

Press Release



September 2014

Brooklyn Museum to Present *Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time*, Featuring a Site-Specific Installation Inspired by the Goddess Kali and Created for the Herstory Gallery of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art

Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time, an exhibition featuring a multimedia, site-specific installation created by Brooklyn artist Chitra Ganesh and an artist-curated selection from the Brooklyn Museum collection, will be on view in the Herstory Gallery of the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art from December 12, 2014, through July 2015. The presentation takes its inspiration in part from the Hindu goddess Kali, one of the figures honored with a place setting in Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, on permanent view in the adjacent gallery. Responding to this unique context, Ganesh's exhibition continues her ongoing exploration of iconic female characters, such as goddesses and female superheroes, and how they connect to contemporary feminist ideas and imagery.

For more than a decade, Chitra Ganesh has explored mythic representations of femininity, sexuality, and power through a variety of media, from watercolors and charcoal drawings to digital collages, films, photographs, and text-based works, as well as numerous commissioned large-scale wall murals. Her drawing-based practice often uses historical and literary texts as inspiration and points of departure to develop and pose alternate narratives and representations of the feminine.

For her Brooklyn presentation, the artist will draw from historical and mythic tales that reveal the fierce Kali as one of the many avatars of feminine divinity, collectively represented by the Great Goddess Devi. As the goddess of destruction and rebirth, creation and salvation, Kali is the incarnation most closely associated with time and the inevitable changes it brings. Inspired by these mystical and visual attributes, Ganesh will incorporate materials gathered during her recent year-long stay in India to create a composition that fills the main wall of the Herstory Gallery and extends into space with three-dimensional sculptural elements.

According to the artist, the work suggests "intersecting narratives that unravel across the space of the wall, forming new avatars that draw from Kali, as well as other figures from *The Dinner Party*, in order to think through femininity as a complex and multilayered representational project." For this contemporary meditation on Kali, Ganesh will bring together her surreal compositional style with the fearsome physical embodiment of the multilimbed, three-eyed, wild-haired goddess who has long stood in contrast to norms of ideal femininity.

Brooklyn Museum

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She will also select works from the Brooklyn Museum's encyclopedic collection that expand on the theme of female power and multiplicity.

Throughout her career Ganesh has incorporated the vivid imagery of popular culture from India and the South Asian subcontinent into her fantastical feminist narratives. One of her first major works, *Tales of Amnesia* (2002), a zine inspired by Indian comic books, appeared in the Brooklyn Museum's 2004 exhibition *Open House: Working in Brooklyn* and is now in the Brooklyn Museum's Brooklyn Artists' Book Collection. During the course of the exhibition, a version of the zine will be made available so visitors can read the publication from beginning to end.

Ganesh was born and raised in Brooklyn, where she currently lives and works. A graduate of Brown University, with a B.A. in Comparative Literature and Art-Semiotics, she attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and was awarded an M.F.A. in painting from Columbia University. Her work has been widely exhibited locally and internationally, including recent solo exhibitions at Göteborgs Konsthall, Sweden, and the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, and is represented in numerous public collections, including the Baltimore Museum of Art; Gwangju Art Museum, South Korea; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Queens Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Whitney Museum of American Art. Ganesh is the recipient of numerous grants and residencies, including awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Printed Matter, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant Program, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in the Creative Arts. She and collaborator Miriam Ghani were Artists-in-Residence at A/P/A Institute at New York University last year with their project *Index of the Disappeared* (2004–), and Ganesh is currently serving as the first Kirloskar Visiting Scholar in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time is organized by Saisha Grayson, Assistant Curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, and is made possible with support from the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation.

The Herstory Gallery in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art presents exhibitions related to Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, an iconic work celebrating the achievements of women throughout history, which is on long-term view in the adjacent gallery. The principal component of *The Dinner Party* is a massive ceremonial banquet arranged in the shape of an open triangle—a symbol of equality—measuring forty-eight feet on each side with a total of thirty-nine place settings, one of which is dedicated to Kali. The settings are composed of richly embroidered runners reflecting the era and contributions of each honoree, china-painted porcelain plates whose raised central motifs are based on butterfly and vulvar forms, and larger-than-life glazed porcelain chalices and utensils. Another 999 names are gilded on the Heritage Floor below.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission:

Contribution \$16; students with valid I.D. and seniors \$10. Ages 19 and under FREE. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

Directions:

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

Museum Hours:

Wednesday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; first Saturday of each month (except September), 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Closed Monday, Tuesday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.