

THE TIMES OF INDIA

LIFESTYLE

IAF diaries 2022 : Chitra Ganesh at Gallery Espace

April 26, 2022, 12:13 AM IST / Uma Nair in pLUMAge, Lifestyle, TOI

Renu Modi's Gallery Espace with 16 artists in its booth is one of the largest white cube spaces at the India Art Fair 2022. Amongst the suite of works the Brooklyn-based Chitra Ganesh's eclectic array of surrealist quirky creations spanning comics and reel and real life.

Past and the present

The suite of inkjet prints by Chitra Ganesh displayed here draw from the artistic vocabulary of 'The Scorpion Gesture', a set of animations that she exhibited at New York's Rubin Museum of Art in 2018. The animations were interventions in Rubin Museum's Himalayan art galleries which display its collection of thangkas, sculptures, tapestries, manuscripts and so on.



Uma Nair

Critic and Curator Uma Nair has been writing for the past 32 years on art and culture. She has written as critic for Times of India and Economic Times. She believes that art is ... [MORE](#)

Ganesh's prints combine the traditional imagery of bodhisattvas and mandalas with her line-drawings, watercolours and painting to create richly layered visual narratives that cite the contemporary visual vocabulary of comics and sci-fi, street art and neon lights to give viewers a chance to look

LIFESTYLE

NEWS / BLOGS / LIFESTYLE / IAF diaries 2022 : Chitra Ganesh at Gallery Espace

Astral Dancer makes us think of her deeper understanding of paintings, animations, prints, and installations. For years now represented by Gallery Espace in India, Ganesh works to challenge canonical representations of femininity, sexuality, and power in art. She takes her inspiration from a plethora of sources that range from popular Indian comics and old Bollywood movies to queer politics, Gargi Gupta of Gallery Espace states that Ganesh addresses the history of erasure.

**Portraying the feminine**

Metropolis is yet another masterpiece. Ganesh creates hybrid plots filled with reinterpretations, as she replaces original male heroes with women who engage in not so feminine but savage, garish acts, that offer new archetypes for portrayal of the feminine.

Her works Rainbow Body, Scorpion gesture and White Beryl all suggest a collaborative synthesis of art and technology to create works that are electrifying in tone and tenor.



History, myth fantasy

In a statement she says: "Some of the key ideas that shape my practice include an interest in creating a space to tell stories that haven't normally seen the light of day, oftentimes at the intersection of history, myth, fantasy and the everyday. There are a lot of different effects of bringing archetypal imagery and playing with the subject matter that take root in my work. Sometimes that happens through the actual iconography I create. In other cases, the archetypal figure functions as a kind of a container for a larger set of ideas that might be in the society and the zeitgeist in our moment."

In the contemporary art format, Ganesh's explorations of mythologies and narrative traditions bring important historical conversations forward. In nonlinear narratives and richly layered visual worlds, she subverts traditional storytelling to create women and queer centric narratives of the future. She draws out alternative depictions of sexuality and power from popular stories and histories, highlighting the accounts of female protagonists, who have often been subsumed or marginalized by plot lines that reproduce the contours of majoritarian power. Women and queer characters become the central figures, they shape their own futures. She has said in an interview that she encourages the viewer to see what was always there – what was once in the 'margins of a mythic history'—

Ganesh is popular in New York as well, her complex hybrid characters have appeared across various media. In the mural installation *Eyes of Time* (2014) for the Brooklyn Museum in New York, Ganesh reimagined Kali—the Hindu goddess of time, creation, and destruction—with a handless clock for a face. For New York's open-air exhibition *Art on the Grid* (2020), the artist similarly brought together symbols associated with rebirth—such as the phoenix, Mahishasura Mardini, and Birth of Venus—to create the digital illustration *Urgency* (2020).