




CHITRA GANESH


BROOKLYN, BOLLYWOOD, AND
THE RAINBOW PATH



Born in Brooklyn, NY, to immigrant parents, Chitra loved reading books and comics.


The comics brought stories to life in wonderful colors.

On summer vacations to India, she spent hours reading “Amar Chitra Katha” (Immortal Picture Stories), a comic series about Indian myths, history, and folktales. She loved the stories of gods and goddesses at work and play.



They resonated with the Greek myths and sci-fi TV shows that she also loved.

Chitra’s father was crazy about Bollywood, Indian movies that featured singing and dancing. Chitra became interested too. This was before VCRs and DVDs, so they would watch Bollywood movies together at a local theater in Queens!



Back in the 1980s, there was barely any representation of any Asian people in media.

Chitra's community had many creative people, but nobody was a professional artist, and there were very few Asian role models in the media at the time.

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Her family didn't believe it would be possible to earn a living as an artist. When she was younger and looking for answers, she found them in comics.

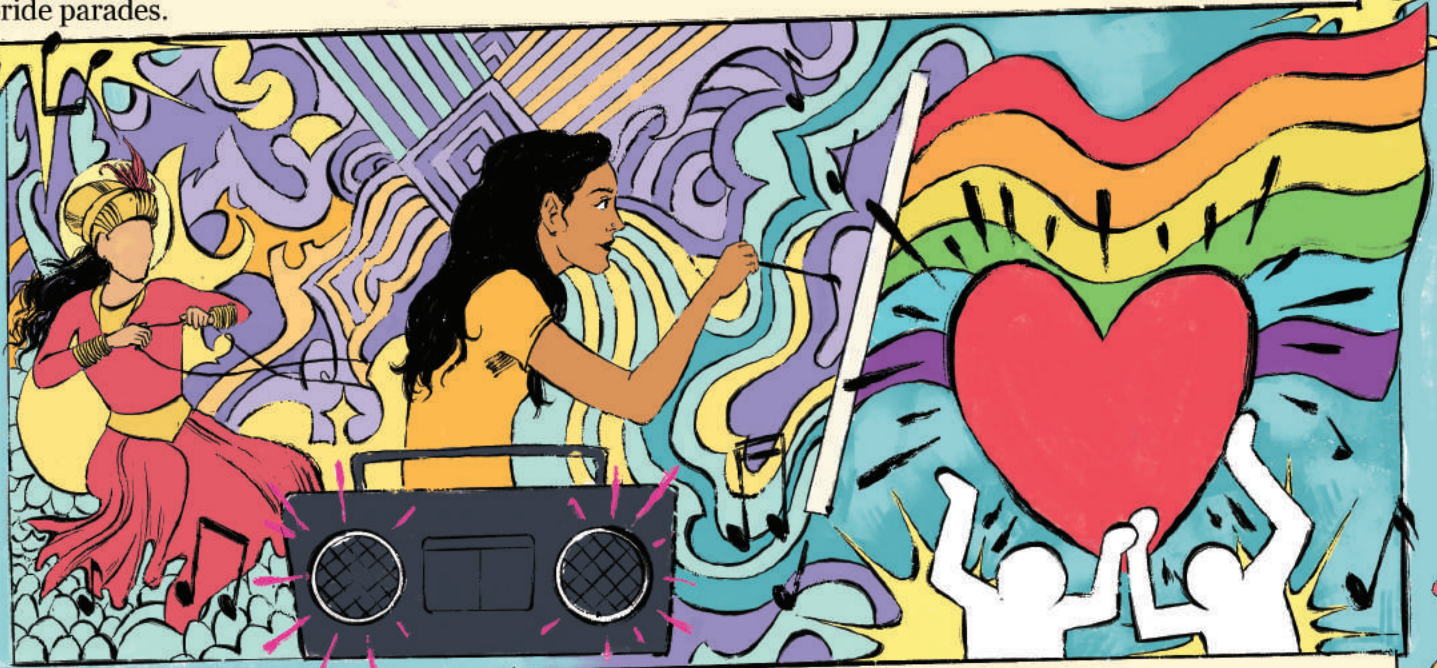
She studied at Brown University, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and Columbia University where she received her MFA in Visual Arts

When she was twenty-three, her mother died suddenly, making her understand how short life could be. She realized how important it was to pursue your dreams & live as your true, authentic self. It was then she decided to become an artist.

At the time, she was teaching at a public school in Washington Heights.



New York City in the 1980s and 1990s inspired her artwork. Mixing Brooklyn with Bollywood, her influences include hip-hop, house music, Amar Chitra Katha, street art murals, Keith Haring's graffiti subculture, and gay pride parades.



Connecting with people at home in NYC and in India is an important part of her work. She does this through mentoring and collaboration.



Her "Queer Power Coloring Book" brings together mythology, science fiction, and storytelling. It continues from her early love of comics, the stylization she developed by riffing on Amar Chitra Katha, sci-fi, and street music.

Now, Chitra's work questioning gender, sexuality, and power can be found in museums, galleries, and festivals around the world, and she's been commissioned to cover walls and windows from NY to India with her fabulous, futuristic visions.

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