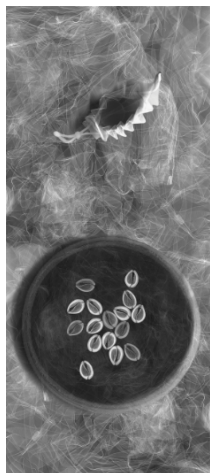


## Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Presents

### *Nari Ward: Divination X*

*Public art installation on the Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade*



*On view: January 6 to June 29, 2015*

**BOSTON, MASS.** (Dec. 2014) – Nari Ward is a master of weaving personal narratives with cultural and historic associations. The Jamaican-born native spent time at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum as a coveted artist-in-residence and is returning next month to install a new piece for the exterior façade of the museum.

Entitled *Divination X*, Ward created a contemporary piece that resembles an x-ray of a cowrie shell reading – a method of fortune-telling in many religions – in response to the question that we all have: “What does the future hold?” The installation will be on view from January 6 to June 29 on the Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade, a focal point for the museum’s emphasis on public art. This will be the sixth façade installation.

To celebrate the opening of *Divination X* and the museum’s commitment to public art, there will be an art-filled breakfast event and lively conversation on Wed. January 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. with Ward, Anne Hawley, *the Norma Jean Calderwood Director*, and Pieranna Cavalchini, *the Tom and Lisa Blumenthal Curator of Contemporary Art*.

In 2002, Ward was an artist-in-residence at the museum and later created an exhibition, *Episodes: Bus Park & Forevermore*, which took visitors on a metaphorical behind-the-scenes tour of the museum’s collection and its custodians. Outside, Ward installed *Bus Park*, a small yellow school bus that he transformed and parked on the museum’s grounds.

Artists-in-residence often spend time in the Gardner museum’s Conservation Laboratories. During a recent visit to the lab, Ward was struck by the x-ray of an angel candlestick holder, which was being restored. Viewing the vortex of unseen matter behind a golden angel may explain why the artist was inspired to use this imaging technique for presenting a yet-to-be imagined future.

X-rays are a form of imaging used for scanning, examining, and documenting physical matter. They can also change our mode of perception. Ward's bird's eye view of thrown cowrie shells in *Divination X* is an image which allows its diviner entry into things to come. The future, which is deemed to be invisible to us, is made, in part, more visible by an x-ray image of this ritual.

Throwing cowrie shells for divination is part of the family of geomancy. These practices use material supports to see into the future. In certain cultures, cowrie shells were first generally regarded as currency and later as part of the paraphernalia of sacred practices in many animistic religions. Although not a devotee of these practices, Ward has a profound regard for the origins and spiritual dimensions of these rituals and wants us to consider how nature's mysterious designs can both inspire reverence as well as the yearning for control.

Artists-in-residence spend one month at the museum and are given the "gift of time." Founded in 1992, the program continues the legacy of inspired support demonstrated by Isabella Stewart Gardner.

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**ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM** • 25 Evans Way Boston MA 02115 • Hours: Open daily from 11 am to 5 pm and Thursdays until 9 pm. Closed Tuesdays. • Admission: Adults \$15; Seniors \$12; Students \$5; Free for members, children under 18, everyone on his/her birthday, and all named "Isabella" • \$2 off admission with a same-day Museum of Fine Arts, Boston ticket • Info Line: 617.566.1401 • Box Office: 617.278.5156 • [www.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.gardnermuseum.org)

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum—a work of art in totality—is at once an intimate collection of fine and decorative art and a vibrant, innovative venue for contemporary artists, musicians and scholars. Housed in a 1902 building, modeled after a 15<sup>th</sup> century Venetian palazzo, and a 2012 wing, designed by Renzo Piano, the Museum provides an unusual backdrop for the viewing of art. The Collection galleries installed in rooms surrounding the verdant Courtyard contain more than 2,500 paintings, sculptures, tapestries, furniture, manuscripts, rare books and decorative arts featuring works by Titian, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, Manet, Degas, Whistler and Sargent. Visit the Gardner Museum online at [www.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.gardnermuseum.org) for more about special exhibitions, concerts, innovative arts education programs, and evening events.

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