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RITHIKA MERCHANT



Rithika Merchant is a visual artist from Mumbai, India, where she was born in 1986. She received a BFA in Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design, New York. At the crossroads of the East and the West, Merchant's work reflects her journey as a global citizen. After growing up in Mumbai, she left to study in New York and graduated a Master in Fine Arts from Parsons in 2008, then pursued several residencies in Europe (Portugal, Greece, Romania) before settling in Barcelona, where she lived for more than a decade, to eventually go back to Mumbai in 2022, where she currently lives again. She now shares her time between India and Belgium.

Rithika Merchant explores the common thread that runs through different cultures and religions. Similar myths, stories and ideas are shared by cultures all around the world: her paintings on paper, sometimes folded, explore this reality while also featuring creatures and symbolism that are part of her personal visual vocabulary, including many references to birds. She creates a mosaic of myths, a syncretism of traditional narratives, which she confronts with contemporary political and environmental issues, such as migrations and the consequences of climate change. Nature actually plays a pivotal role in her work and is emphasised by the use of organic shapes and non saturated colours.

In her most recent work, Rithika Merchant proposes a holistic view of the universe: she examines why humanity needs to believe in and worship the forces beyond itself, and seeks to understand why we have inflicted so much

destruction on our planet. Far from seeing it as a fatality, she proposes an optimistic vision of our future, where humans are reconciled with the planet, in harmony with ancestral traditions, and where powerful women play a major role.

Between 2018 and 2020 Rithika Merchant collaborated with French fashion label Chloé on several collections, for which she received the Vogue India Young Achiever of the Year Award, at the 2018 Women of the Year Awards, and was named one of Vogue World magazine's 100 creative voices. She is also the winner of the Sovereign Asian Art Prize 2021 - Vogue Hong Kong Women's Art Prize, for her work «Saudade», and the DDessin Paris '21 Prize gave her the opportunity to carry out a month-long residency at the French Institute in Saint-Louis, Senegal, in 2022.

Her work is part of public collections such as the Chloé archives, the Palais Galliera, the Musée de la mode de la Ville de Paris, the Samdani Art Foundation, the Sarmaya Arts Foundation and the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, or private collections such as the De Bueil & Ract-Madoux collection (Paris) and the Aarti Lohia Collection (London).

Her work was the subject of a first monograph, *The Eye, The Sky, The Altar*, published in late 2022 by Galerie LJ and Tarq Mumbai, with a text by Fariha Róisín.

AWARDS

2021

Sovereign Asian Art Prize - Vogue Hong Kong Women's Prize
Prix Ddessin 21

2018

Vogue Women Of The Year 2018 - Vogue Young Achiever Of The Year
Vogue Magazine's VogueWorld 100 Creative Voices

RESIDENCES

2022

Institut Français - Villa Ndar, Saint-Louis, Senegal

2016

Arthouse Wolfsberg/Garana Garana

2012

Arthouse Wolfsberg/Garana Garana

2008

Convento São Francisco De Mertola Mertola

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Chloé Archives

Elisabeth and Hartwig Ochsenfeld, Arthouse Wolfsberg/Garana, Romania

Palais Galliera | Musée de la mode de la Ville de Paris, Paris

Sir H.N. Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai

School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Fashion Resource Centre)

Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Sarmaya Arts Foundation, Mumbai

Collection DBRM, Paris

Collection Aarti Lohia, London

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2023

Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka (Bangladesh) - 'Bonna' - Group show

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London - 'Terraformation' - Solo show

KIAF, Seoul - Represented by Galerie LJ

2022

Mining Mythology, Sarmaya Foundation, Mumbai - Group show

Festival of The Phoenix Sun, Galerie LJ, Paris, solo show

Asia Now, Paris - Represented by Galerie LJ

Kristin Hjellegjerde, Schloss Görne (Germany) - 'Uprising' - Group show

Art India, New Delhi - Represented by Tarq Mumbai

2021

CFHILL, Stockholm - Mentors - Curated by Sandra Weil, also with Olafur Eliasson, The Gee's Bend, Marie-Louise Eckman, Miki Krastman, Anne Samat and Barbara Kruger

Sovereign Asian Art Prize, Hong Kong - Finalists Exhibition

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlin - 'Rachel Garrard and Rithika Merchant' - Two-person show

DDESSIN art fair, Paris - Represented by Galerie LJ

Galerie Dys, Brussels - Metamorphosis - Two-person show with Benoît Huot

2020

Inherited Memory, Tarq, Mumbai, group show

2019

Mirror of the Mind, Galerie LJ, Paris, solo show

Osmosis, TARQ, Mumbai, group show (cur. Shaleen Wadhwana)

SPRING! A Group Show of Contemporary Drawing, Galerie LJ, Paris (with Howie Tsui and Jason Jägel), group show

Chloe Couture National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine, group show

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam/ The World Is One Family, Kolkata Centre For Creativity, Emami Art, Kolkata, group show

The Dot that went for a walk, The Royal Opera House, Mumbai, group show

2018

Breaking Barriers, Jehangir Art Gallery/Gallery Art & Soul, Mumbai, group show

We See You, We Hear You The Hospital Club Gallery, London. U.K. (Presented by Subject Matter)

Homo Faber / Fashion Inside and Out The Michelangelo Foundation, Venice, Italy (cur. Judith Clark), group show

Portal October Gallery, London, group show

Sensorium / The End Is Only The Beginning Sunaparanta, Goa Centre for the Arts, Goa India

India Art Fair (Presented by TARQ) New Delhi, group show

2015

Reliquaries: The Remembered Self, TARQ, Mumbai (with Suruchi Choksi), group show

2017

State of Art Mazda Space, Barcelone (Presented by Galeria Bien Cuadrado and Barcelone Young Gallery Weekend), group show

Where The Water Takes Us TARQ, Mumbai, solo show

Ancestral Home Galeria Bien Cuadrado, Barcelona (cur. Diana Di Nuzzo), solo show

This Burning Land Belongs To You Swiss Cottage Gallery, London (Presented by TARQ for Camden Kala, UK/India Year of Culture), group show

To talk to the worms and the stars The New Gallery, Calgary, Canada (cur. Natasha Chaykowski)

G/rove Latitude 28, New Delhi (cur. Bhavna Kakar and Adwait Singh), group show

Roots to Healing Northrup Gallery, Goldstein Museum of Design, Minneapolis, Minnesota (cur. Lisa Aston Philander), group show

2016

Hortus Deliciarum, Arthouse Wolfsberg/Garana, Garana, group show

Intersections, Galeria Combustion Espontanea, Madrid, solo show

Language of the Birds: Occult and Art, 80WSE Gallery, New York. U.S.A. (cur. Pam Grossman, group show)

2015

Hieroglyphica, Stephen Romano Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, group show

Magica Sexualis, Stephen Romano Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, group show

Not Man The Less, But Nature More Summerhall, Édimbourg (cur. Michela D'Acquisto & Holly Knox Yeoman), group show

Luna Tabulatorum, Stephen Romano Gallery, New York, solo show

Metro Curates Art Fair (presented by Stephen Romano Gallery), The Metropolitan Pavilion, New York, group show

2014

Diplomatic Art - Expozia Retrospectiva, Galeria Calpe Timisoara, group show

Abundantia Cornu Copiae, Stephen Romano Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, group show

Encyclopedia Of The Strange, Tiny Griffon Gallery, Nuremberg, solo show

Diplomatic Art, Helios Gallery, Timisoara, group show

Collectiva de Petit Format, Galeria Espai b, Barcelona, group show

2013

India Art Festival (presented by Gallery Art & Soul), Mumbai, group show

Mythography, Gallery Art & Soul, Mumbai, solo show

Crest of the Strawberry, Moon Gospel Flat Farm, Bolinas, Californie, group show

Of The Hand Madder, Moon Gallery, Singapour

2012

Mitología Comparada, Swab Art Fair (presented by Galeria Espai b), Barcelone, solo show

Xmas 12/ The Big Group Show Galleri Christoffer Egelund, Copenhagen, group show

O Fim, Espaço Santo Antonio, Rio de Janeiro, group show

Sobre El Paper, Galeria Espai b, Barcelone, group show

Tristesia - Paraphernalia - Memorabilia Fundatia, Interart Triade, Timisoara, group show

Tristesia - Paraphernalia - Memorabilia Arthouse Wolfsberg/Garana, Garana, group show

2011

Origin of Species, Gallery Art & Soul, Mumbai, solo show

Barcelone Showcase, Casa Batllo, Barcelona, group show

Collectiva Nadal, Galeria Espai b, Barcelona, group show

Exhibition Room, Who Galeria, Lisbon, group show

Kala Ghoda Arts Festival Mumbai, group show

Snowball, Articule Gallery, Montréal, Québec, group show

2010

De Sanguine, Guardia Sanframondi, Benevento, group show

New Mirror Illustration, Muuda, Porto, group show

2009

Worlds Within Words, Fabrica do Braço de Prata, Lisbonne, solo show

Conversations With Myself, Pois.Cafe, Lisbonne, solo show

Kala Ghoda Arts Festival Mumbai, group show

2008

Senior Citizens, Gallery MC, New York, group show

Collection of Dreams, Convento São Francisco De Mertola, Mertola, solo show

I'll show you mine, if you show me yours, Parsons

Fine Arts Gallery, New York, group show

2007

City Symphonies/Urban Muck Parsons Fine Arts Gallery, New York, group show

Mentor/Meteor Parsons, Fine Arts Gallery, New York, group show

2006

HISA Final Show, The Hellenic International Studies In The Arts; Paros, group show

2004

The Armature Project, Grand Central Station, New York, group show