

Simone Leigh, Chitra Ganesh, and Uri McMillan

# ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES: AESTHETICS, IMAGINATION, AND RADICAL RECIPROCITY: AN INTERVIEW WITH GIRL

*I*n the spring of 2012, on a visit to New York City, I took the train up to the Upper West Side on an explicit mission to visit the Jack Tilton Gallery. In a striking turn of fate, the gallery was running not one



Simone Leigh. Photograph by Paul Mpagi Sepuya.



Chitra Ganesh. Photograph by C. Ganesh.

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*but two of my friends' solo exhibitions simultaneously: CHITRA GANESH's The Ghost Effect in Real Time and SIMONE LEIGH's jam packed and jelly tight. Traversing elegant narrow mansions with pristine balustrades and faded facades in the upper 70s, I eventually entered a large space where I was immediately greeted*

*by one of Leigh's arresting sculptures: a sinuous and slender wood tree trunk reaching toward the ceiling, where it cradled one of Leigh's large ceramic glazed cowrie shells covered in a brilliant appliqué of gold leaf. Upstairs, as I traversed Leigh's sculptures—chandeliers of pendulous glass containers filled with salt; a row of six figurines with headdresses made out of voluptuous configurations of cobalt blue ceramic roses—I encountered Ganesh's large-scale black-and-white charcoal drawings of scenes inspired by early cinema productions in India, Germany, and the United States. Ganesh's drawings contained imagery culled from science fiction, histories of Orientalism, and epic myth. Combining compressed charcoal with charcoal dust, the drawings were mysterious and strangely evocative, as if the remnant of charcoal dust enabled the residue of embedded historical narratives to migrate off the surface of the images and saturate the room with the density of the past. In short, the title of Ganesh's exhibition—THE GHOST EFFECT IN REAL TIME—felt especially appropriate, as the reverberating presence of hauntings seemed to pervade the room. Despite the formal divergence of Leigh and Ganesh's work, I now recognize in hindsight that the convergence of their exhibitions was really a meaningful coincidence; it was indicative of their friendship and broader commitment to each other's work—a shared affinity that is deeply implicated in each of their art practices. For Leigh and Ganesh, art and friendship are delicately intertwined and mutually transformative.*

Both Brooklyn-based artists, ceramist Simone Leigh and painter Chitra Ganesh have been friends for several decades, and their artistic practices are informed by their upbringings as children of immigrants from Jamaica and India, respectively.

Ganesh, a graduate of Brown and Columbia Universities, combines drawing, installation, text-based work, digital collage and collaboration in her praxis. She makes rich use of materials that range from lace to spray paint and from glass to chalk, and her work excavates narrative palimpsests—particularly the submerged voices and concerns of South Asian women—that often remain obscure within both conventional history and the contemporary arts. Drawing on surrealism, futurism, mythology, comic-book aesthetics, and cultures of protest, Ganesh’s often large-scale yet intricate work integrates “traditional and established painting practices with the artist’s unique visual iconographies and assemblages” to create artistic subjects who “confront the viewer with their gazes, acting as radiant agents of their own present and future, emerging as powerful allegories of politics, performance and fantasy.”<sup>1</sup> A current Hodder Fellow at Princeton University’s Lewis Center for the Arts, a 2012 Guggenheim Foundation grantee, and a Kirloskar scholar-in-residence at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2014, Ganesh has participated in numerous group and solo shows in New York City and elsewhere in the United States, including *Word of God(ess)* at the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh (2011), *Eyes of Time* at the Brooklyn Museum (2014), and *The Ghost Effect in Real Time* at the Jack Tilton Gallery (2012). She has exhibited around the world, with solo shows in Paris, Zurich, New Delhi, and Mumbai. In addition, her social practice has included several billboard-sized public art exhibitions in Shanghai, Lisbon, Porto, and at the Socrates Sculpture Park in New York. At the latter site, Ganesh reproduced an 11 x 28’ image of an earlier work titled *Her Nuclear Waters...* in 2013. Employing imagery and narratives from Indian comic books that depict Hindu mythology and South Asian history for popular audiences (albeit with text rewritten by Ganesh), the piece features the apocalyptic image of a woman astronaut exploring a ravaged planet. Installed in Socrates Sculpture Park—a former landfill—*Her Nuclear Waters...* evokes the history and subsequent transformation of the site itself.

Simone Leigh is equally adept in her manipulation of temporal and historical juxtapositions throughout her body of work. Her commitment to expanding her artistic praxis beyond the walls of the art museum extends to the creation

of site installations in public parks and neighborhoods. She has been a fellow in the distinguished Artist-in-Residence program at the Studio Museum of Harlem in New York City in 2010–2011, and her first solo show, *You Don't Know Where Her Mouth Has Been*, was curated by Rashida Bumbray at the Kitchen, the legendary multidisciplinary art and performance space, in 2012. Since then she has participated in a number of notable group exhibitions, solo shows, and innovative social practice projects, including the 2015 *Greater New York* exhibition at MOMA/PS1. In 2012 she worked with opera singer Alicia Hall Moran and jazz pianist Jason Moran in *BLEED* at the Whitney Biennial as part of Moran's and Moran's freewheeling residency that spooled out twenty-six performances drawing on film, video, dance, poetry, journalism, and alternative medicine. In 2014, as part of the *Free People's Medical Clinic*, a community-based arts commission sponsored by Creative Time and the Weeksville Heritage Center, Leigh created an installation in a brownstone formerly owned by Dr. Josephine English, the first African American woman to have an OB/GYN practice in New York. Leigh's curated sessions of massage, acupuncture, and yoga paid homage to both the Black Panthers and the unknown history of a fleet of black nurses that operated in nineteenth-century Brooklyn, while using art to strengthen "the memory of a local past that could be easily swallowed up by gentrification," as art critic Holland Cotter wrote in *The New York Times*.<sup>2</sup> Straddling "the divide between two seemingly disparate worlds of art and health," as Samara Davis remarked, Leigh's predilection for "a kind of formal circuit breaking that reroutes narrative lines" eroded the lines between the two, resulting in an art project that enabled "somewhat unlikely historical associations to proliferate, putting into circulation new forms and ways of valuing."<sup>3</sup>

GIRL is a collective formed by the two artists as a testament to their friendship and shared aesthetic interests, especially in regard to iconographies of the diasporic female body. *My Dreams, My Works, Must Wait Till After Hell...* (2011), the fruit of their union, is a solemn seven-minute digital video that depicts an anonymous black woman with her upper torso exposed and back turned to the viewer (played by performance artist Kenya Robinson), who lays silently on a white marble table with a pile of rocks obscuring her head. Against a haunting soundtrack of Japanese taiko drums and shinobue flutes by musician Kaoru Watanabe, the video's only movement is the barely perceptible expansion and compression of the subject's ribcage as she attempts to breathe. Deeply suggestive of histories of objecthood, durational performance art, and women's labor,

the video suggests how performance art's use of the black body as a pliable artistic medium is especially loaded when confronted by the legacies of objectification, coercion, and abjection that occurred during chattel slavery. Ganesh and Leigh share an interest, moreover, in women's work and in female iconography alike. *My Dreams, My Works, Must Wait Till After Hell...* resonates with these interests in its invocation of the ontological labor women of color perform on a daily basis—seeking to find slivers of freedom, if not breathing space, under the most oppressive of constraints. The video was included in *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*, the groundbreaking exhibition of performance practices by black artists from the 1960s to the present <sup>4</sup>

In the fall of 2016, I arranged an interview with the artists to discuss their collaborative practices, both as GIRL and with other artists, in order to think about art and aesthetics in times of crisis and precarity. Sharing an interest in social practice, the artists also aim explicitly to reach publics beyond the art museum. In this sense they are aligned with the vision of the late philosopher José Muñoz, particularly in their understanding of the relationship between the singular and the plural: in short, a commons. For Muñoz, the commons provides “the



**Figure 1.**

*Girl* (Simone Leigh and Chitra Ganesh), *My Dreams, My Works, Must Wait Till After Hell...*, 2012. Digital video. Duration: 7:14. ©*Girl* (Simone Leigh and Chitra Ganesh); Courtesy of the artists and Luhring Augustine, New York.

ground for enacting new modes of being in the world” insofar as it enables us to see and know each other “not as singular marks but as parts of a larger choreography of being and belonging.”<sup>5</sup> Leigh’s and Ganesh’s unique visions, and their friendship as queer women artists of color, reveal how the radical reciprocity of friendship can serve as the platform for an art praxis explicitly engaged in creating a dynamic, diasporic artistic commons.

—Uri McMillan, UCLA

**UM/** *First I want to talk about the politics of collaboration. While you both have collaborated with other artists in a multitude of different arrangements, there is something unique and special about GIRL. How did GIRL come to fruition? How did you decide to name it that?*

**CG/** Both of us have individual experience with collaborative practices. Recently, as part of her “Psychic Friends Network” series in her 2016 performance, *Aluminum*, at the Tate Modern, Simone worked with New York-based choreographer Rashida Bumbray. Since 2004 I have maintained an ongoing collaboration with artist Mariam Ghani as part of *Index of the Disappeared*, an archive of post-9/11 disappearances and a platform for dialogue with the public. Our experiences with collaboration, whether in the form of GIRL or in our other collaborations, tend to emerge organically from the current formal interests or political climate of that moment. In that way we invoke both particular interests in material culture, alongside the structural conditions in which we create our work. GIRL and our other collaborations emerge via longstanding

alliances and friendships with artists who share political views and aesthetic affiliations.

*My Dreams, My Works, Must Wait Till After Hell...* (2011), the digital video GIRL produced, came out of a series of experiments that harnessed a concurrent interest in tropes of surrealist photography and figuration. We were both reading art historian Whitney Chadwick’s 1998 book *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation*.<sup>6</sup> These investigations were also informed by MOCA curator Cornelia Butler’s 2007 groundbreaking exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*.<sup>7</sup> The exhibition brought to light many of the art historical precursors to our works—artists whose work was less familiar alongside works by more widely known feminist artists, including Ana Mendieta’s photography and performance, and Martha Rosler’s photcollages and videos. The legacy of key artists featured in *Mirror Images*—such as French artist, photographer, and writer Claude Cahun and Mexican painter Frida Kahlo—was furthered and amplified by many of the artists in the *WACK!* exhibition. These modes of production were more legible than other ideas

we were discussing at the time, such as the iconic representations of the Afro-diasporic water spirit “Mami Wata” (Mother Water). In addition, Simone was also working on a solo presentation that was years in the making. Thus it felt very appropriate that the two of us would have a collaborative piece in the context of a comprehensive exhibition, given the discourses we were engaged with at the time.

GIRL suggests a naming of female subjectivity that is recognizable, even iconic, and at the same time offers open-ended representational possibilities. It seemed like something that could capture those areas of the Venn diagram where we overlap with regard to feminism, issues around labor, and a desire to situate transnational influences—South Asian or Sub-Saharan contemporary art practices, for example—as well as other visual and art historical languages that exceed the Euro-American art historical frame. Given Simone’s thinking about sculpture and the body and my work in drawing and photography, it was very surprising when the work we made was a video that seemed to be so much more about painting. It was almost as if we had subconsciously responded to French painter Edouard Manet’s *Olympia* (1863), or the monumental tenth-century sculptures in the rock-cut monastery-temple cave complexes, known as the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, in India.

**UM/ *This juxtaposition of artistic influences—from Manet to surrealism to cave sculptures—is interesting, because it raises a question about***

***the role of aesthetics in your work(s). Chitra, I’m thinking of how your recent work has been addressing the intersection of aesthetics and politics via epistemologies of protest and their various performative stagings—as in your show **Protest Fantasies at the Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco. Meanwhile, for you, Simone, your leadership of **Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter (#BWAforBLM)**, a collectivity of over a hundred black women artists, transformed the **New Museum in New York City into a kinetic forum for mourning and mobilizing around institutionalized violence against black lives through performances, displays, and healing workshops.*******

***What would you say, then, is the role of the artist? Particularly in the fraught political moment we find ourselves in, how have you both—independently as well as together—been trying to stretch or re-frame notions of what the art object and/or the artist can and should do? In short, where do art and politics meet?***

**SL/** Artists do not have to do anything. I feel that this political moment that we are in, and the fact that a lot of artists are directly responding to police violence or widespread government surveillance of individual citizens—issues that have become more visible in recent years—does not create a mandate for what artists can or should do.

**CG/** We have no interest in creating some kind of mandate, recipe, or requirement



for how artists should perform in a moment of social and political crisis. All of our work arose organically. This includes both of my recent exhibitions at Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco, or the *Index of the Disappeared* project *Black Sites I: The Seen Unseen* (2016–) —a legal, historical, and visual inquiry into the afterlives of “black site” or secret prisons, sponsored by Creative Time Reports and Yale University Law School’s Robina Foundation and Schell Center for Human Rights. And it includes as well Simone’s recent exhibitions *Simone Leigh: The Waiting Room* at the New Museum, *Hammer Projects: Simone Leigh*, and her upcoming *In Real Life: Performance* with Professor Rizvana Bradley as part of the Bureau of Feminism initiative at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles—and even Simone’s leadership and work with Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter. These projects were born out of genuinely organic interests in how protest and care, and their performative and aesthetic dimensions, are potent fields of inquiry in our contemporary moment. These works and ideas have been years in the making,

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rather than marking a recent shift that would be characterized as an immediate reaction to current events, inasmuch as our political landscape must be understood not as something that has suddenly come to a head, but rather as longstanding structures and antagonisms that some of us have experienced for quite a while, now revealing themselves to a much broader public and scale.

**SL/** I agree. We both feel that for artists who occupy marginalized positions within a mainstream Euro-American art structure, one of the most radical acts is consistently to make one’s work. We both agree that key to this process—of both surviving and *thriving* artistically—is to develop the internal logic that guides one’s practice as well as the personal, emotional, and institutional structures that would enable it.

**CG/** Yes, and I also think that the role of aesthetics can be to provide alternative structures for thinking, feeling, and sharpening one’s political analysis or emotional awareness through immersion in a symbolic imaginary that rubs against the grain of everyday life. Simone thinks about subjectivity. I think through archives and erasures. We both think about our audiences, with an explicit awareness that these audiences are transnational ones, whether they are located in India, South Africa, or here in the U.S. These are long-held and developed ideas about audience that reflect our shared desire to include a range of viewerships and to index a set of visual vernaculars that encompass and transcend the



disparate philosophical and formal interests we bring to bear on our work.

**UM/** *But does that concern for audiences and diasporic viewerships then raise for you the question of the function and role museums and galleries should serve? Recent work in art history and performance studies discusses how artists in the 1970s were demanding more representation of women and artists of color in their collections, as well as a more equitable distribution of resources to their communities.<sup>8</sup> Almost fifty years later, we see that museums have been slow to do this work. What do you two imagine to be the future of the art world, as you'd like to envision it?*

**SL/** This is very broad question. I've decided not to concern myself with the future of the art world. I would say that my concern right now in this particular moment is how often the spectacle of the black body, and especially the black body in performance, is invited into art spaces that have not yet made any serious commitments whatsoever to supporting black artists. In other words, while our exhibitions are not always welcome, the black performing body always is. And the spectacle of it is used to mask the structural racism of art institutions that have repeatedly excluded black artists and their exhibitions.

**CG/** Yes, this *is* a difficult question given the consistent—I would even say aggressive—absence of South Asian and Muslim artists within mainstream art institutional contexts. I think institutions can often be extraordinarily

far behind what is happening on the ground, be it in politics, street culture, or even television. All of these other spheres have seen more visible contributions by the constituencies I mention. The idea of what is American, or who has contributed to American history, needs to be challenged, to expand, before there is more diversity within the museum and gallery systems. My sense is that this is just now starting to happen for African American artists, maybe in the last five to ten years, and yet the rest of us will probably be waiting for decades to come.

I want to take a moment here to say that what has been so fantastic about being in discourse and in collaboration with Simone is that while we are both very differently positioned, we are able to bring our work, collaboratively and individually, into a complex analysis that recognizes these different alignments. In my case, I would say that American institutions are only just beginning to realize the gravity and scale of the omission of African American artists from their programs, an almost century-long omission for which corrections are only now slowly, haltingly, and tentatively underway. Thought we are in a moment of political polarization and crisis, one that strongly directs physical violence against Muslim bodies on a daily basis, there is still no representation of Muslim or South Asian artists to speak of in the majority of these places. So my interest is in participating in whatever discourse would allow this thinking to change and expand, as well as continuing to work within non-mainstream institutional spaces to further our ideas.

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SL/ Absolutely. We also understand that it’s important to align strategically when possible with institutions that are willing to take risks on our behalf, because it is not just that ideas need to get communicated, but also that it is important to deploy the access to power possessed by institutional spaces to discuss those ideas publicly.

UM/ *To shift away somewhat from our discussion of power and the terms and conditions of access to art institutions, I want to end with a question about the importance of imagination, what historian Robin D.G. Kelley calls “freedom dreams” and what performance theorist José Esteban Muñoz discusses as a kind of “forward-dawning futurity.”*<sup>9</sup> *Your work has importantly engaged with fluid notions of time, be it through mythology or Afrofuturism. The continued importance of artists, activists, and musicians, as Kelley and Muñoz emphasize, lies in their collective ability to imagine, create, and perform alternative visions to the stultifying present. What role does such an imagination play in your praxis?*

CG/ Imagination—the possibility to think beyond the physical bounds of one’s own body or subject position, to inhabit narratives

and alternate structures of representation that seem far from impossible at any given moment—lies at the heart of our praxis. For me, I will talk about the role of empathy. I feel that one of the things I appreciate most about my friendship and alliance with Simone is how her imagination enables her to think through or understand positions, circumstances, and challenges that have not necessarily been directly part of her experience, especially as it pertains to the way in which the kind of discursive space we generate amongst ourselves accounts for our very different positionalities.

SL/ And both of us are also very interested in cultivating intergenerational relationships across these different positionalities. Specifically, we both invest in mentorship, teaching, and being engaged with artists and movements—both older and younger—that have points of view different from our own.

CG/ Amen. In terms of thinking of the future, when I think about what Simone might call a “feminist future,” I think that what the most ideal collaborations and allegiances could be built on, actually, is friendship. Friendship has become more important to me, as a point of departure, than what we call “making allies”

or comradeship. Friendship is when you try to find the same things you agree on, where you try to support each other. Friendship is where you love the person and trust that there isn't a need for complete understanding, sameness, or the exact concurrence of ideas, but rather a faith and investment in radical acceptance and reciprocity as the foundation for material labor, and for building through that together. So, to circle back to your question regarding friendship: friendship—in the way we speak of it—provides access to a mode of imagination that furthers our praxes, both individually and collectively, and that is not impinged upon by the stressors that inevitably arise when individual artists work in situational spaces—stressors such as questions of whether I am going to be trusted, responded to, allowed room for failure, and so forth.

**SL/** Friendship and collaboration are about power sharing and the dissemination of ideas that might be aligned with, but slightly divergent from, our own in order to enable an amplification of propositions, practices, and convenings that would otherwise be entirely absent from our worlds.

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/ **Notes** /

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.artnet.com/galleries/gallery-wendi-norris/chitra-ganesh-protest-fantasies/>.

<sup>2</sup> See Holland Cotter, "Time-Traveling to a Corner of Brooklyn's Past," *The New York Times*, October 7, 2014 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/08/arts/design/funk-god-jazz-medicine-black-heritage-in-brooklyn.html>). *The Free People's Medical Clinic* was one of four community-based arts initiatives that were

presented as part of the program *Funk, God, Jazz, and Medicine: Black Radical Brooklyn*, a month-long art exhibition launched from the site of Weeksville, a black American community that was established by free and formerly enslaved black citizens eleven years after the abolition of slavery in New York State and is now subsumed by the neighborhoods of Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant in present-day Brooklyn. The four artists—Simone Leigh, Xenobia Bailey, Bradford Young, and Otobenga Jones & Associates—were invited to engage the history of Weeksville by creating site-specific works on the theme of "self-determination." Curated by Rashida Bumbray, Nato Thompson, and Rylee Eterginoso, *Funk, God, Jazz, and Medicine* paired each artist with community partners with deep ties to the neighborhood in order to highlight themes of community, migration, memory, radical music, and self-reliance in healthcare. For more, see <http://creativetime.org/projects/black-radical-brooklyn/>

<sup>3</sup> Samara Davis, "Room for Care: Simone Leigh's Free People Medical Clinic," *TDR: The Drama Review* 59, no. 4 (2015): 172, 174, 175.

<sup>4</sup> *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* was first shown at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH), organized by senior curator Valerie Cassel Oliver. It later traveled to New York where it was jointly exhibited in two parts at the Grey Art Gallery at New York University (September 10–December 7, 2013) and the Studio Museum in Harlem (November 14, 2013–March 9, 2014). Its final stop was the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota (July 24, 2014–January 4, 2015). *Radical Presence* included works by thirty-seven artists employing influences from music, theater, dance, and popular culture including forebears such as Lorraine O'Grady, Adrian Piper, Ulysses Jenkins, and David Hammons as well as contemporary progeny including Jacolby Satterwaite, Tameka Norris, and Kalup Linzy. For more, see *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art*

(Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum; New York: Distributed Arts Publishers, 2013). For web-based resources, see <http://radicalpresenceny.org/>

<sup>5</sup> José Esteban Muñoz, “‘Gimme Gimme This . . . Gimme Gimme That’: Annihilation and Innovation in the Punk Rock Commons,” *Social Text* (116) 31, no. 3 (2013): 102, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Whitney Chadwick, *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism, and Self-Representation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> See Cornelia Butler and Lisa Gabrielle Mark, eds., *WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Susan Cahan, *Mounting Frustration: The Art Museum in the Age of Black Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016) and Uri McMillan, *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Robin D. G. Kelly, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (New York: Beacon Press, 2003); José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 1.

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**SIMONE LEIGH's** practice incorporates sculpture, video, and installation, all informed by her ongoing exploration of black female subjectivity and ethnography. Her objects often employ materials and forms traditionally associated with African art; her performance-influenced installations create spaces where historical precedent and self-determination come together. Through her investigations of visual overlaps between cultures, time periods, and geographies, she confronts and examines ideas of the female body, race, beauty, and community.

In 2016, Leigh received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, the Herb Alpert Award for Visual Art, and a Blade of Grass Fellowship for Socially Engaged Art. She has also been the recipient of the 2013 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Award and the 2011 Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant for Sculpture. Recent projects and exhibitions include *Psychic Friends Network* (2016) at Tate Exchange, Tate Modern, London; *The Waiting Room*

(2016) at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; *The Free People's Medical Clinic* (2014), a project commissioned by *Creative Time*; and *inHarlem*, a public installation presented by *The Studio Museum in Harlem* at Marcus Garvey Park, New York.

**CHITRA GANESH** graduated magna cum laude from Brown University with a BA in Comparative Literature and Art-Semiotics, and received her MFA from Columbia University in 2002. For over a decade, Ganesh's work has been widely exhibited both locally and internationally, including at the Queens Museum, Bronx Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and Baltimore Museum. International venues include Fondazione Sandretto (Turin), the Saatchi Museum (London), MOCA Shanghai, Kunsthalle Exnergasse (Vienna), and Kunstverein Göttingen (Germany) with solo presentations at PS 1/MoMA, the Andy Warhol Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and Gothenburg Kunsthalle (Sweden). Ganesh's work is widely recognized in South Asia, and has been shown at The Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (New Delhi), Princess of Wales Museum (Mumbai), and the Dhaka Art Summit at Shilpakala Academy (Bangladesh). Ganesh has received numerous grants including a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in the Creative Arts (2012), and awards from the Art Matters Foundation (2010), Joan Mitchell Foundation (2010), and New York Foundation for the Arts (2009), among others. Ganesh currently holds a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts.

**URIMCMILLAN** is Associate Professor of Performance Studies in the Departments of English, African American Studies, and Gender Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (NYU Press, 2015), the winner of three prizes, including the Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History from the American Society of Theater Research (ASTR), the Errol Hill Award for Outstanding Scholarship in African-American theater, drama, and/or performance studies from the American Society of Theater Research (ASTR) and the William Sanders Scarborough Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Study of Black American Literature/Culture from the Modern Language Association (MLA). He has published essays in *Flow* (2008), *Re:Collection* (2010), and *Evidence of Accumulation* (2011), all published by the Studio Museum of Harlem, and artist interviews for *Aperture*. He is the editor of “Surface Aesthetics: Art, Race, Performance and Play,” a forthcoming special issue of *Women and Performance: a journal of feminist theory*.