

CHITRA GANESH

Age 33

Hometown Brooklyn, New York

Education BA, Brown University, Rhode Island (art-semiotics and comparative literature); MFA, Columbia University, New York (visual arts)

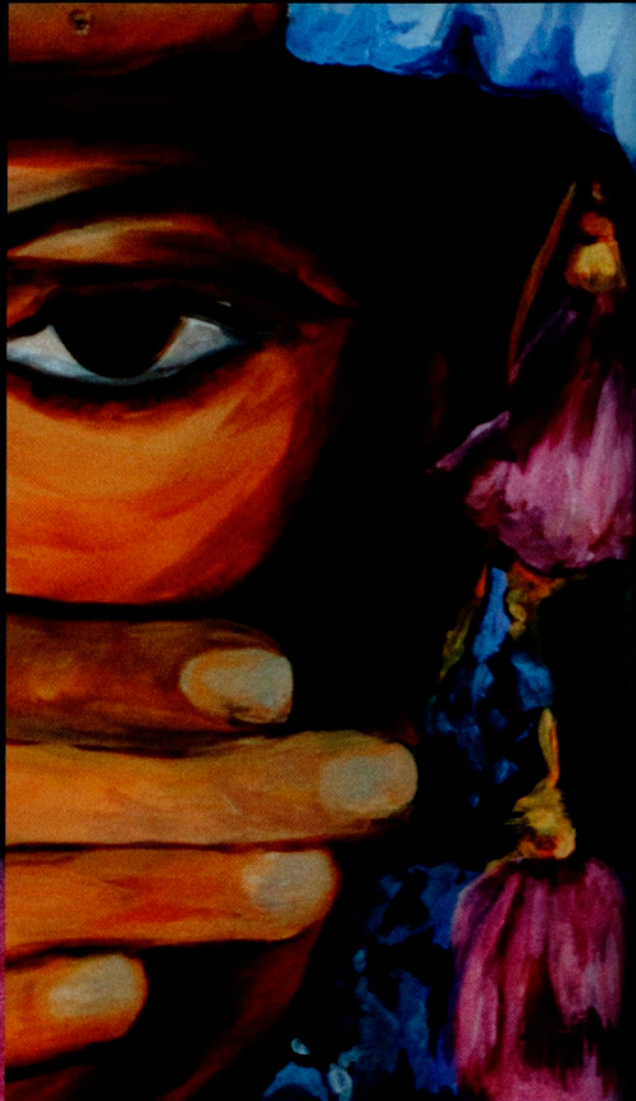
Medium Installation, photography, painting, drawing

Chitra Ganesh is sprawled on snow, a trail of blood around her, a breastplate covering her chest, a sceptre under her arm, her hand on a shield. Her full lips are parted, spilling red life.

This evocative image of a fallen queen, majestic even in death, is Ganesh's rendition of the Rani of Jhansi, the 19th-century monarch. Ganesh, who portrayed the queen in the photograph, is one of the challenging, connotative artists emerging from the South Asian American diaspora. "I enjoy stepping into the middle of stories," she says. "I navigate my own way and let the audience make their own connections."

Though a born-and-bred New Yorker, Ganesh heavily uses her Indian heritage in her work. "India never stops. People decorate their taxis, their doorsteps. It's fantastic." Partly inspired by Hindu mythology, her work is full of characters satisfied in a world of gore and gauche. Composed through a variety of media—sculpture, photography, installations and comic book art with stream-of-consciousness text—Ganesh's themes impart her interest in reconsidering the familiar.

"I use forms that compel people to think about different concepts," she says. "We as people have a need to answer the questions of who we are, where we came from and why we are here." SAHARAKHAN



"Ganesh's work is inspired by the *Amar Chitra Katha* series of the '70s, which distilled historical and religious texts into a comic-book format for young readers. With incisive wit and vision, Ganesh takes these familiar images and enhances them with erotic, graphic and political messages, forcing viewers to question traditional belief systems and conventions of representation."

Amin Jaffer, International Director of Asian Art, Christie's

