

Flash Art



ULTRA BODIES
ULTRA SPECIES

PAMELA ROSENKRANZ
PAN DAIJING
SIMONE FORTI
CHITRA GANESH
PAKUI HARDWARE
TALOI HAVINI
AGNIESZKA KURANT
HELMUT LANG
JARED MADERE
NOUR MOBARAK
KATE MOSHER HALL
ARTS AT CERN
SEX ECOLOGIES

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50
COVER STORY **Materialist Invisibility: Art as Organic Development in Pamela Rosenkranz's Work**
by Nicolas Bourriaud

64
Systemic Errors of Collective Intelligence: A Conversation with Agnieszka Kurant
by Noam Segal

84
Bio-Hazard: Pakui Hardware
by Ingrid Luquet-Gad

98
Urgency or The Thick of Time
A graphic narrative by Chitra Ganesh

112
HELMUT LANG and FOREST MINIMALISM
by Charlie Robin Jones

114
Beyond Physics
Andrea Lissoni in conversation with Pan Daijing

128
READINGS Sex Ecologies: A New Consciousness
by Mariana Lemos

130
I understand things, but in my way: A Dialogue with Simone Forti
by Patrick Steffen

142
**Kalpavriksha for Little Richard: Recent Developments in Artificial Intelligence
as they Pertain to Social Imagination**
A visual essay by Jared Madere

162
Nour Mobarak: Movements of Spheres for a Hybrid Economy of Desire
by Marie de Brugerolle

170
The Age of Love Chapter III: The Cure of the Mind: On Taloi Havini's Answer to the Call
by Chus Martínez

176
LETTER FROM THE CITY
by Kate Mosher Hall

177
QUESTIONNAIRE Arts at CERN: Where Art Meets Science
Eleonora Milani in conversation with Mónica Bello

182
**TELL EVERYONE Episode IV: Free My Mind, Artpop: You Make My Heart Stop
(For Lady Gaga)**
A column by William J. Simmons

Reviews

Carol Bove "The séances aren't helping" The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York / Virgil Abloh "Figures of Speech" ICA, Boston / James Barnor "Accra / London – A Retrospective" Serpentine Galleries, London / Martine Syms "Aphrodite's Beasts" Fridericianum, Kassel / "Ouverture" Pinault Collection – La Bourse de Commerce, Paris / "La Mer imaginaire" Fondation Carmignac, Porquerolles Island

Urgency or The Thick of Time

A graphic narrative by Chitra Ganesh

In her practice, Chitra Ganesh reflects on long-received cultural constructions of female sexuality and power, reimagining these concepts in visual narratives characterized by a strong mythological component that has come to constitute the artist's complex visual imaginary. Ganesh rethinks the canonical narrative of our world order and history by deconstruction, focusing on liminal spaces where mythology and contemporary life meet – in this sense, her studies in comparative literature and semiotics are revealing, as well as her early studies of social theory and deconstruction, both seen as tools for accessing or recovering historical cultural texts – from literature and film to visual art. Ganesh subverts the official canons of history through a production that utilizes the functions and structures of a story itself: the written word. Her experimental poetics are conveyed in mythical texts accompanied by drawings, both in print and animated forms, imbued with a feminist and queer sensibility. A mash-up of old Bollywood images and songs, graffiti, lyrical poetry, and erased moments of South Asian history, draws upon Ganesh's upbringing in New York City as a child of Indian immigrants.

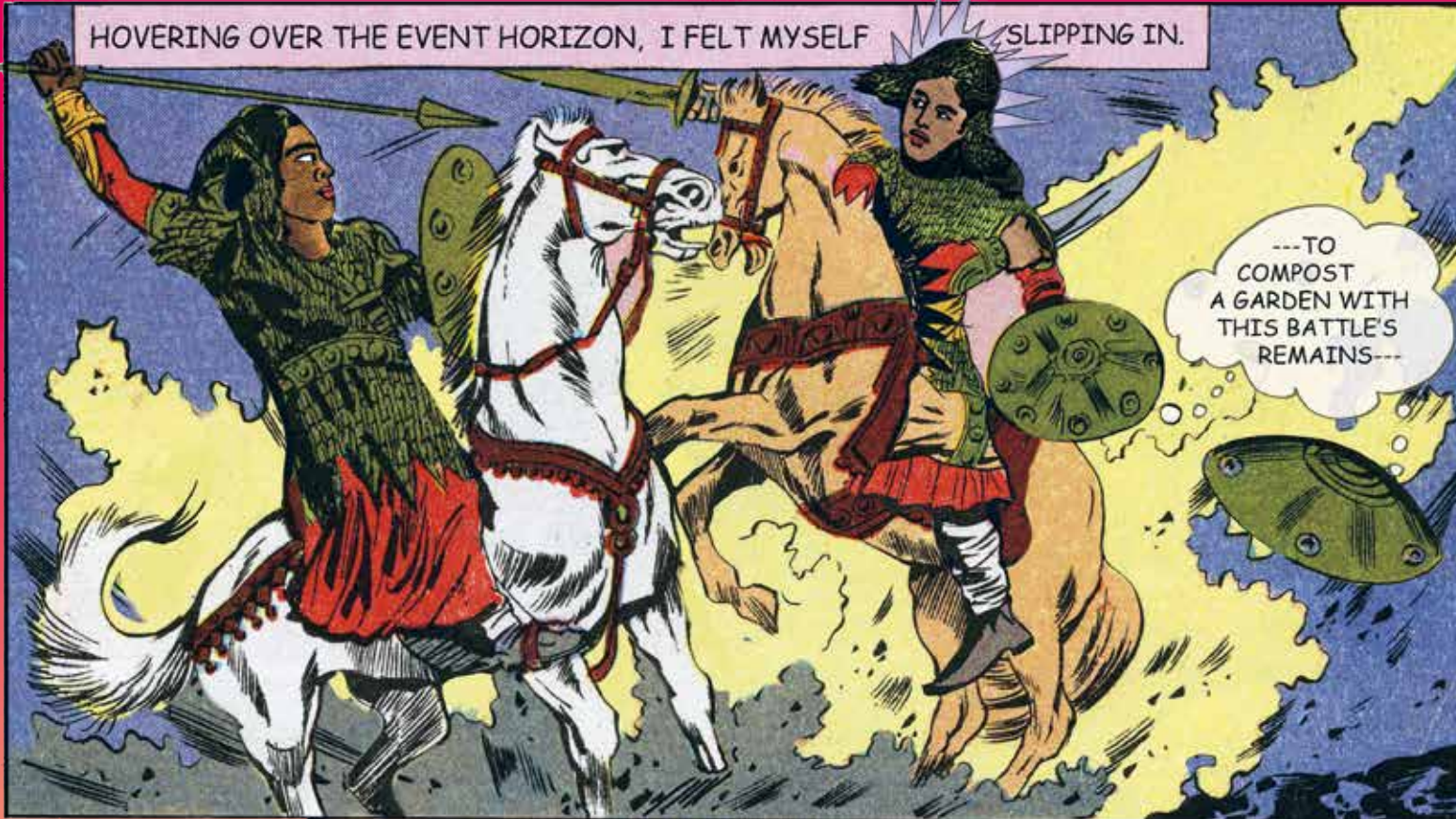
Her visual grammar uses the trope of "jungle," understood not only as wilderness but also as a reference to an old Indian colonial idiom used to describe women rebelling against convention. The artist developed the theme of diasporic identity – and of femininity inevitably linked to it – by taking inspiration in part from popular visual imagery: the comic books that Amar Chitra Katha has published since 1967, a genre used to teach Hindu mythology to Indians and children of the Indian diaspora. Reflecting on the role this comic book series has played in shaping her experience, Ganesh challenges the rise of Hindu nationalism's linear narrative by offering multiple and heterogenous positions in her work. Drawing from the aesthetics and fragments of ACK comics, Ganesh reframes the paradigms of collective memory, trying to shape a new form of contemporary visual culture.

For this issue, the artist has conceived this graphic narrative starting from a reflection on the concept of biodiversity, and a meditation on current states of uncertainty and fragmentation. Fusing image and text, she constructs a multilayered narrative that animates the interconnected nature of being.





THAT NIGHT IT SEEMED ~ A MOUNTAIN HAD DISAPPEARED FROM ITS STATION -- WALKED AWAY FROM THE HORIZON, ONCE AND FOR ALL. THAT NIGHT TIME UNFURLED ITSELF LIKE A PARACHUTE, EXTENDING FROM HER FINGERTIPS, FLUTTERING LIKE A TORN SAIL...







THE LOON'S HAUNTING CALL, ASHES IN THE OCEAN, THE RITES AND PASSAGES OF SPRING.

INSIDE THE LOOKING GLASS, A MURDER OF CROWS CALLS HER BY HER CHILDHOOD NAME:



WITH ROSES SPILLING OVER HER SHOULDER, RIDING A LONE GRAY WOLF

THOSE DAYS WERE LIKE RIVERS,-- LIKE RIBBONS OF SAND RUNNING THROUGH YOUR FINGERS

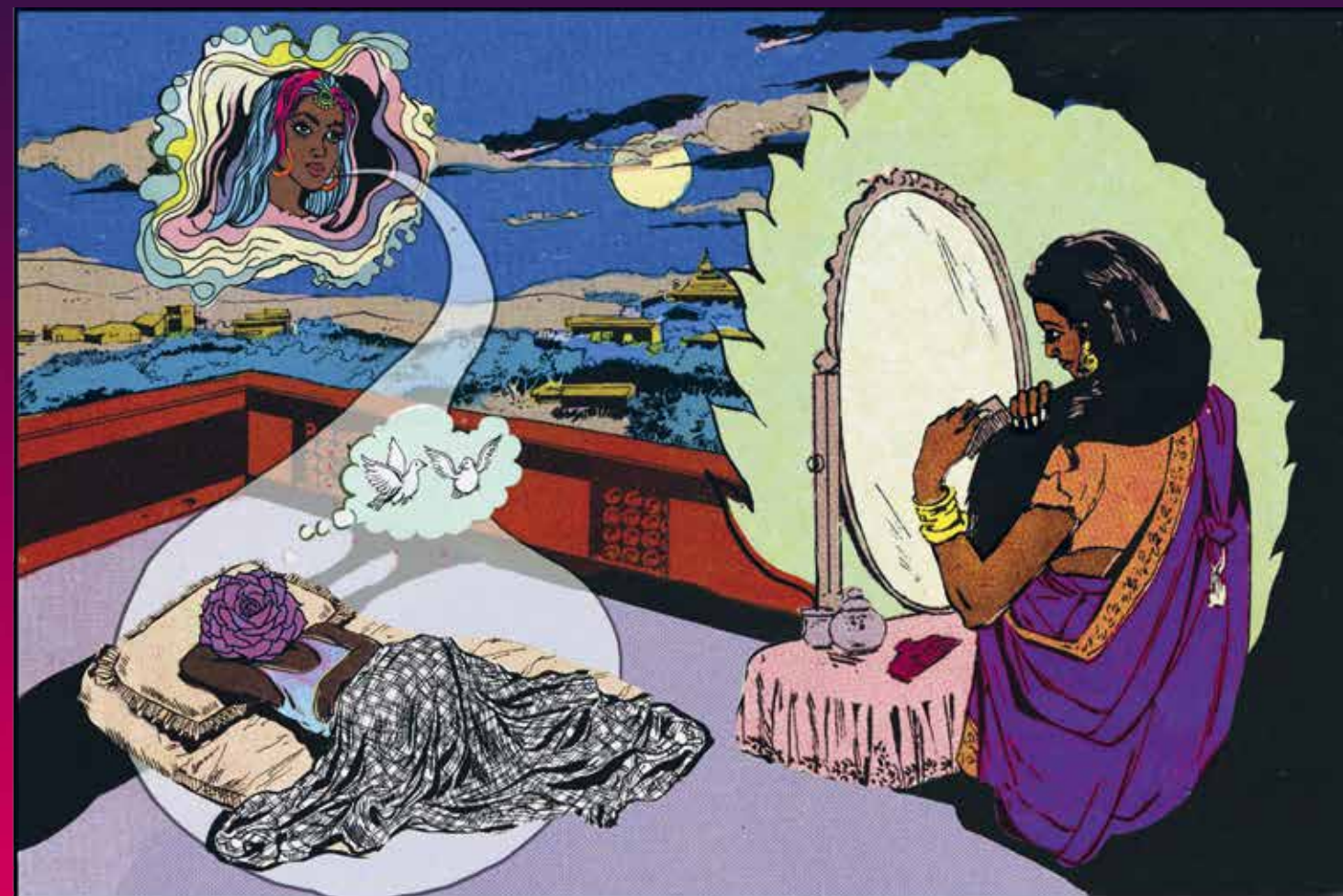
"WEB OF INFINTE SELVES"

WILL THERE EVER, WILL THERE EVER, WILL THERE EVER
BE AN AFTER...

IF I COULD SHOW YOU
MY VEINS, WOULD YOU TELL ME
STORIES ABOUT THE CONTINENTS
THEY LED INTO (CENTURIES AGO--?)
OR WRITE ME A POEM ABOUT
THE REMNANTS OF SCARS-- LIVING,
BENEATH PALM PRINTS, LINING
CAVE WALLS FOR 10,000 YEARS
OR MORE?



(SUICIDE LIKE A MARBLE, ROLLING
AROUND HER OCEAN'S FLOOR)



IN ANOTHER QUADRANT, INSTRUCTIONS ARE WHISPERED
FROM UP ABOVE: "WATCH THAT PIT IN YOUR STOMACH
TURN INTO A BLACK ROSE."



OH, CHITRA...

Postscript:

ON MOONLESS NIGHTS LIKE THIS, HER WORDS DRIFT INTO THE SOUNDPROOF ROOMS OF MY MIND. IN THE SPACE BETWEEN OUR HEARTBEATS, COULD YOU WHISPER BACK TO ME EVERYTHING SHE EVER TOLD US? {...OF HER BUTTERFLY WINGS, OF OUR VOLCANIC ASH.}



OUR LADY OF THE HOUR {OUR SUBJECT} IS TIME. SHE WAS: AN ABANDONED HOUSE DRAWN FROM MEMORY, SHAKING LOOSE THE CONTENTS OF MY INSIDES... INVISIBLE CONTINENTS AND IMPROBABLE FUTURES, PLUCKED FROM THE EDGES OF DAWN... THE HAND OF FATIMA ON ME, HER LIGHT & AMPUTATED TOUCH. TOOLS OF HER TRADE? A SPIDERWEB, A RAINBOW, AN EYE THAT CANNOT CRY...





Chitra Ganesh's current and upcoming solo exhibitions include: "A city will share her secrets if you know how to ask" at Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art from October 18 through June 2022; Sultana's Dream, Rochester Art Museum, Fall 2021; Hales Gallery, New York, November 2021; and Contemporary Calgary (forthcoming Fall 2022). Group exhibitions include: "Born into Flames: Feminist Futures Bronx Museum" through October 2021; the Honolulu Triennial (forthcoming January 2022); and "New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century," at Berkeley Art Museum through January 30, 2022.