

india  **com**

Innovative Multi-Medium Artist Chitra Ganesh Shares her Creative Passion

By [Poorvi Adavi @US Indiacom](#) | May 22, 2015 2:20 AM



[Press photo of Chitra Ganesh in front of, Drawing from the Present, a multidimensional mural/ project space exhibition while, in residence at Lakeeren Gallery. Interactive, process-based installation on view, July 10 - September 30, 2014.]

Chitra in Hindi means art, and *Ganesh* is a symbol for wisdom—40-year-old, Brooklyn-based artist Chitra Ganesh emulates the best of both art and philosophy in her body of creative works. Ganesh’s work is currently on view at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, through mid-July.

At the beginning of her creative career, she embraced her passion for drawing and painting alongside her academic pursuit of education. As she grew up, she started to lay the foundation for a career in the arts.

“I finally decided to pursue my visual art professionally in my mid-20s,” Ganesh said. “Going to graduate school, studying further and more intensely, and connecting with an artistic community here in New York, including friends from college who were pursuing their art seriously, and the South Asian Women’s Creative Collective, were the first steps.”

161 Jessie Street San Francisco, CA 94105

T 415.346.7812 F 415.346.7877

www.gallerywendinorris.com

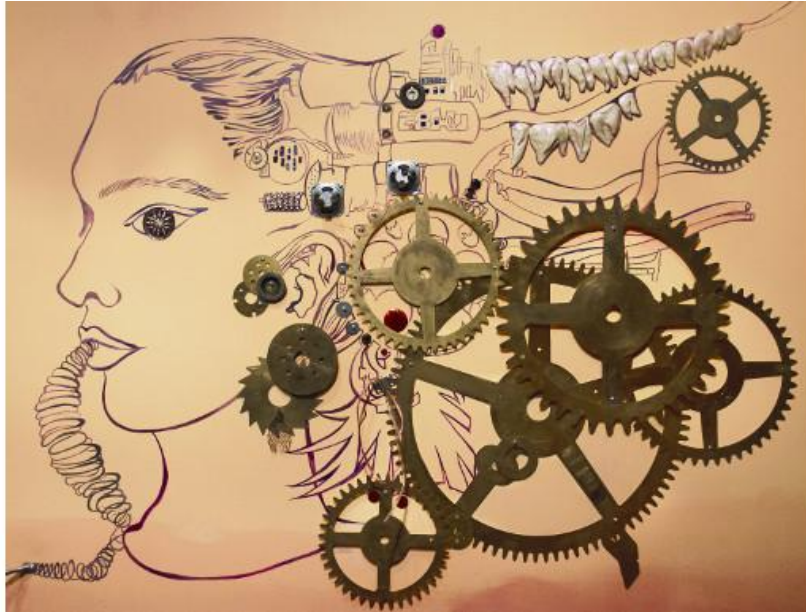


[Installation details from Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time, Mixed media on wall - installation size approximately 15 x 47 feet, Currently on view at Brooklyn Museum's, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through July 12, 2015, Images courtesy of Brooklyn Museum's Digital Collections and Services]

She also credits encouragement from her parents for helping her career path move forward through the exploration of many different art styles and mediums.

For a passionate artist, experimenting with different art methods and abstract ideas can be exciting.

“It is not the medium itself, but the way a medium is used, which makes it powerful,” Ganesh said. “I love comics and street art, as well as classical paintings, and a wide range of music, including contemporary girls rock, and *qawwali* music, both classical and film.”



[Installation details from Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time, Mixed media on wall - installation size approximately 15 x 47 feet, Currently on view at Brooklyn Museum's, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through July 12, 2015, Images courtesy of Brooklyn Museum's Digital Collections and Services]

When an artist has such a broad-minded way of thinking and a galvanizing admiration for a wide array of art forms, a perceptive central artistic message does not come as a surprise.

“That art should make an audience feel free to have a wide range of interpretations, should trigger the viewer to reconsider and think about familiar issues in a new light, and inspire a sense of awe during the visual encounter with a piece of art,” Ganesh said.

With the same artistic message in her heart, she has traveled all over the world and exhibited her work in various museums and galleries. She said she has had memorable experiences at each exhibition, and they all still linger in her mind.



[Installation details from Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time, Mixed media on wall - installation size approximately 15 x 47 feet, Currently on view at Brooklyn Museum's, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through July 12, 2015, Images courtesy of Brooklyn Museum's Digital Collections and Services]

“I have had wonderful experiences exhibiting my work around India as well as in a variety of places around the world, such as Lakeeren Gallery in Mumbai, Gallery Espace in New Delhi, the Saatchi Museum in London, and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh,” Ganesh said. “All of these have provided very specific and rich contexts in which to show my work and have attracted a broad set of viewers, from locals to students, to peers in the art world. I feel very fortunate to have had such a broad array of exhibition opportunities, and to have met and spoke with the museum-going audience, who come from every cross-section of the urban public in which these spaces are located.”

Experience gained by meeting people across different cultures is reflected in Ganesh’s body of work as well. Her work demonstrates a blend of psychological insight and intensity. This is perhaps what sets Ganesh apart. However, the depth of her imagination does have one foot in reality, the shadow of which is demonstrated in the form of her various paintings and drawings.



[How we do at the end of the World, 48 x 66 inches, 2011, lightjetprint]

“I draw inspiration from all kinds of art—including so-called high or historical pieces of art you see in museums and galleries, as well as popular arts such as comics, song lyrics, anime, and more,” Ganesh said. “I also draw a great deal of inspiration from literature, mythology and current events. Much of the creative and literal representation of events around us have a great deal of psychological charge, which I am interested in further exploring.”

In exploring the wide range of Ganesh’s artwork, what is most fascinating is her focus on feminist and female empowerment issues. The portrayal of such progressive subjects in her artwork is indeed awe-inspiring.

“I have always been interested in probing places where collectively transmitted and understood stories about women, femininity, and feminine power have come apart at the seams,” Ganesh said. “For example, what could happen if there is no happily ever after, Prince Charming or *shaadi*? What other possibilities are there? There are an endless number of turns a story can take, in regards to the paths a female protagonist could follow. I have always been drawn to depicting those roads less travelled, with unexpected twists and turns, for greater possibilities of female power, more open versions of sexuality and eroticism around and across gender, and generally more open expectations of how these issues can be represented.”



[The Raw and the Cooked, 2013, Mixed media on wall installation, approximately 10 x 7 meters, On view in Zebra Among Horses: Chitra Ganesh solo exhibition, September 17- November 22, 2013, Courtesy the artist and Gallery Espace New Delhi]

Ganesh's paintings are symbolic of a new wave in the field of art, especially when seen alongside most movies, historical paintings, and carvings we observe, where the role of women is submissive and resigned to looking beautiful.

Take, for instance, Madhubala's role in the movie "Mughal-e-Azam." Anarkali bestowed unconditional love on Salim—so much so that their love story became evergreen. Ganesh was clearly inspired by this story, shown by her elegant portrayal of Madhubala in one of her paintings. When asked if the young adults of today's society can accept the depiction of such love, in the form of art, Ganesh said:

"I am not sure how young people of today take inspiration from such stories. I know that female cinema icons, such as Madhubala, Helen, Smita Patil, Zeenat Aman and Nandita Das, were inspirational to me in terms of the circumstances that they all survived and thrived in, as well as their progressive views on how important women's unconventional experiences and roles can be in influencing society at large."



[Double Vision, 2014, On view in Seven Decades of Drawing, Indira Gandhi National Arts Centre. 40 x 60 inches, mixed media on paper Courtesy the artist and Gallery Espace New Delhi]

Michelangelo once said, “True work of art is nothing but a shadow of divine perfection.” Different artists interpret this quote in their own ways, but what Ganesh thinks about it is something completely out-of-the-box.

“I think art can simultaneously feature a number of representations that may be seen as conflicting,” she said. “For example, ideals of beauty can be seen alongside as extreme versions of the absurd, grotesque, or psychologically opaque/challenging material. I think the most important aspect of an artwork is to trigger viewers to have a transformative visual experience, a substantive intellectual encounter, and to trigger reconsideration of issues or events that seem familiar in a new and illuminating way.”



[Installation details from Chitra Ganesh: Eyes of Time, Mixed media on wall - installation size approximately 15 x 47 feet, Currently on view at Brooklyn Museum's, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art through July 12, 2015, Images courtesy of Brooklyn Museum's Digital Collections and Services]

Mesmerized by Ganesh's work, one cannot help but be excited by the next big project on her mind.

"I am currently working on a body of paintings in preparation for a solo exhibition in San Francisco this fall, as well as a couple of other larger scale sculptural and book projects, which are in the works," she said. "I look forward to spending a lot of time developing these and taking my work in new directions."

Modified Date: May 22, 2015 2:20 AM

<http://us.india.com/arts-and-culture/innovative-multi-medium-artist-chitra-ganesh-shares-her-creative-passion-382114/>