

## Artist Statement

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I come from the survivors of the apocalypse. Stolen from their homes, packed like human cargo into the bellies of ships, rebirthed on new continents, my foremothers gathered the detritus of their trauma and wove together new futures for survival and liberation. I continue their labor – creating forms and experiences that treat the past, present, and future as malleable and permeable. As the child of diaspora, material roots me to history and identity. My first art teacher was my grandmother, who taught me to sew, embroider, and knit, to create objects that held stories, that lived intimately with our family, spread out over two continents. Later, in formal art classes, I encountered clay, plaster, and metals, which offered a connection to the earth and the transformative possibilities of the elements. When I make an object, video, installation, or performance, I am making an intervention in the fabric of reality, inhabiting the liminal space between what is and what could be. Through my practice, I imagine a new timeline that foregrounds the histories of those on the margins, that heals generational trauma and gestures towards a future after the end of white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism.

My own family history and personal experiences are the basis for a symbolic and material language that moves into broader conversations around global issues of migration, cultural memory, and liberation. I am a mixed-race woman of color – my mother is from Guyana with South Asian, Chinese, and African heritage and my biological father (largely absent from my life) is from Belgium. My mother grew up on a rice farm, the oldest of twelve children, descended from enslaved Africans and Asian indentured laborers brought by the British to Guyana to work on sugar cane plantations. Pursing a career as an agricultural economist, she migrated to Canada and then the United States. I have lived in Los Angeles, Chicago, suburban Virginia, and a small town in Iowa. These lineages and experiences produce my practice, which weaves together disparate histories, perspectives, and identities, revealing collisions and connections across time and space.

My ANTI/body series embodies a radical abundance, a breaking open of Western aesthetics, a reckoning of everything lost and found. The assemblages incorporate sculptural objects referencing classical forms, breaking them open to reveal what was hidden beneath the literal whitewashing of history. They are the ANTI/body, the natural mechanism that fights the disease of oppression from within, the other side of form, the other side of structure, the cyborg future. I utilize non-traditional materials associated with feminized craft practices and religious ceremonies to create intimate forms of fantastical, hybrid beings. The colors are bold, an explosion of limbs, cellular forms – with references to bodies that are at once human, plant, and fungi.

In my performances I conjure contemporary Hindu goddesses who channel the fury, grace, and vulnerability of what it means to exist in a feminine body in this time and place, employing everything from rituals to memes to get their message out. *Aaji*, a silent persona who wears a white veiled headdress of steel and patterned textiles, represents the essence of my women ancestors, those who survived slavery and indentured labor, kidnapping and violence, whose stories live in my body even as they are permeated by lacunae, by gaps in the texts of their lives. Lakshmi is my primary performance persona – the goddess of wealth,

abundance, and love, she is both a mirror through which the dominant hegemonic US culture views itself and a hammer of its dismantling. She welcomes and upholds marginalized voices while speaking hard truths to those who would sustain oppression. She has read poetry on a street corner on Hollywood Boulevard through a megaphone and visited the Women's March to gather imaginations of a future where all women are free.

In *#NEWGLOBALMTRIARCHY Poetry and Performance Circle*, I work to create spaces for women/queer/trans/non-binary creatives of color to imagine another world into existence. I invite them to express their work in its purest, most complex forms, to create a space for ritual, for healing, and for truth telling. The relationship to the audience is often intimate, involving participatory art and poetry, performances that incorporate breathwork and meditation, as well as musical ritual transformations and dance as embodied cultural reclamation. The project is at its core about building community and networks, about bringing womxn of color together to create, to be inspired by one another, and to share their brilliance with the world. The event is hosted by my performance persona, the Goddess Lakshmi.

More recently, I have been employing sacred geometry and folk arts in my practice. My *Lunar Mandala* sculpture references rangoli, a traditional craft of South Asian women—ephemeral designs made from colored sand, flour, or rice. I have also been utilizing the mandorla, a shape representing the union of opposites that exists in both Western and Eastern religious iconography. *Demerara Mandorla* is a sacred icon of my mother's place of birth and the resting place of my maternal grandparents, each element referencing the material of our family farm in Guyana specifically and the lived environments of the Global South broadly.