



Living & Breathing Art

Emerging Indian Artists to Watch

The world is taking increasing notice of up-and-coming South Asian artists who are creating a buzz by producing some of the most innovative and adventuresome art around. Two recent exhibitions in New York City showcased 28 of these hottest emerging artists. Talented curators Jaishri Abichandani and Prerana Reddy teamed up to organize the show, *Fatal Love: South Asian American Art Now*, around the work of artists in North America.

The art, Reddy noted in an interview and in her catalogue essay about the show, reflects a multitude of creative and social engagements between artists and their diasporic environments. Some work was chosen to represent an exploration of first- and second-generation immigrant experiences - the passionate, exhilarating, and at times dislocating or even treacherous experience of cultural transition. Artists reflect on the complicated nature of performing immigrant identity, balancing ethical and religious traditions, experimenting with historical and perceived gender roles and identities, and the process of making America their home.

Other works in *Fatal Love* take personal narratives as a starting point from which to confront colonial legacies and national mythologies. While the experience of cultural displacement retains relevance in South Asian American art practice, diaspora artists are again considering the ways in which they are inscribed by the twin cages of heritage and history, and through their art-making they are creating openings for the unseemly and the hybrid.



Here are 13 of our favorite Fatal Love artists:

Dhruvi Acharya

Dhruvi Acharya applies personal, ancient and pop-culture symbols and metaphors to create narratives that explore concepts of speech and communication, solitude and loneliness, and their effects on one's psyche. Her technique involves layering opaque and translucent paint, matte and gloss media, to create a uniform surface that allows the paint to visually recede to various levels. Her influences include Indian miniature paintings and contemporary comic books, as well as Japanese Superflat paintings..

Acharya is a native of Mumbai, India and moved to the US in 1995. She received her MFA in painting from the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore, and studied Applied Arts at the Sophia Polytechnic College in Mumbai. This young painter has exhibited in juried shows with panelists from the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Hirshhorn Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. She currently divides her time between New York and Mumbai.

Rina Banerjee

Rina Banerjee's mixed media sculptural installation, *With tinsel and teeth: "get back, get back, get back to where you once belonged"* (2005) offers a spectacle of luxury teeming with objects redolent of colonial intrigue: a chandelier and foyer table are juxtaposed with a crocodile head and dried fish. These elements mark a ritual entry into the retail stores, restaurants, spas, nail salons and ethnic restaurants of the West, demonstrating vast diasporized market societies' eagerness to taste the faraway. Her two videos are reflections of violent pendulum swings between heritage and nationalist movements that threaten to cut out what is not rigid and tidy, the different and abject.

Banerjee received her MFA in painting and printmaking at the School of Art at Yale University. She is an NYFA advisor and has recently exhibited at MASS MoCA by commission, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Phillip Morris 2002, and the Whitney Biennial 2000. Her work can be seen in several academic texts including: *20th Century American Art*; *Art Practice as Research: Studio Inquiry in Visual Arts*; and *The Color of Rape* by Sujata Moorti.

Chitra Ganesh

Chitra Ganesh explores how memory and its repression shape moments of personal and social crisis. Her original wall drawing and her two performative photographic pieces integrate personal and post-colonial narratives, challenging dominant representations of post-colonialism. Ganesh's source materials include Greek and Hindu mythology, 19th-century portraiture, Bollywood posters, comic books, and mainstream media. She uses collage, assemblage, and digital manipulation to layer disparate images and materials.

Ganesh was born and raised in Brooklyn and Queens, and currently lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. She received her MFA from Columbia University in 2002, and has received awards including residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Henry Street Settlement, Abrons Arts Center, and a College Art Association Professional Development Fellowship. In 2004, Ganesh was selected for Residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, The Center for Book Arts and The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Program. In 2003, Ganesh's work was featured in *Velvetpark Magazine* as an up-and-coming artist and named as one of *OUT magazine's* top 100 people of the year.



Hot Air, 2002 Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 inches; Dhruvi Acharya



When scenes travel...bubble, bubble, 2004 Video; Rina Banerjee



Awakening, 2003, Digital C-print, 15 x 19 inches; Chitra Ganesh