

PRESS RELEASE

ARTIST CHITRA GANESH REIMAGINES HISTORICAL ARTWORKS IN THE RUBIN MUSEUM COLLECTION AND IS NAMED A 2018 “FUTURE FELLOW”

As her new animation works transform the Rubin Museum’s galleries, Ganesh will take up residency curating talk and film series this spring

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Interventions and animations by #ChitraGanesh make traditional artworks new in @RubinMuseum galleries. <http://rma.cm/2jg>



“Future fellow” #ChitraGanesh will curate talks, films, and works by emerging artists as part of her residency @RubinMuseum <http://rma.cm/2jg>

New York, NY (February 13, 2018) — Building on her longstanding investigation of mythological imagery and narrative, Brooklyn-based artist Chitra Ganesh has developed a multimedia exhibition across multiple galleries at the Rubin Museum in 2018. With “The Scorpion Gesture,” Ganesh has created a series of new large-scale animation works inspired by the Rubin Museum’s collection. The motion-activated artistic interventions are on view all year in the Rubin Museum’s permanent collection galleries as part of the Museum’s 2018 thematic exploration of “The Future.” Ganesh has also invited seven emerging artists to redefine the aesthetics of science fiction in “Face of the Future,” on view alongside her own new works on paper through November. Ganesh will also serve as a “Future Fellow” this spring, curating a series of talks and films that address the future from a variety of angles, including the feminine, mood, and science fiction.

“The Scorpion Gesture” features five short video animations that use the Tibetan Buddhist figures of Padmasambhava (known as the Second Buddha) and Maitreya (the Future Buddha) as points of departure. Each work integrates Ganesh’s original drawings with elements from paintings and sculptures in the Rubin’s collection. The works are motion-activated by visitors in the galleries, where they are projected amidst the traditional artworks on view. The title of the series refers to a mudra, or gesture, in Tibetan Buddhism that is said to have unlimited power and potential for transformation.

“Through her layered visual narratives, Chitra Ganesh creates a new archaeology of the traditional objects to which her works refer, translating the figures and narratives evident in the Rubin Museum’s collection in contemporary and futuristic languages,” said Beth Citron, the exhibition’s curator. “By combining the ideas and imagery in traditional artworks with her own visual language expressed in drawing and animation, she activates new layers of discovery that transform the galleries as if by magic.”

Select stills:



Photograph of animation in the gallery by Asya Danilova; Production still from Chitra Ganesh, “The Rainbow Body,” 2018, digital animation, courtesy of the artist

In addition to her exploration of the Rubin Museum’s art collection, Ganesh has also reimagined the visual languages of science fiction and fantasy in “Face of the Future,” which brings together her own new works on paper with posters created by seven emerging artists: Maia Cruz Palileo, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, Tammy Nguyen, Jagdeep Raina, Sahana Ramakrishnan, Anuj Shrestha, and Tuesday Smillie. The works refer to a group of important, influential films largely outside the Western canon.

Ganesh will take up residency at the Rubin Museum in May and June, curating a series of on-stage conversations that investigate a range of topics, including the future of behavior, the future of storytelling, and the future of the feminine. Guests and themes will be announced later this year, and a free public celebration will kick off her fellowship on May 4 from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. Ganesh has also selected a series of films that reflect pop fiction futuristic elements in her art, including “Barbarella,” “Metropolis,” and “Green Slime,” which will be among those screened at the Rubin on Friday evenings during her residency.

Ganesh’s exhibition and fellowship are part of the Rubin’s yearlong exploration of “The Future,” bringing together programs, exhibitions, and experiences that invites visitors to consider a future that isn’t fixed but fluid.

“Art experiences are a powerful tool for grappling with the issues of our time. From past to present, humans have been facing the future, vacillating between hope and anxiety,” said Jorrit Britschgi, the Museum’s executive director. “In 2018, the Rubin Museum will invite visitors to catch a glimpse of a different notion of the future and time.”

“Chitra Ganesh: The Scorpion Gesture” and “Chitra Ganesh: Face of the Future” are made possible by Rasika and Girish Reddy. The exhibition is curated by Beth Citron, the audio/visual design is by David Wilburn, and the design and installation are overseen by John Monaco, all of the Rubin Museum. Works in “The Scorpion Gesture” were developed with and animated by the STUDIO.

About Beth Citron

Beth Citron is the Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, at the Rubin Museum of Art. Her exhibitions for the Rubin Museum have included “Chitra Ganesh” (2018),

“Henri Cartier-Bresson: India in Full Frame” (2017), “Genesis Breyer P-Orridge: Try to Altar Everything” (2016), “Francesco Clemente: Inspired by India” (2014), “Witness at a Crossroads: Photographer Marc Riboud in Asia” (2014), and the three-part exhibition series “Modernist Art from India” (2011–13). She completed a Ph.D. in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania, and has taught in the Art History Department at New York University, from which she also earned a B.A. in Fine Arts.

About Chitra Ganesh

In her drawing-based practice, Chitra Ganesh brings to light narrative representations of femininity, sexuality, and power that are typically absent from canons of literature and art. Her wall installations, comics, charcoal drawings, and mixed-media works often take historical and mythic texts as inspiration and points of departure to complicate received ideas of iconic female forms. Her vocabulary pulls from surrealism, expressionism, Hindu and Buddhist iconography, and traditional South Asian pictorial forms, connecting these sources with contemporary mass-mediated visual languages.

About the Rubin Museum of Art

The Rubin Museum of Art is an arts oasis and cultural hub in New York City’s vibrant Chelsea neighborhood that inspires visitors to make powerful connections between contemporary life and the art and ideas of the Himalayas, India, and neighboring regions. With a diverse array of thought-provoking exhibitions and programs—including films, concerts, and on-stage conversations—the Rubin provides immersive experiences that encourage personal discoveries and spark new ways of seeing the world. Emphasizing cross-cultural connections, the Rubin is a space to contemplate the big questions that extend across history and span human cultures.

The Rubin Museum’s preeminent collection includes over 3,200 objects spanning more than 1,500 years to the present day. Included are works of art of great quality and depth from the Tibetan plateau, with examples from surrounding regions including Nepal, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Mongolia.

For further information and images, please contact:

Robin Carol

Senior Manager, Communications & Marketing

Rubin Museum of Art

212.620.5000 x213

rcarol@rubinmuseum.org

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