Saturday, June 18, 11 am–12 pm

Suzanne Eberle, PhD, Professor Emerita, Kendall College of Art and Design

Abundance and Scarcity: Yinka Shonibare CBE and Food Justice

Saturday, July 16, 11 am–12 pm

Jochen Wierich, PhD, Assistant Curator & Researcher at Meijer Gardens and Associate Professor of Art History at Aquinas College

Complex Embodiment: Yinka Shonibare and Disability

Saturdays, September 3 and 10, 11 am–12 pm

Jessica Cooley, PhD candidate in the art history department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison

Yinka Shonibare and the Pan-African Imagination

Saturday, October 1, 11 am–12 pm

Antawan Byrd, PhD candidate in the art history department at Northwestern University, Weinberg Fellow, associate curator of photography and media at the Art Institute of Chicago

A full list of exhibition activities can be found at MeijerGardens.org/Shonibare

Yinka Shonibare CBE: Planets in My Head is made possible by:

Bill Padnos and Margy Kaye; the Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation; the Meijer Foundation, Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Foundation; Botanic and Sculpture Societies of Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Park; and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a Partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

This exhibition has been organized by the artist and Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Park with the support of Stephen Friedman Gallery and James Cohan Gallery.

[Images are available HERE.](#)

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About Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Park

Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, was recently listed in the top 100 most visited museums in the world and the 30 most visited museums in the United States by *The Art Newspaper*, the leading global art news publication. Education programs welcome 80,000 students and guests each year. Culinary Arts & Events offerings include weddings, corporate meetings and award-winning catering. The 158-acre main campus features Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the country's largest interactive children's gardens; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens, including a replica 1930s-era farm garden; an eight-acre Japanese garden featuring contemporary sculpture; and a 1,900-seat outdoor Amphitheater Garden, showcasing an eclectic mix of world-renowned touring musicians each summer. The permanent collection highlights hundreds of sculptures from internationally acclaimed artists Magdalena Abakanowicz, El Anatsui, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero, Marshall Fredericks, Henry Moore, Michele Oka Donor, Beverly Pepper, Jaume Plensa, Auguste Rodin, Richard Serra, Yinka Shonibare CBE and Ai Weiwei, among others. Indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions have hosted shows by Jonathan Borofsky, Edgar Degas, Jim Dine, Laura Ford, Richard Hunt, Rebecca Louise Law, Pablo Picasso, George Segal and others.

Frederik Meier Gardens & Sculpture Park promotes the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of gardens, sculpture, the natural environment, and the arts.

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