

# Rina Banerjee





Rina Banerjee

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## By Wangechi Mutu

The cowry shelled dome home inked pink inside and outwards, mints a certain kind of currency, a tale about Rina the very, maker of a broken captivity in her ever-changing nativity. Here's the quintessential born-again, mourn-again type of objectifier. She slays in her persnickety persistent winner's theatre!

Her poems' pith is made of objectionable objects. These pleasure-treasures wrapped in that awful awesome homage to culturally sexed bondage. Yet her progeny of ideas are funnily un-shackled. Still like a melanin deprived stubborn, sun burnt, ghost, these fables and miscommunication that have plagued us all, rise (and then thanks to her shrink) with their very little protection from long-term truth and light exposure. Resulting, is a germ-covered fetish-ed and famished colonially derived glitch ridden mysteriously well built empire of dreams mounted on a clean matt white gallery wall. I like blind elephants stomping till no grass is left under. Banerjee made-things are this way; guilt-free creatures that don't know what they squash below their massive padded tree trunked footsie dance of unfathomably messy grace.

I very much like this stubborn un-stealing of the scales and the re-making of rank and scrubbing of stank and un-shining those academic mines, filled with blood stained, self coined mis-stories. Myths of ownership should be carefully watched with one eye always open even when sleep threatens.

Those that map us, usually trap us. Imagine, the other half of the world from right here? Wait! What half are you on? Say for example we stitched together a bewitching social contract that proposes the slightly slutty suspicious theory that insists that we believe in that constant redrawing of the outlandish outlines of our world and our ownerships. I dare to venture that we all know by now no One was really exploring it was more a perpetual preoccupation with escape. No One was ever really discovered that hadn't already found them-selves. Them, those, you

called 'other' then, now, and onwards, they were never outside of or over there or away from or groundless or innocent or untouched or needing to be retouched or rescued or cured or skewered, or saved or shaved. Before that careful demarcation of irresponsible, national geographical, theory and those big notorious borders, there were already ready real names and places and spirits and cosmologies and languages and disciplines and turmoil and clean soil and doctors and shamans and cesareans and humanitarians and amputations and abortions.

The plan worked and unraveled centuries of life and lore and Sanskrit-ed manuscript-ed ancient records of existence. Now here we are at the verge of a new Banerjee-ick breakdown, with more questions left to ask than the previous ones unanswered. What exactly am I to be paid and how do you know, you know my game? How about we appoint a point person poet turned curator turned cultural diplomat par excellence to do some of the unavoidable trans-Atlantic translation and to unravel these centuries of knotted gnarly letters.

The ritual of entering a room with a mystical Rina experience is always fraught with twisted well-cooked trance and trepidation. The possibility that you might get aroused is almost guaranteed – if you're freaky like that! Otherwise the intellectual and mental recoil and warmth all happens deep inside the chore of your most ancient not bloody lizard brain! (What condescending fuckery to compare ourselves to animals that have survived so much longer on this planet than our perpetually destructive 'sophisticated' Adam-antly self destructive monkey mass). Enter at your own risque. Be ready for other Queens that she's been visiting and sharing teas with, the likes of Kiki the Smith, Alison the Czar, Louise the Bourgeois, Annette the Mesenger, Kara the Walker, Monah the toum, Marisa the Merz, Sara the Zee, Yoko the Ono, Francesco the Clementine, Georgia the key and eye the Wangechi Mutu.

[...] if the apexes of many identical arches were to meet at a point in the center, a vault would be created that is like the heavens; this then we prefer to call the perfectly spherical.<sup>1</sup>

# When the Perfectly Spherical was Nearly Impossible: Rina Banerjee's Sculptural Dome Motifs

## Courtney J. Martin

I.

First shown at MASS MoCA in 2003, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... to the Palace of Love* (2003) has become one of Rina Banerjee's most well-known sculptures, if not the work that characterizes the remarkable range of her practice. It is a scale model of the World Heritage site and mausoleum, the Taj Mahal. The sculpture is one of a series, along with *The Lure of Place* (2006) that mines the fantastical realism of the architectural wonder as a kind of locus for the aesthetic conversation of the tomb, shrine and tourist vehicle. In both of Banerjee's works, the national symbol recuperates its awe inspiring qualities when brought into the realm of sculpture. Both the sculptural installations feature prominent domes that signal the Taj Mahal and her demarcate her practice within the subgenre of architectonic sculpture.

II.

Leon Battista Alberti's mid-fifteenth century treatise on architecture, *De Re Aedificatoria* (*On the Art of Building* in ten books), is singular in its treatment of architecture as equal parts theoretical and practical. If the (translated) prose is lofty in some passages, it is also straight-forward and informative in others. Such is the case of his description of the 'perfectly spherical' in 'Construction', the third book, or chapter in his tome, wherein the 'perfectly spherical' is as celestial as much as it is an undisputable fact, as noted in the following:

These are the various types of vaulting: the barrel, the cambered, and the perfectly spherical.<sup>2</sup>



Selfie by Rina Banerjee, spring 2015

Alberti's 'perfectly spherical' vault described what we commonly call the dome. Domes would have been a regular feature of the architecture of his time, including ancient examples, such as the Pantheon in Rome (built 27 BC - 14 AD, rebuilt circa 126 AD) or the post-Byzantine style of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (completed 691 CE). The former might have been a regular site for him since he lived much of his adult life in the eternal city, but it is likely that his knowledge

of the latter would have been limited to textual sources. Closer to home, the dome atop the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence was completed in 1436 by his near-contemporary Filippo Brunelleschi before Alberti embarked on his architecture books.

Alberti's text is notable also for its modernity as a presentation of theory and practice. It is a working manifesto for what would become the profession of the architect, distinct from that of the artisan, the builder, the scientist or the philosopher; drawing on each discipline is another example of his modernity. Even as an early modern, Alberti clearly fits into what art historian and critic Geeta Kapur theorizes as the modern,

modernity is a way of relating the material and cultural worlds in a period of unprecedented change that we call the process of modernization. It is also an ontological quest with its particular forms of reflexivity, its acts of struggle.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps one of the best architectural examples of the meeting of the early modern and the modern is The Taj Mahal in Agra, India. Commissioned in 1632 as a dual act of love and grief by the Mughal emperor, Shâh Jahân, the tomb complex was partially complete by 1643, before being fully realized in 1653. In time, it has become an international inspiration for architects, novelists, poets, tourists and nearly every known class of creative entrepreneur. Banerjee's interest in the building is by no means unique; the Taj Mahal is undeniably visually striking and viscerally evocative. Its experiential facts are reinforced by the structural dominance of the large dome that sits atop the central building as the point of symmetry for the rest of the complex's architectural and decorative features. The singularity of the dome within the repeated elements of the rest of building signify its import and, in the manner of Kapur's definition of modernity, point to its denotive reflexivity as the locus of the monumental architectural program and its attendant love and loss.

### III.

Trained as a sculptor, Banerjee works in a variety of materials and has a vast skill base. Many of her works are the occasions for learning new processes

or experimenting in previously unexplored studio practices. In 2004, for example, she re-trained in film and video-making to complete her first films, *Coconut Oil* (2004, RT 5:00) and *When Scenes Travel... Bubble, Bubble* (2004, RT 4:52). Later, she allowed her prolific private drawing practice to become public when she began working on a series of mid-scale drawings and collaged works on paper. Recently she has turned to painting in a series of acrylic and ink compositions. Despite the diversity of her practice, sculpture has been a mainstay of her material and technical development. In those films, for example, Banerjee layered multiple images in a manner that was reminiscent of her sculpture from the late 1990s that featured stacked and balanced objects. The drawings and paintings share similar colour palettes with her sculpture and installation, most notably the piercing pink shade that she has long used as an atmospheric hue in her structures. Compositinally, she under paints with pink, giving the entire work a kind of warm glow, and then uses it to outline both representational and abstract details, such as hair and clothing or the amorphous shapes that appear throughout.

In other two-dimensional works (some made on hand-made paper or Mylar), Banerjee references the sculptural with the addition of glass beads, built-up dots of acrylic paint and layers of gold leaf that add proportion to the contours of her forms. This is perhaps no more true than in her entry into the 2000 Whitney Biennial, *Infectious Migrations* (1999) – a wall relief composed of Silly Putty, plastic tubes, fabric, netting and a set of found architectural renderings that expand up the wall to reveal a figure.<sup>4</sup> In all, Banerjee's attention to space and depth is foregrounded.

Banerjee's sculpture can be divided into a few distinct types: stabiles, free-standing constructions and the more architectonic installations. The stabiles are compositions of hard and soft material that are, through visible armature, suspended from the ceiling or affixed to the wall. There is often a deep shadow cast (on the wall and on the floor) by this method of display that visually suggests an entrance into and occupation of space that is greater than the surface area of the object. Her inclusion in the Whitney Biennale identified her with a kind of millennial



Armory Art Fair, New York, 2011



Studio of Rina Banerjee in Chelsea, 2011



Selfie by Rina Banerjee, Rome, 2010

sculptural practice, one in which the boundaries between traditional sculpture and installation were blurred. Thus, the free-standing constructions might be further subdivided into two categories: large and small. In tandem with the blurring, there was also a re-defining of existing art concepts, like the ready-made. Marcel Duchamp's term for the isolation of an everyday item for the, eventual, reevaluation of said item into an art object, is best seen in his practice in which the item-to-object transfer brought urinals, bicycle wheels, shovels and other pieces of the commonplace into art and art history.

For Banerjee's practice, ready-mades are those notional items that form the matter of her sculptures. The umbrellas, vintage saris, dolls, cowrie shells, (plastic and animal) horns, brass and glass beads, quills, (real and faux) feathers, porcelain, gourds, fans, antique furniture and other pieces of tat and treasure are her material and medium. That some of her materials are notions (beads, buttons, pins, etc.), their display is hardly notional. These works take up space on the wall and on the floor, requiring a kind of full immersion from viewers who have to watch where they step, move with caution and, sometimes, duck down to avoid a freely hanging appendage.

Rendered in vast quantities, these constructions seem to be a part of a larger discourse, one that many have linked to post-colonial theory, due to the colonial-era or Victoriana associations of these objects. The mere abundance of these items and the method of their construction as massing – whether in the form of piling, scattering, spreading or stacking – adds to their near-monumental scale. In more recent sculptures – the baby-doll headed, elephant-bodied, *Explores not fortune tellers...* (2014) and the be-spiked and quill-fingered, *Jack Fruit Johnny she was a diasporic Devi changed her name to honey changed her faith to sunny, changed this sex to something funny, changed her city to New York City – all for reason to be far far away from misery and war for money* (2015) are but two examples – Banerjee has moved to smaller, more contained compositions. These objects are made from the same items, but they tend to be monolithic reductions of the larger constructions, without the spreading smaller pieces or the abundant installation gestures.

If these quotations of the larger works function independently, they do so as if they are totemic items removed from a larger whole. This larger whole might best be understood as her interest in the manifestations of late modernity wherein the accumulation of new goods was part and parcel of a coercive economy that was completely reliant upon unpaid, underpaid and under-aged labour.

While few in number, Banerjee's architectonic installations have become the most representative aspect of her practice. Completed within a few years of each other, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...To the Palace of Love* (2003) and *The Lure of Place* (2006) consist of a central sculpture, supplemented by additional objects contained within them. Both reference the Taj Mahal, specifically, and, in doing so, assume the discourse of Persianate, funerary architecture as well as contemporary cultural tourism. What is often overlooked about each, however, is that at their core, lies a simple, hemispheric shape. This shape is the dome.

#### IV.

Completed in 2003, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... To the Palace of Love* is often referred to as the 'pink Taj' due to the vibrancy of Banerjee's signature colour that fills in the negative spaces of the steel and copper armature. This large-scale construction is not quite a model of the Taj Mahal, but more of a quotation, like the details taken from her installations and made into standalone objects. *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* is a formal allusion to the Taj Mahal, but in title and presentation it harnesses other relationships. For one, Banerjee's pink has the easy associations of flora (the so-called 'pinks' from the *Dianthus* genus) in addition to confections and femininity. Banerjee's pink picks up on the hue's meaningful art historical connotations as a Renaissance Christological referent. The colour of the Christ child's garments in notable Trecento painting, such as Giotto's *Ognissanti Madonna* (1306–10) or Duccio's *Maestà* (1308), is often pink. The infant's pink clothing may have been employed to signify his life progression toward the passion, which can be visualized by deep purple tones. This pink is especially notable when played off the blue gowns in which Mary, his mother, is frequently

painted. For a sculptor, like Banerjee, to delve into the painting lexicon, she is jumping into a new version of the old game of the *Paragone* – the Renaissance feats of strength waged between painting and sculpture.

Generationally, pink might also be a colour that Banerjee adopted as an outgrowth of her own feminism. From the late 1960s, American feminists used pink as a term to describe the, negative or positive, presence of women. A pink ghetto, for example, is a euphemistic description of the abundance of and seeming confinement of women in certain occupations. So Banerjee's own transition from science to art might be marked as a measure of personal choice, rather than one of gender relegation.

It is notable that her time at Yale University's art school coincided with that of feminist artist Sheila Levant de Bretteville's tenure as director of the school's Graphic Design program. A founder of the Feminist Studio Workshop in 1973, Levant de Bretteville's poster, *Pink* (1973) has frequently been cited as one of the *urfeminist* art objects to visually unite femininity, feminism, waged labour and gendered output within the textual aesthetic of conceptual art. Alongside other artistic reclamations of women's stereotypes – Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973–79) or Howardena Pindell's, *Free, White and 21* (1980) – Levant de Bretteville's rejection and renewal of the colour, and its gendered associations, set the stage for a generation of women to critically engage with it. It is not, then, by accident that Banerjee's pink is a robust hue, more of a blushing crimson, warmer than hot pink and burned through with more intensity than any of the disdained pale pinks. If the suggestively pithy title is an oblique reference to the building's inspiration – Shâh Jahân's muse and wife, Arjumand Bânu Begum (better known as Mumtâz Mahal) – it doubles as a statement of Banerjee's agency and self-possession to will herself into ecstasy by erecting her own palace complex.<sup>5</sup>

The relationship of Banerjee's deep pink to the structure of *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* is more than just chance or accident. As a trained scientist, Banerjee has a keen sense of scale, proportion and structure, not mention her knowledge of the



*Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... To the Palace of Love*, curated by Laure Steward, MASS MoCA in North Adams MA, 2003



Mahabalipuram, granite temple in Tamil Nadu, India

chemical compounds of materials. The deep pink plastic that serves as the skin of the model building is entirely pink, despite the fact that the referent (the Taj Mahal) is not only white marble, but also heavily decorated with a lotus, an ornate finial and bands of consecutive patterns demarcating the base of the dome from the body of the building. In contrast, Banerjee's onion-shaped dome is pink allover, indicative of a programmatic structural democracy. This full colour assembly suggests that no one element is more important than another, despite the tendency in architecture, to designate hierarchies to individual parts.

There is also kind of egalitarianism that pervades the space. Though Banerjee is rarely connected to minimalism or the spare examples of conceptual art, her use of the dome is geometric in nature. If the circle is an ideal form, the dome can be understood as a raised, three-dimensional circle. The area beneath the sculpture's dome is just large enough for viewers to enter, but it is not so large that it competes with the built environment in which it is held. The structure, and each of the objects contained inside of it, is suspended from the ceiling and appears to be floating, which further adds to its ability to be in harmony with its space. While responsive to site, the installation is not strictly site-specific and has been re-installed on several occasions since its completion.<sup>6</sup>

In the space of a few years, Banerjee returned to the dome, finial, chattris and spires of *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* for the construction of *The Lure of Place* (2006). While similar in stature and architectonic intent, the later sculpture is closer to an open plan interior than its predecessor. Created for the 2006 Tsumari-Echigo Exhibition 3rd Triennial in Japan, it was sited in a former primary school. Due to the occasion of the triennial it was also necessarily specific and temporary in way that the earlier version was not. Instead of pink plastic, steel and copper, she constructed *The Lure of Place* from a matte green fabric and bamboo stalks. In its interior, Banerjee installed a hanging sculptural assembly of upturned school chairs, coloured plastic tubes, lights and several, small globes. The chandelier-esque construction is a light source for the external structure and its internal sculptural elements. The interplay between the living and the non-living elements and the

illuminated interior and the unembellished green exterior skin diminished the structure's ready reference to the Taj Mahal, despite the presence of the large, central dome.

If in *The Lure of Place* Banerjee moves away from the association of the Taj Mahal (and with it the facile biographical connections to Indian art and architecture), she gravitates toward the kind of temporary, quasi-architecture of world's fairs and universal expositions that typified the presentation of colonial discourses on race and class. In the manner of the national pavilion, Banerjee represents both the former function (the school chairs and miniature globes) of the site within its location: Japan by way of the bamboo, a native plant. The use of the bamboo as a national product ties into the ways that the presentation of culture and goods were intermingled within these exhibitions. Though these structures were often temporary, they presented a version of a place and its goods that left lasting perceptions of that place, hence the later acts of permanence that are also associated with exposition culture, such as the rebuilding of the Crystal Palace, following the 1851 Great Exhibition in London or the international scramble to secure land, build properties and declare national presence by foreign entities in Venice following the first Venice Biennale in 1895. The expositions were the 'acts of struggle' on which modernity was pushed and pulled as commerce moved from the local to the global.

As a temporary structure, *The Lure of Place* is a pavilion in which its status as art inverts its ability to represent *only* as an object.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the animals, vegetables, appliances and humans put on show in 19<sup>th</sup> century expositions, *The Lure of Place* could not be objectified because it is already both subject (of art) and (art) object. Some aspect of this is achieved by the dome's quotation of the Taj Mahal, an object that is often isolated from the discourse of national displays, despite the complicated history of Muslim rule in India.

#### V.

To return to the issue of the dome, since the execution of *The Lure of Place* in 2006, domes have become a recurrent motif in a number of her other works.<sup>8</sup> *The World as Burnt Fruit—When Empires*



*The Lure of Place*, Echigo Tsumari Triennale, 2011

*Feuded for Populations and Plantations, Buried in Colonial and Ancient Currency a Gharial Appeared from an Inky Melon – Hot with Blossom Sprang Forth to Swallow the World not yet Whole as Burnt Fruit* (2009) and *I'll Get You My Pretty!* (2009) are, perhaps, the most visible examples of domes because they lack a building from which to arch themselves. In the latter, the structure is turned on its side as if unleashed from the building of which it was once a part and set free to occupy its own space. Fans, pink feathers and other objects are stuffed inside the once hollow sphere from which an alligator head – the titular *Gharial* – emerges with a small globe clenched in his teeth.<sup>9</sup> *The World as Burnt Fruit...* dome is like those other object details seemingly released from larger installations and made to stand alone as a discreet sculpture. In this case, its former site is only figurative as it is not the fallen dome from either *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...*, *The Lure of Place* or another Taj Mahal model. Alternately one might think of this dome in relation to *arte povera* – specifically Mario Merz's 'igloos' and their uncritical embrace of an imagined prehistoric or indigenous exotic – in which architecture enters the everyday through the everyday object.

Where *The World as Burnt Fruit* suggests a vigorous rolling motion from its over-turned side and toothy alligator, *I'll Get You My Pretty!* is less animated and more contemplative. Here the net-hewn dome is lit from within and hung over a group of items assembled on the floor, including a cow skull, toy camels and glass vials all loosely grouped within an array of cowrie shells amidst sand. The shells resting in and on the sand resemble a sea bed or continental views of a topographic map. Overhead the dome lights the floor-based installation in a manner that recalls the religious, rather than the secular. Within the dome's light, the gathered objects appear as ex votos for an unnamed deity or the diorama of a dystopian 'orientalist' oasis. This dome, perhaps more so than any other in her practice, mines the celestial aspect of domes that drew Alberti towards his understanding of the harmony of the 'perfectly spherical'. When Banerjee traded her hard science career for art, she retained some aspects of the soft science of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wherein intrusive surveillance, neurotic collecting and graphic examinations of the natural world were normalized as the pursuit of truth. In her practice,

she matches the perversity of that world with the early modern's rational preoccupation with the built environment's seemingly infinite potential, a time before mechanization, when the 'perfectly spherical' was nearly impossible.

1. Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, translated by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1988): 84–85.

2. Ibid, 85.

3. Geeta Kapur, 'When was Modernism in Indian Art?' in *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India* (New Delhi: Tulika, 2007): 298.

4. The 2000 biennial was on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, March 23 – June 4, 2000. For a brief description of the impact of the biennial on her career, See, 'Banerjee Presentation' (interview with Jane DeBevoise), *Asia Art Archive in America* (October 20, 2011): <http://www.aaa-a.org/programs/presentation-by-rina-banerjee>

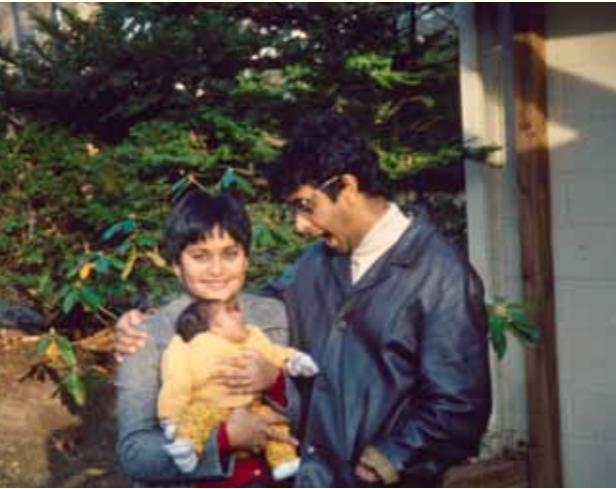
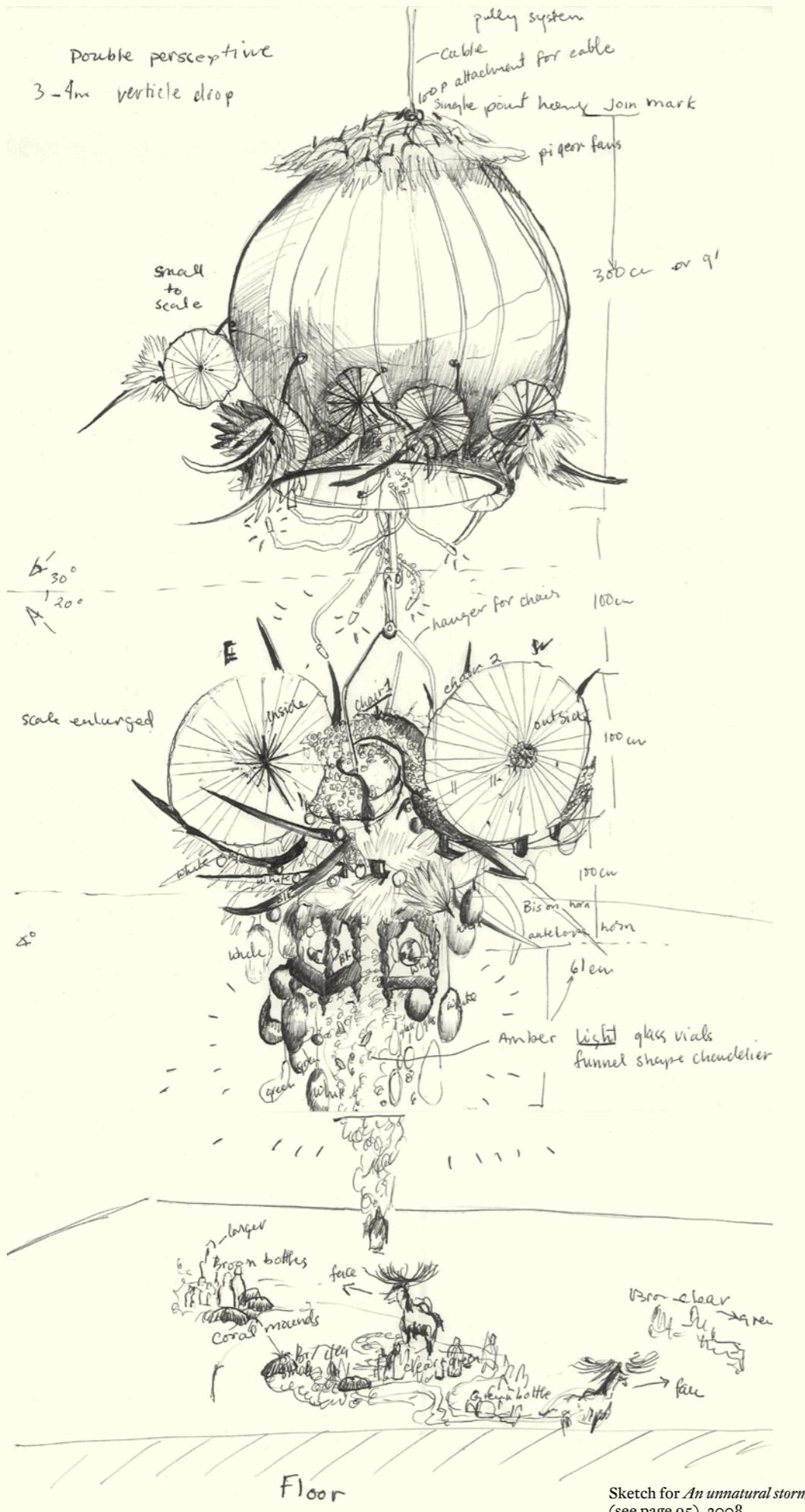
5. In a longer format, this essay would include a discussion of other recent immersive art works in which the deep pink shade is prominent, such as the pink-wrapped leg of the Ibizan hound in Pierre Huyghe's 2013–2014 exhibitions.

6. After being shown at MASS MoCA (North Adams, Massachusetts) in 2003, it was re-installed a number of times at international venues, including, The Peabody-Essex Museum (Salem, Massachusetts) in 2005–2006; The former Haunch of Venison gallery (London) in 2010 and most recently at the Musée Guimet (Paris) in 2011.

7. It is ironic that *The Lure of Place* is one of the shortest and least illustrative of Banerjee's titles. For most of her career, she has employed an inventive and highly narrative titling style that harkens back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature in which the colonial subject was formed and elucidated through fanciful language. Banerjee's titles are crucial to their objects and inseparable from most understandings of them and should be given equal attention within her practice. Unfortunately, titles are not the focus of this essay. Banerjee shares this practice with other contemporary artists, like Damien Hirst and Kara Walker, for whom the titles are stand-alone statements.

8. There are a few recurring objects in Banerjee's work. In terms of frequency of appearance, domes rank equally alongside other representations of shelter, such as umbrellas or parasols and birdcages.

9. Though Banerjee used a resin alligator skull in the sculpture, a gharial is a crocodile. Once plentiful throughout the coastal Indian Continent, the Gharial is now an endangered species.



Rina Banerjee, Ananya Kumar-Banerjee and Sanat Kumar,  
Pennsylvania, 1998

## Politics of the Title Cédric Vincent



Postcard of Indian village scene, bought in Amsterdam

Certain specialists in titleology claim that a title serves to identify the work it designates, to give it a kind of "proper name."<sup>1</sup> We are so accustomed to designating a painting or a sculpture by its title that we find ourselves somewhat at a loss when faced with a work whose title we do not know. As though comprehension of a work of art presupposes knowledge of its title, in order to guide (even to trick) the viewer's gaze by modifying his interpretive keys through the simple choice of one word. This generally agreed-upon point should be kept in mind as we prepare to explore the works of Rina Banerjee.

A glance at the label: our certainties are shaken. In place of a title, there are multiple lines of text taking us through short tales, with content that is sometimes metaphoric, enigmatic, even dramatic. They summon a strange bestiary, or divinities from the Hindu pantheon - hybrid or metamorphosizing beings struggling with their identity(ies) - that are presented in a sensual and troubling universe combining the vegetal and animal. The main character is always feminine, but is never named. We are far from a purely referential neutrality. We lose sight of the common functions aiming to identify, name, and classify, to the extent that we could question the use of the very term "title" to refer to these texts.

It must be said that their sophistication is intriguing, so much so that we wonder whether they should not be considered as another aspect of her work - a textual facet to be arranged next to her sculptures and works on paper. It is of course vain to try to understand the title by making an abstraction from the artefact to which it relates, and that it is supposed to linguistically represent. They should in fact be grasped in relation to these sculptures - assemblages of disparate elements borrowed from the mineral, vegetal, animal or manufactured worlds. Their similarities with surrealism could for that matter also be discussed. However, as texts these dilated titles relate to an approach that is able to grasp them within their written dimension.

When the status of titles is discussed, Rina Banerjee begins by mentioning her participation in the Whitney Biennale (2000). Other than the fact that it was the first major exhibition in which she took part, it was marked by a confrontation with

the organizers regarding the title of her selected work. The artist reveals that: "I was very aware of the impact of the title of work when my sculpture was first included in 2000 Whitney Biennial where my sculpture referred to infectious disease as the root of our obvious connection globally and the work was very specifically tied to the Aids epidemic as it was mistakenly believed to be overcome in 2000. The epidemic was a problem them in Africa and Indian. The museum [of American Art] would not allow a longer title than 'Infectious Migration' as it was printed for wall text." The curators of the Biennale evidently wanted to have the "title" conform to its function of indexing, a function that we assume was not fulfilled in the original version, which has since been scrapped, as the artist adopted the title inscribed on the label at the Whitney.

A title must reference and name a work, and the titles provided were not the most practical way of doing so. Often, in the text of an art critic or in the caption of a reproduction, only three or four words of the title are retained, followed by ellipses. The artist herself uses a contracted form to refer to her works, "nicknames" that are the best able to designate them conventionally. In other words, a work possesses at least two titles. The official title is inscribed on the label, and is intimately linked to the expression of the work. To compensate for its shortcomings, it is supplemented in certain situations by a diminutive, a nominative title. *Infectious Migration* is one of the rare works for which the nickname is confused with the title.

"Captivity" is the nickname given to a work from 2011 with the following wording:

*/Her captivity was once someone's treasure and even pleasure but she blew then flew away, took root which grew, we knew this was like no other feather, a third kind of bird that perched on vine interwined was neither native nor her Queens daughter, a peculiar other/*

Let us examine this text for a moment, firstly with regard to its form. It is not a sentence in the strict sense, as we notice the lack of a period, as though it carries on beyond the frame. The construction focuses on rhythm, as well as the choices of alliteration and assonance that produce it. We can imagine the development of the text with its preliminary drafts, hesitations, and regrets before arriving at



Bimal Kumar Banerjee, Dolly Banerjee and Anjana Banerjee, 1964



Studio of Rina Banerjee, Brooklyn, New York, 2000

this definitive version. Some commentators on her work have even alluded to poetic echoes. Perhaps it would be more relevant to read the titles out loud after all.

The narrative aspect is obvious. The plot revolves around the birth of a "third kind of bird" associated with this "peculiar other" who marks its radical alterity. We set out from a situation of exploitation of wealth (colonization?), and then on to migration or exile as well as a new place of residence, which nonetheless remains on the margins, belonging neither to the place of departure nor that of arrival. In short, this journey brings about a new species: Rina's comments, and what she calls the "third identity," can make this reading resonate further. This however should not be seen as an obligatory reference to the thinker Homi Bhabha, the pioneer of postcolonial studies, and his notion of "third space." The term refers to a critical analysis of the reified oppositions between center and periphery, identity and alterity, which rigidifies them in sterile concepts. It is a matter of introducing the ambiguity and ambivalence that characterized the postcolonial situation as a "liminal" space, in which cultural differences link together and produce imagined constructions of national and cultural identity.

Behind their array of fables, the titles explore the relation to locality and alterity, and present the voice of a diasporic culture, in a liminal zone with no clearly identifiable borders. This subject of identities arising from postcolonial situations is more emphatic in the title associated with a strange sculpture, a zoomorphic character wearing a red dress. Her nickname is "Western Style" (2011), and the title reads:

*/She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesh who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself shipwrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and grew ram-like under stress /*

Once again the adjective "peculiar" is used to qualify the character's strangeness. We must note that the divinity Ganesh is already a hybrid representation itself, an elephant's head combined

with a human body. Aside from the recurring references to the Hindu pantheon in her texts, the title brings forth a plot similar to *Captivity*, in which the cause of the forced journey explicitly implies colonial empire. This final section of the title is based on autobiographical details from the family's journey.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to emphasize the implicit geographical aspects outlined between "bidesh" and "desh," which can be related to the "roots" vs "roots" of globalization theorists. In certain locales in Northwestern Bangladesh, "desh" is the place for community and family residence, and "bidesh" refers to elsewhere, with "bideshi" meaning foreigner.<sup>3</sup>

It is not a matter of seeing identity as unitary, but rather of grasping its outlines through movement, interconnection, and diversity of references. The characters of the titles are creatures that take possession of their identity, metamorphosizing into new, original forms. In the graphic works, it is particularly discernible to encounter creatures that are half-bird and half-woman, who give a glimpse of this world and of a new culture that is in the process of being created. The subtext includes representations of the work of globalization, postcolonial cultures, and constructions and sociabilities of diasporic identities. The titles strongly assert the principle of mobility – one that is at work in identity constructs – whereas the classic notion tends to focus on the consistency of communities maintained through time and space. "The complexity of composition, your origin is not recognized by a singular Nation," reveals Rina. This postnational approach to culture and identity is embodied in the production methods used for her sculptures – perhaps more than in the sculptures themselves – through the assembly of materials of disparate and well-travelled origins.

Despite everything, it gives an autobiographical resonance and prompts us to understand her work in terms of an individual mythology. An autobiographical interpretation seems all the more attractive as the feminine referent ceaselessly returns as an actor in the issues explored by the text. Yet when she talks about this subject, the artist offers a correction: "She' is human and unknowable undefined – While he is in exile. In mythological narratives, the 'she' is on trial bewildering unrealized rejected, abject. She is not

She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesha who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself shipwrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and grew ram-like under stress



Christmas in New York, 1973



Birthday party in Queens, New York, 1973

*alone and in this I mean all that contests he is she in this resistance to defined binary. She reaches to be connected to blur definition and containment to contagious and linked, invested in change transformation, border less and mobile. Mobility/freedom resists time and space, history drawn out of land marked and ordered circular gaps."*

The subjects explored by the titles are evoked in these remarks, however the recurrence of this feminine reference reinforces the presence of a single character that spans the texts and different incidents.

In the case of Rina, the title is conceived after the production of the piece – "when I find myself for the first time a viewer examine my own work. I take this other identity to reflect on the work taking some freedom to realize that the text can often lead the image and it can speak to add another layer of meaning." The task does not appear to be truly finished until the created object is endowed with the title that will enable it to transition from a visual artefact to the status of a work in its own right. The title is thus grasped at the intersection of production and reception. It does not claim to be the illustration or the plot from which the work emerges, but rather it is the work that activates a story from clues that link the text to its related object. The title does not dispossess the work of its autonomy; the relation between the work and its title must instead be understood as would be a diptych.

This is a relation in which the textual does not take precedence over the object. It does not offer a solution, even if the viewer's first instinct is to construct the title in a metaphorical, descriptive, or even illustrative relation to the work. The viewers seek to identify in the text's ordering the elements that relate to the work. This inclination is established all the more naturally if the narrative aspect of the text is supported by the figurative aspect of the sculptures or graphic works. *Captivity* is evident in this regard: the sculpture's cage, vine, and birds are ordered within the text, which in turn situates the sculpture in a narrative fabric. *Western Style* refers to a hybrid character dressed in Western fashion, with a jutting head resembling a trunk, perhaps the Ganesh of the text. In fact, only the first part of the title can be connected to the sculpture, as the rest takes us toward another

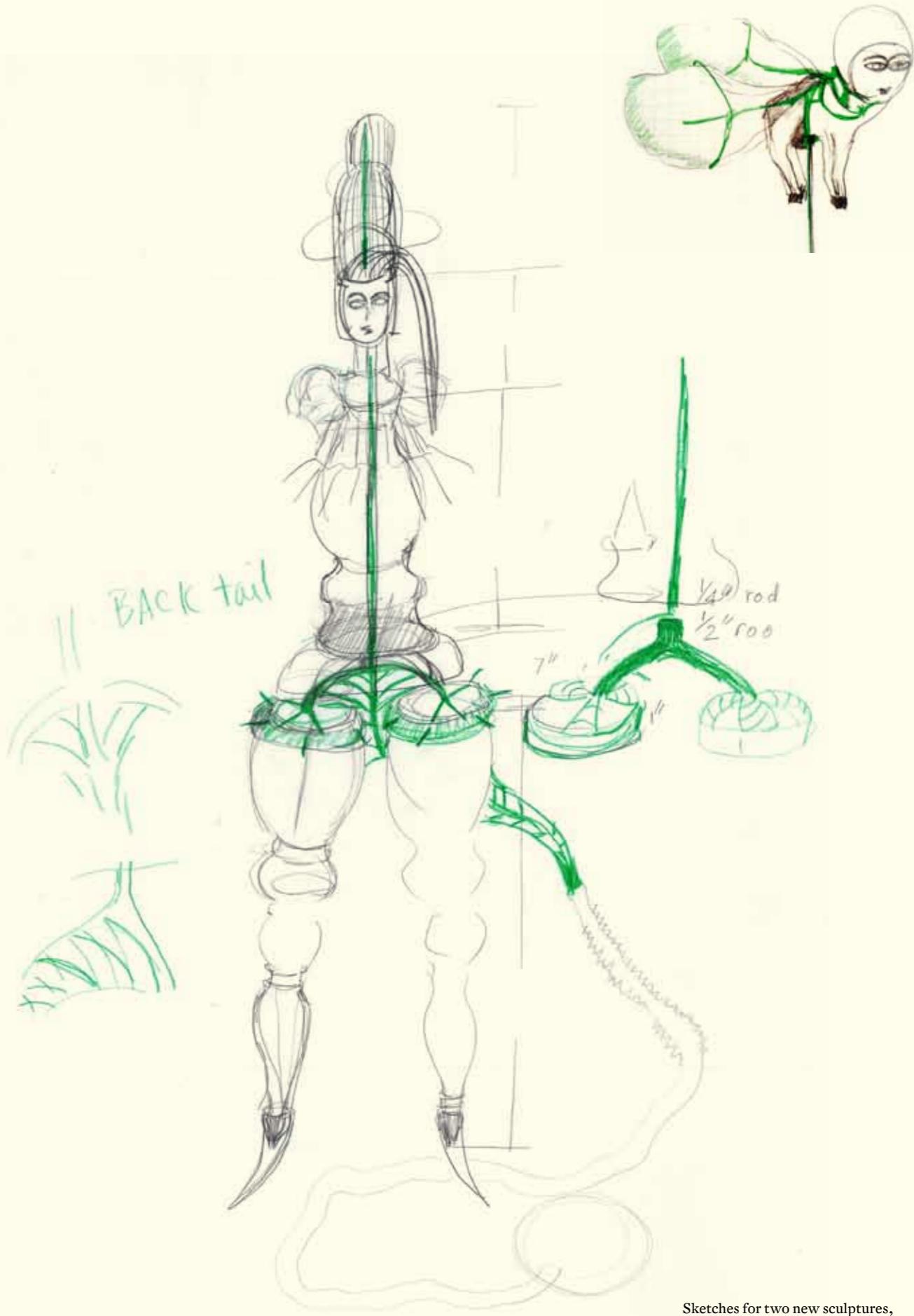
dimension. It is not certain that the text fully illuminates the works, but on the other hand it shifts them into a narrative.

If we were to accept the work of Rina according to this diptych framework – in which representation combines the visual and the textual – it is possible to navigate through her work in a different way. The text is perhaps too cramped in its function of title: releasing it from the label in order to exhibit it as an integral part of the work, perhaps by printing it on the walls, would change its relation to the work it accompanies. This could change the work's perspective, and provide ample space for the narration that runs through Rina Banerjee's work.

1. Pierre-Marc de Biasi, Marianne Jakobi, Sérgolène Le Men, eds., *La Fabrique du titre. Nommer les œuvres d'art* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2012). Our translation.

2. For the artist's commentary on the work: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJkOcAukEnO](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJkOcAukEnO)

3. Cf. Katy Gardner, "Desh-Bidesh: Sylheti Images of Home and Away," in *Man* 28:1 (1993): 1–15. In this article, the anthropologist shows that *bidesh* is associated with migration and the economy, while *desh* is associated with the domain of group identity, spirituality, and family.



Sketches for two new sculptures,  
July 2015

## Par Wangechi Mutu

Dôme où s'abriter, rose à l'intérieur et au dehors.

Un coquillage écalé qui, pour ainsi dire, bat monnaie et forge fable sur Rina l'innombrable, faiseuse d'une captivité éclatée dans l'éternelle métamorphose de sa naissance, parfait exemple de la créatrice fraîchement éclosé, tout juste en deuil. Elle tue, avec méticulosité, sur la scène permanente du théâtre de sa victoire.

La moelle de ses poèmes : des objets indésirables, ravissants trésors sous les oripeaux d'un hommage somptueux à une servitude culturellement sexuée. Et pourtant, Rina enfante des idées sans entraves. Tel l'entêté qui, privé de mélanine, se retrouve par son immobilité brûlé par le soleil, véritable fantôme, ces histoires et ces malentendus qui nous ont tous tourmentés grandissent (avant qu'elle ne les réduise), si peu protégés des vérités durables et de l'exposition à la lumière : le pépin colonial, fétiche famélique, empire étrangement bien bâti de songes, se met ainsi à germer sur le blanc mat du mur immaculé d'une galerie. J'aime les éléphants aveugles qui piétinent jusqu'à ce qu'il n'y ait plus d'herbe.

Les productions de Banerjee sont de cette veine : créatures dénuées de culpabilité qui ne savent pas ce qu'elles écrasent dans le ballet de leurs pieds massifs, troncs d'arbres capitonnés qui dansent dans un désordre d'une insondable grâce.

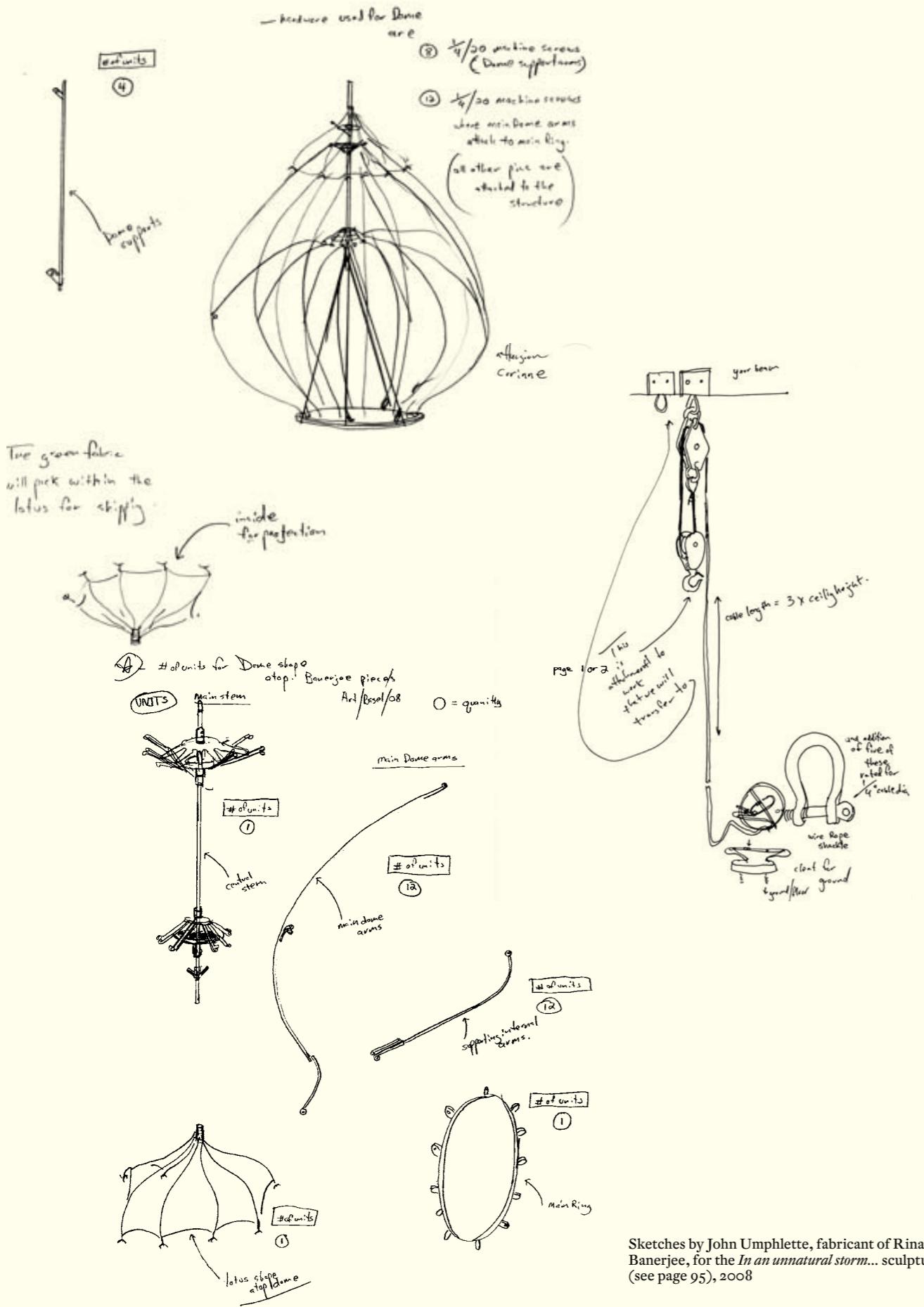
J'aime beaucoup la restitution obstinée des écailles, la reprise de ces odeurs fétides, le décrassage de cette puanteur, la souillure de ces puits de mines théoriques remplis de sang séché et d'une génération spontanée d'histoires fausses. Les mythes de la propriété devraient être soigneusement examinés, un œil toujours ouvert même lorsque le sommeil menace.

En général, ceux qui nous cartographient nous piègent. L'autre moitié du monde vue d'ici ? Halte-là ! Laquelle est-ce, votre moitié ? Admettons : nous avons confectionné un envoûtant contrat social, une théorie douteuse, un peu dévergondée – insistant sur notre croyance en un constant remodelage des étranges contours de notre monde et de nos

possessions. J'ose prétendre que nous sommes désormais tous au courant : nul explorateur n'avait d'autre préoccupation permanente que celle de la fuite. Nul n'a véritablement fait de découverte, qui ne s'était déjà découvert lui-même. Ceux-là, que vous appelez désormais les « autres », n'ont jamais été en dehors de, à l'écart de, privés de racines, innocents, préservés, susceptibles d'être amendés, préservés, soignés, épingleés, sauvés, tondus. Avant cette démarcation prudente établie par une théorie irresponsable, géographique et nationale, avant ces grossières frontières devenues tristement célèbres, il y avait déjà de vrais noms, lieux, esprits, cosmologies, langages, disciplines, troubles, terres immaculées, docteurs, shamans, humanitaires, césariennes, amputations, avortements.

Le plan a fonctionné et a démêlé des siècles de vie, de connaissance, d'anciennes archives d'existence, de manuscrits sanskrits. Nous voici désormais au bord d'une nouvelle rupture Banerjee-que, et il reste davantage de questions à poser que les précédentes n'ont apporté de réponses. Qui suis-je exactement pour être payée et vous, comment savez-vous quel jeu je joue ? Pourquoi ne pas désigner comme référent le poète, le poète devenu curateur, le curateur consacré diplomate culturel par excellence, pour entamer cette inévitable traduction transatlantique et pour démêler des siècles d'écriture infâme ?

Pénétrer dans une pièce où se produit une expérience Rina-mystique est toujours un rituel effrayant – impatience inquiète et transe à point. Excitation garantie – si vous êtes suffisamment étrange. Dans le cas contraire : régression de l'intellect, sensation de chaleur au plus profond de votre cerveau reptilien ! (Quelle niaiserie que de se comparer aux animaux, eux qui ont survécu sur cette planète tellement plus longtemps que nous, la foule des singes suicidaires, les funestes Adam grouillant sans limite.) Entrez à vos risques et périls. Tenez-vous prêt, ici trônent d'autres Reines à qui elle a rendu visite, d'autres Reines avec qui elle a pris le thé, les semblables de *Kiki the Smith, Alison the Czar, Louise the Bourgeois, Annette the Mesenger, Kara the Walker, Monah the toun, Marisa the Merz, Sara the Zee, Yoko the Ono, Francesco the Clementine, Georgia the key*, et moi, eye the Wangechi Mutu.



# Quand le parfaitement sphérique était presque impossible : le dôme dans la sculpture de Rina Banerjee

## Courtney J. Martin

[...] si les sommets de plusieurs arches identiques se rencontraient en un point central, cela créerait une voûte semblable aux ciels ; nous l'appellerons le parfaitement sphérique<sup>1</sup>.

### I.

Exposé pour la première fois au MASS MoCA en 2003, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...To the Palace of Love* (2003) est devenue l'une des sculptures emblématiques de Rina Banerjee. C'est sans doute celle qui caractérise le mieux l'étendue remarquable de sa pratique artistique. Il s'agit d'un modèle réduit du Taj Mahal, mausolée classé au patrimoine mondial de l'humanité. Avec *The Lure of Place* (2006), *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* fait partie d'une série réaliste-fantastique qui utilise le côté merveilleux de l'architecture comme un lieu de dialogue esthétique entre le tombeau, le sanctuaire et le tourisme. Dans les deux œuvres, le symbole national, transposé au royaume de la sculpture, retrouve son côté frappant et redevient source d'inspiration. Les deux installations présentent des dômes proéminents qui évoquent le Taj Mahal. Elles inscrivent ainsi la pratique artistique de Rina Banerjee dans le sous-genre architectonique de la sculpture.

### II.

Au milieu du xv<sup>e</sup> siècle, le traité d'architecture de Leon Battista Alberti, *De Re Aedificatoria* (*L'Art d'édifier*, en dix volumes), offre un regard singulier de l'architecture : elle apparaît comme une discipline théorique tout autant que pratique. La prose d'Alberti (du moins en traduction) est souvent pleine de noblesse, mais elle peut aussi s'avérer très directe et fort instructive. C'est le cas du livre III, «Construction» (c'est aussi le titre d'un des chapitres de ce volume). Alberti y présente le «parfaitement sphérique» comme un symbole céleste – tout autant qu'une réalité :

Voici les différents types de voûtes : la voûte en berceau, la voûte à branches d'ogive et la voûte parfaitement sphérique<sup>2</sup>.



Rina Banerjee in her studio, New York, 2011

La voûte «parfaitement sphérique» désigne ce que nous appelons couramment un dôme. À l'époque d'Alberti, on trouve beaucoup de dômes : l'on songe bien sûr au Panthéon romain (édifié entre 27 avant J.-C. et 14 après J.-C., puis reconstruit autour de 126), ou au Dôme du Rocher à Jérusalem (de style post-byzantin, il fut achevé en 691 de notre ère). Alberti a sûrement beaucoup vu le premier, puisqu'une fois

adulte il a vécu pour l'essentiel dans la Ville éternelle. En revanche, il n'a sans doute connu le second que par l'intermédiaire de sources textuelles. Plus près de lui, à Florence, le dôme qui surplombe la cathédrale Santa Maria del Fiore a été achevé en 1436 par l'un de ses quasi contemporains, Filippo Brunelleschi - et cela avant même qu'Alberti n'entreprene l'écriture de son traité d'architecture.

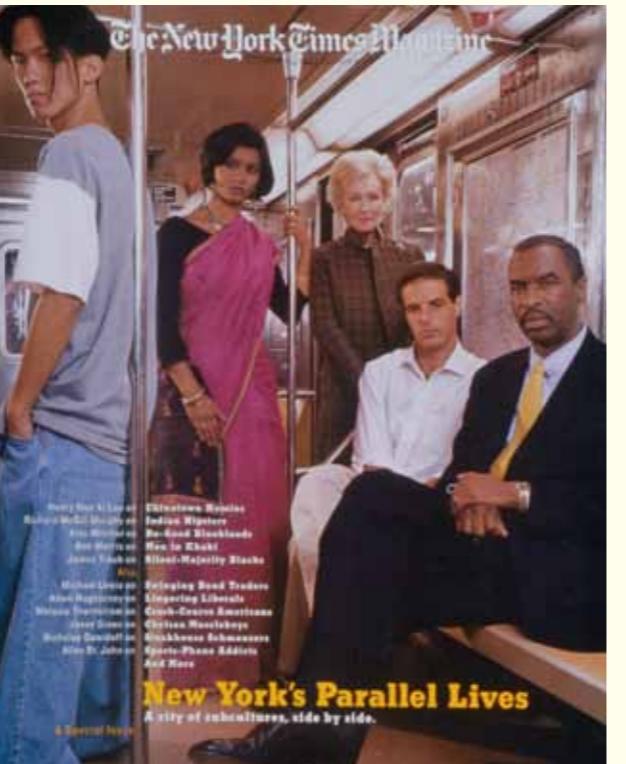
Le texte d'Alberti est remarquable par sa modernité: il présente à la fois les aspects théoriques et pratiques de l'architecture. C'est un véritable manifeste professionnel pour le métier d'architecte – qu'il convient de distinguer de l'artisan, du bâtisseur, du savant ou du philosophe. Un autre élément de modernité tient au fait qu'Alberti tire parti de toutes les disciplines. Il appartient certes à l'époque pré-moderne, mais correspond néanmoins parfaitement à la définition de la modernité que donne la critique et historienne de l'art Geeta Kapur:

La modernité est une manière de lier le monde matériel à celui de la culture, dans une période de changements sans précédent que l'on qualifie de processus de modernisation. C'est également une quête ontologique, avec ses formes particulières de réflexivité et de luttes<sup>3</sup>.

L'un des meilleurs exemples architecturaux de cette rencontre du prémoderne et du moderne se trouve peut-être à Agra, en Inde: il s'agit du Taj Mahal. Commandé en 1632 par l'empereur moghol Shâh Jahân en témoignage d'amour et de douleur, le mausolée a été achevé aux environs de 1642, puis a subi quelques ajouts jusqu'en 1653. Au fil du temps, il est devenu dans le monde entier une source d'inspiration pour les architectes, les romanciers, les poètes, les touristes et à peu près tous ceux que l'on peut ranger dans la catégorie des entrepreneurs. L'intérêt de Rina Banerjee pour le Taj Mahal n'est pas un cas isolé: sur le plan visuel, c'est un bâtiment incontestablement frappant; il est aussi spontanément très évocateur. Le caractère structurellement dominant du grand dôme qui couronne le bâtiment central renforce ce phénomène: le dôme est un centre de symétrie autour duquel s'organisent les autres éléments d'architecture et de décor. Il s'oppose en cela aux motifs répétitifs du reste du bâtiment, et cela témoigne de son importance: conformément à la définition que donne Geeta Kapur de la modernité, le dôme fait de cette architecture monumentale un lieu de réflexivité, renvoyant l'image de l'amour et de la perte de l'être aimé.



Image of temple deity dressed mala of lemons and sari in madras (Chennai), 1996



Addressing culture requires the viewer to examine who is inside the main /dominant /American culture and who is outside culture. This is a fabrication of modernisms.

### III.

Rina Banerjee a étudié la sculpture. Elle utilise toute une gamme de matériaux et une large palette de techniques. Ses œuvres sont souvent pour elle l'occasion d'apprendre de nouveaux procédés et d'expérimenter dans son atelier des pratiques qu'elle n'avait jamais explorées auparavant. En 2004 par exemple, elle s'est remise à travailler avec pellicule et vidéo pour achever ses premiers films, *Coconut Oil* (2004, RT 5:00) et *When Scenes Travel... Bubble, Bubble* (2004, RT 4:52). Elle a ensuite commencé à exposer ses dessins – elle dessinait beaucoup, mais cela n'avait jamais été qu'à titre privé. Puis elle s'est lancée dans une série de moyens formats et de collages sur papier. Plus récemment, elle s'est mise à la peinture, avec une série de compositions à l'acrylique et à l'encre. Nonobstant cette diversité, la sculpture est demeurée centrale dans l'évolution de ses choix matériels et techniques. Dans ses films par exemple, elle superpose de multiples images, tout comme elle empilait, dans ses sculptures de la fin des années 1990, des objets en équilibre les uns sur les autres. Les dessins et les peintures partagent avec les sculptures et les installations la même palette de couleurs, tout particulièrement cette vive nuance de rose que Rina Banerjee utilise depuis longtemps comme une teinte d'ambiance: elle commence par poser une sous-couche rose, ce qui donne à toute l'œuvre un tendre éclat, puis elle l'utilise pour souligner les contours de détails figuratifs ou abstraits, comme les chevelures et les vêtements, ou les silhouettes amorphes qui transparaissent derrière.

D'autres œuvres en deux dimensions (dont certaines réalisées sur du papier fait main ou sur du Mylar) renvoient à la sculpture par des ajouts de perles de verre, de pastilles réalisées à l'acrylique, ou de feuilles d'or qui rehaussent les contours des formes. C'est peut-être à la biennale du Whitney Museum en 2000 que cet aspect de son travail a été le plus visible: *Infectious Migrations* (1999) est un mur en relief composé de Silly Putty, de tubes en plastique, de tissu, d'un filet et de morceaux de crépi. Ces éléments s'étendent sur le mur et dessinent une silhouette<sup>4</sup>. L'attention que porte Rina Banerjee à l'espace et à la profondeur est manifeste dans toutes ses œuvres.

Ses sculptures peuvent être classées en plusieurs catégories: stables, constructions autoportées ou installations plus architectoniques. Les stables

sont des compositions réalisées à partir de matériaux souples ou rigides, suspendues au plafond ou accrochées au mur grâce à une armature apparente. Cela crée généralement un jeu d'ombre sur le mur et le sol: nous sommes ainsi placés à l'intérieur de l'œuvre, qui occupe alors un espace plus vaste que son seul volume.

Après cette participation à la biennale du Whitney, on a associé le travail de Rina Banerjee à une forme de sculpture millénaire, dans laquelle la démarcation entre sculpture traditionnelle et installation est floue. Ainsi, les constructions autoportées peuvent elles-mêmes être divisées en deux catégories: grands et petits formats. On a en outre assisté à une redéfinition de concepts artistiques comme le ready-made. Le terme choisi par Duchamp pour décrire la mise à l'écart d'un objet quotidien en vue d'une requalification ultérieure comme objet d'art est capital pour Rina Banerjee: un transfert s'opère par lequel urinoirs, roues de bicyclette, pelles et autres objets communs prennent pied dans l'art et son histoire.

Les ready-mades de Rina Banerjee sont les éléments factices dont elle se sert pour réaliser ses sculptures. Parapluies, saris rétro, poupées, céramiques, cornes d'animaux (vérifiables ou en plastique), perles de verre et de cuivre, plumes et piquants (vrais ou faux), porcelaines, calebasses, éventails, meubles anciens, breloques et trésors sont à la fois sa matière première et ses moyens d'action. Même si certains de ces matériaux sont assurément factices (perles, boutons, épingle), leur assemblage ne l'est pas. Les œuvres investissent le mur et le sol, et invitent les spectateurs à une forme d'immersion totale: ils doivent regarder où ils marchent, se déplacer avec précaution et parfois baisser la tête pour éviter quelque appendice suspendu au plafond.

Rina Banerjee a réalisé beaucoup de constructions de ce genre. Elles semblent faire partie d'un discours plus vaste, que beaucoup rattachent à la théorie postcoloniale (on y trouve en effet beaucoup d'objets d'époque coloniale et victorienne). L'abondance de ces éléments et leur effet de masse – par amas, éparpillement, dissémination ou empilement – renforcent le caractère quasi monumental des constructions de Rina Banerjee. Dans des sculptures plus récentes – *Explores not fortune tellers...* (2014) avec sa tête de poupée et son corps d'éléphant, ou

*Jack Fruit Johnny she was a diasporic Devi changed her name to honey changed her faith to sunny, changed this sex to something funny, changed her city to New York City – all for reason to be far far away from misery and war for money* (2015), le corps hérissé de pointes et les doigts tels de grands piquants – elle opte pour des compositions plus petites, plus contenues. Elle utilise les mêmes éléments, mais ce ne sont plus alors que des réductions monolithiques de constructions plus imposantes; les détails disparaissent, en même temps que les nombreuses interventions de l'artiste réalisant son installation. Ces citations deviennent autonomes, à la manière de totems arrachés à un ensemble plus vaste. Cela montre bien l'intérêt de Rina Banerjee pour la postmodernité, une postmodernité dans laquelle l'accumulation de biens nouveaux fait partie intégrante du schéma économique. L'économie postmoderne est coercitive: elle repose en totalité sur un travail non payé, sous-payé et effectué par des enfants.

Bien que peu nombreuses, les installations architecturales de Rina Banerjee sont devenues l'aspect le plus représentatif de son travail. Achevées à quelques années de distance, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...To the Palace of Love* (2003) et *The Lure of Place* (2006) sont toutes deux composées d'une sculpture centrale, à l'intérieur de laquelle d'autres objets viennent prendre place. Les deux œuvres font clairement référence au Taj Mahal. Elles reprennent ainsi la signature architecturale des tombeaux persans, et symbolisent en même temps le tourisme culturel contemporain. Quoi qu'il en soit, on passe souvent à côté de cette simple forme hémisphérique qui trône en leur centre. Cette forme, c'est le dôme.

#### IV.

Achévé en 2003, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... To the Palace of Love* est souvent désigné comme le «Taj rose», avec sa couleur si caractéristique. Le rose remplit tous les vides de l'armature en acier et cuivre. Mais ce n'est pas pour autant une miniature parfaite du Taj Mahal. Là encore, il s'agit plutôt d'une citation, selon le procédé déjà évoqué: Rina Banerjee reprend dans ses installations des détails qu'elle transforme en objets autonomes. Dans sa forme, *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* est une allusion au Taj Mahal; mais dans son titre et sa présentation, l'œuvre porte d'autres connotations: le rose évoque naturellement la flore (les différentes nuances de «rose» des dianthus), les friandises et la féminité.

Rina Banerjee renoue avec le sens historique de cette teinte: à la Renaissance, elle était associée au Christ enfant. Dans les remarquables toiles du Trecento – la *Vierge d'Ognissanti* (1306-1310) de Giotto par exemple, ou *La Maestà* de Duccio (1308) – ses vêtements sont en effet souvent roses. C'est la couleur de son cheminement vers la Passion, qui se pare quant à elle de violet profonds. Le rose contraste avec le bleu des robes de Marie. Dans ses sculptures, Rina Banerjee explore le vocabulaire pictural: elle rejoue à ce jeu ancien qu'est le *paragone* – une comparaison des forces respectives de la peinture et de la sculpture à la Renaissance.

D'un point de vue générationnel, Rina Banerjee a pu aussi choisir le rose par féminisme. Depuis la fin des années 1960, les féministes américaines en ont fait un symbole de la présence, négative ou positive, des femmes. On parle ainsi de ghetto rose pour qualifier de manière euphémistique le cantonnement des femmes à certaines tâches. Le changement de carrière de Rina Banerjee, de la science à l'art, serait donc un choix personnel, et non une relégation dans un domaine déterminé par son sexe.

On notera que son passage à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Yale coïncide avec celui de l'artiste féministe Sheila Levant de Bretteville comme directrice du programme d'Art graphique de l'école. Fondatrice du Feminist Studio Workshop en 1973, Levant de bretteville a réalisé la même année une affiche *Pink* qui a souvent été citée comme l'une des œuvres d'art proto-féministes qui unifiait visuellement la féminité, le féminisme, le travail salarié et la production sexo-spécifique dans une esthétique textuelle relevant de l'art conceptuel. Comme d'autres artistes en lutte contre les stéréotypes qui frappent les femmes – Mary Kelly et son *Post-Partum Document* (1973-1979), ou Howardena Pindell avec *Free, White and 21* (1980) – Levant de Bretteville rejette l'idée que la couleur soit associée à un sexe donné. Elle pose ainsi les bases qui vont permettre à toute une génération de femmes de s'investir dans un dialogue critique. Ce n'est donc pas un hasard si le rose de Rina Banerjee est une teinte forte, plus proche d'un pourpre qui tendrait vers le rose, plus chaud et plus brûlant que ces roses pâles souvent dédaignés. Si le nom du Taj Mahal, dans sa concision suggestive, fait référence à la femme pour qui le monument a été bâti (la muse et épouse de Shâh Jahân, Arjumand Bânu Begum, plus connue sous

le nom de Mumtâz Mahal), il apparaît aussi comme l'affirmation par Rina Banerjee d'un pouvoir et d'une maîtrise de soi: en se construisant son palais, elle vise sa propre extase<sup>5</sup>.

Le rapport entre ce rose profond et la structure de *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* ne doit rien au hasard. Du fait de sa formation scientifique, Rina Banerjee possède un sens développé des échelles, des proportions et de la structure, sans parler de sa connaissance de la composition chimique des matériaux qu'elle utilise. La totalité du plastique qui sert de peau au bâtiment est rose, alors même que le référent (le Taj Mahal) est construit en marbre blanc et lourdement décoré (lotus, épis de faîtage et bandes de motifs dessinant une démarcation entre le dôme et le corps du bâtiment). Par contraste, le dôme en forme d'oignon de Rina Banerjee est entièrement rose, ce qui révèle une structure et un programme d'inspiration démocratique: aucun élément n'est plus important qu'un autre, malgré la tendance de l'architecture à hiérarchiser les parties individuelles d'un édifice.

Un certain égalitarisme s'empare de l'espace. Généralement assez éloignée du minimalisme et du caractère rudimentaire de l'art conceptuel, Rina Banerjee utilise le dôme pour son aspect géométrique. Le cercle est une forme idéale, et le dôme peut être vu comme un cercle étiré en trois dimensions. Sous le dôme, l'espace est tout juste assez large pour permettre aux spectateurs d'entrer, mais pas assez pour soutenir la comparaison avec l'environnement du bâtiment sur lequel il repose. La structure, avec tous les objets qu'elle contient, est suspendue au plafond et semble flotter. Cela renforce sa capacité à être en harmonie avec l'espace où elle se trouve. Elle réagit au site, sans pour autant être strictement *in situ*: une fois achevée, elle a été réinstallée ailleurs en plusieurs occasions<sup>6</sup>.

Quelques années plus tard, Banerjee en revient au dôme, à l'épi de faîtage, aux Chhatris et aux flèches de *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* pour la construction de *The Lure of Place* (2006). Bien que semblable en proportion et dans l'intention architectonique, la sculpture, plus tardive, tient beaucoup plus de l'intérieur décloisonné que la précédente. Crée en 2006 pour la troisième triennale d'Echigo-Tsumari au Japon, elle a été installée dans une ancienne école primaire. Comme elle était réalisée pour la

triennale, elle était *ipso facto* spécifique au lieu et temporel, contrairement à *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* Au lieu de plastique rose, d'acier et de cuivre, Banerjee a suspendu un assemblage de chaises d'écolier renversées, de tubes plastique colorés, de lampes et de plusieurs petits globes. Cela ressemble à un chandelier qui illumine la structure externe et les éléments sculpturaux internes. Le jeu entre les éléments organiques et inorganiques, l'intérieur illuminé et l'extérieur vert dénué de tout décor, minimise la référence au Taj Mahal, malgré la présence d'un dôme central imposant.

Dans *The Lure of Place*, Rina Banerjee s'éloigne donc de la référence au Taj Mahal (et à des liens biographiques trop faciles avec l'art et l'architecture indiens). Elle gravite dans l'univers des foires mondiales et de leur architecture fugace, dans le monde des expositions universelles, structurées par le discours colonial et ses notions de races et de classes. Comme dans un pavillon national, elle représente la fonction première des objets (les chaises d'écoliers et les globes miniatures), mais aussi le contexte local: le Japon est ainsi symbolisé par le bambou. Comme élément national, le bambou correspond tout à fait au lien que les expositions universelles établissaient entre culture et biens matériels. Les pavillons étaient souvent temporaires, mais la façon dont ils présentaient lieux et objets laissait des impressions durables – d'où ces dernières traces de la culture des expositions : reconstruction du Palais de Cristal après la grande exposition de Londres en 1851, pays étrangers se bousculant à Venise après la première Biennale en 1895 pour acquérir des terres, y construire des bâtiments et affirmer ainsi leur présence nationale. Les expositions étaient les «actes de lutte» qui faisaient bouger la modernité, alors que le commerce local devenait mondial.

Pavillon temporaire, *The Lure of Place* est surtout une œuvre d'art: cela lui permet de représenter les choses autrement que par son statut d'objet<sup>7</sup>. Contrairement aux animaux, aux plantes, aux machines et aux êtres humains que l'on exposait au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'œuvre ne peut pas être purement réifiée, car elle est à la fois sujet et objet d'art. La citation du dôme du Taj Mahal en est la preuve; ce dernier reste souvent absent des expositions nationales, malgré l'histoire complexe de la domination musulmane en Inde.

## V.

Depuis la construction de *The Lure of Place* en 2006, les dômes sont devenus un motif récurrent chez Rina Banerjee<sup>8</sup>. *The World as Burnt Fruit – When Empires Feuded for Populations and Plantations, Buried in Colonial and Ancient Currency a Gharial Appeared from an Inky Melon – Hot with Blossom Sprang Forth to Swallow the World not yet Whole as Burnt Fruit* (2009) et *I'll Get You My Pretty!* (2009) en sont peut-être les exemples les plus frappants, car il leur manque un socle. Dans *I'll Get You My Pretty!*, la structure est couchée sur le côté, comme si elle avait été décrochée de la construction à laquelle elle appartenait, libérée pour occuper son propre espace. Divers objets viennent remplir la sphère initialement vide : éventails et plumes roses côtoient une tête d'alligator (le Gharial mentionné dans le titre) avec un petit globe coincé entre les dents<sup>9</sup>. Le dôme de *The World as Burnt Fruit...* est traité comme les détails des grandes installations : Rina Banerjee le détache comme pour le laisser seul, en isolé. Mais ici, il ne provient en réalité d'aucune œuvre précédente : ce n'est ni le dôme de *Take Me, Take Me, Take Me...* qui se serait effondré, ni celui de *The Lure of Place* ou d'un autre Taj Mahal. On peut plutôt songer à l'arte povera – en particulier aux igloos de Mario Merz et à leur appréhension acritique d'une préhistoire imaginaire ou d'un exotisme indigène : c'est ici grâce à l'objet banal que l'architecture pénètre notre quotidien.

Là où *The World as Burnt Fruit* suggère un fort mouvement de roulis, avec son côté renversé et son alligator toutes dents dehors, *I'll Get You My Pretty!* est moins animé et plus contemplatif. Le dôme y est éclairé de l'intérieur et suspendu au-dessus d'un groupe d'éléments assemblés au sol – un crâne de bovin, des petits chameaux et des fioles en verre grossièrement disposées sur des porcelaines au milieu du sable. Les coquillages présents dans le sable font songer aux fonds océaniques ou à la carte topographique d'un continent. Le dôme éclaire l'installation qui est au sol, l'ensemble apparaissant ainsi plus religieux que séculaire. Sous la lumière du dôme, les objets ressemblent à des ex-voto pour une divinité sans nom, ou à la maquette de présentation de quelque oasis dystopique, teintée d'«orientalisme». Ce dôme, peut-être plus que tous les autres, revêt le caractère céleste dont parle Alberti – cette harmonie que crée le «parfaitement sphérique». Lorsqu'au cours de son cursus Rina Banerjee a troqué la science pour l'art, elle a conservé quelques aspects des sciences humaines du xix<sup>e</sup> siècle : la surveillance

intrusive, la collecte compulsive d'informations et la représentation graphique du monde naturel, qui semblaient alors être les outils qui mèneraient à la vérité. Rina Banerjee associe la perversion de notre monde à la rationalité des débuts de la modernité, lorsque l'on croyait en la possibilité d'un progrès architectural infini. C'était avant le machinisme ; le «parfaitement sphérique» était alors encore impossible.

1. Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, traduction Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, et Robert Tavernor, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) et London, 1988, p. 84-85. Pour des raisons de cohérence terminologique dans ce paragraphe, il a été décidé de traduire en français la version anglaise du texte d'Alberti plutôt que d'utiliser les traductions françaises disponibles. (NdT)

2. Ibid.

3. Geeta Kapur, «When was Modernism in Indian Art?», dans *When Was Modernism: Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India*, Tulika, New Delhi, 2007, p. 298.

4. La Biennale de 2000 s'est tenue au Whitney Museum of American Art de New York, du 23 mars au 4 juin 2000. Pour une rapide description de l'impact qu'a eu la Biennale sur la carrière de Rina Banerjee, voir «Banerjee Presentation», entretien avec Jane DeBevoise, dans *Asia Art Archive in America* (20 octobre 2011) : <http://www.aaa-a.org/programs/presentation-by-rina-banerjee>.

5. Si l'on en avait ici la place, l'on pourrait inclure dans cette discussion d'autres œuvres immersives récentes, dans lesquelles cette nuance profonde de rose est proéminente – c'est le cas de ce chien à la patte tatouée en rose que l'on retrouve dans les expositions de Pierre Huyghe en 2013-2014.

6. Après l'exposition au MASS MoCA (à North Adams dans le Massachusetts) en 2003, l'œuvre a été réinstallée dans plusieurs institutions internationales : au Peabody-Essex Museum (à Salem, dans le Massachusetts également) en 2005-2006, à la galerie Haunch of Venison (à Londres) en 2010, et plus récemment au musée Guimet, à Paris, en 2011.

7. Ironiquement, *The Lure of Place* est l'un des titres les plus courts et les moins emblématiques de Rina Banerjee. Pendant presque toute sa carrière, elle a rédigé ses titres dans un style très inventif et particulièrement narratif. Ce style prend sa source dans la littérature du xix<sup>e</sup> siècle, qui posait le problème colonial et le résolvait en utilisant un langage fantasque. Les titres de Banerjee sont indispensables pour les œuvres et leur compréhension. Il convient donc de prêter autant d'attention aux uns qu'aux autres. Cela dit, les titres ne sont hélas pas le sujet de cet essai. Banerjee partage cette caractéristique avec d'autres contemporains : Damien Hirst par exemple, ou Kara Walker – pour qui les titres sont des affirmations indépendantes.

8. Il y a peu d'objets récurrents dans le travail de Rina Banerjee. Les dômes apparaissent aussi fréquemment que d'autres formes d'abris : parapluies, parasols ou cages à oiseaux.

9. Rina Banerjee utilise ici un alligator en résine, mais le Gavial du Gange est un crocodile. Autrefois très présent sur tout le littoral du continent indien, il est désormais une espèce menacée.

Un titre sert à identifier l'œuvre qu'il désigne, à lui donner une sorte de «nom propre» disent certains spécialistes en titrologie<sup>1</sup>. Nous sommes si habitués à désigner un tableau, une sculpture à partir de son titre que nous nous trouvons quelque peu démunis si, face à l'un d'eux, nous ignorons son intitulé. Comme si la compréhension d'une œuvre d'art presupposait la connaissance de son titre afin de guider (voire de tromper) le regard du spectateur en modifiant ses clés de lecture par le simple choix d'un mot. Ces propos assez convenus méritent d'être rappelés lorsqu'on s'apprête à aborder les œuvres de Rina Banerjee.

Coup d'œil au cartel : nos certitudes sont malmenées. En place de titre, c'est plusieurs lignes de textes qui nous entraînent dans de courts récits, à la teneur parfois métaphorique, énigmatique, voire dramatique, convoquant un bestiaire étrange ou des divinités du panthéon hindou, des êtres hybrides ou en état de métamorphose aux prises avec leur(s) identité(s), décrits dans un univers sensuel et inquiétant mêlant le végétal à l'animal. Le personnage central est toujours féminin, mais il n'est jamais nommé. Nous sommes loin d'une neutralité purement référentielle. L'on perd de vue les fonctions communes visant à identifier, nommer, classer, si bien que l'on pourrait contester à ces textes le terme même de «titre».



Bimal Kumar Banerjee, Rina Banerjee, Tarak Banerjee, London, 1968

## Politique du titre Cédric Vincent



Chanclana, Anjana, Rina Banerjee, 1972

Il faut dire que leur sophistication intrigue, au point de se demander s'ils ne doivent pas être considérés comme un autre pan de son travail – une section textuelle à ranger au côté de ses œuvres sur papier et de ses sculptures. Certes, il est vain de chercher à comprendre le titre en faisant abstraction de l'artefact auquel il se rapporte et qu'il est censé représenter dans l'ordre du langage. On devrait en effet les apprécier dans la relation à ces sculptures – assemblages d'éléments disparates, empruntés aux univers minéral, végétal, animal et manufacturé. La parenté de ces sculptures avec le surréalisme pourrait se discuter par ailleurs. Mais il reste que ces titres dilatés relèvent en tant que texte d'une approche capable de saisir dans leur dimension écrite.

Dès lors que l'on aborde le statut du titre avec Rina Banerjee, elle commence par évoquer sa participation à la Biennale du Whitney (2000).

Outre le fait qu'elle a été la première grande exposition à laquelle elle participa, celle-ci a été marquée par une confrontation avec les organisateurs sur le titre de l'œuvre sélectionnée. L'artiste confie : «*I was very aware of the impact of the title of work when my sculpture was first included in 2000 Whitney Biennial where my sculpture referred to infectious disease as the root of our obvious connection globally and the work was very specifically tied to the Aids epidemic as it was mistakenly believed to be overcome in 2000. The epidemic was a problem then in Africa and Indian. The museum [of American Art] would not allow a longer title than "Infectious Migration" as it was printed for wall text*<sup>4</sup>» La volonté des commissaires de la Biennale était visiblement de recadrer le titre dans sa fonction d'indexation dont on suppose qu'elle fut évacuée de la version originale. Celle-ci est aux oubliettes depuis, l'artiste ayant adopté le titre inscrit sur le cartel du Whitney.

Il faut bien référencer, nommer l'œuvre et les titres fournis ne sont pas des plus commodes pour ce faire. Bien souvent, dans le texte d'un critique d'art ou dans la légende d'une reproduction, seuls persistent trois ou quatre mots suivis de points de suspension. L'artiste elle-même utilise une forme contractée pour désigner ses œuvres, des surnoms («*nicknames*»), plus à même de les désigner conventionnellement. Autrement dit, une œuvre posséderait au moins deux titres. Sur le cartel est inscrit le titre officiel, intimement lié à l'expression de l'œuvre. Pour pallier ses carences, il est supplié dans certaines situations par un diminutif, un titre nominatif. *Infectious Migration* est une des rares pièces pour laquelle le surnom est confondu avec le titre.

«*Captivity*» est le surnom donné à l'œuvre de 2011 portant ce libellé :



Rina Banerjee in her studio, New York, 2011



Rina Banerjee in her studio, New York, 2011

Her captivity was once  
someone's treasure and  
even pleasure but she  
blew then flew away,  
took root which grew,  
we knew this was like  
no other feather, a third  
kind of bird that perched  
on vine intertwined  
was neither native nor  
her Queens daughter,  
a peculiar other

Restons sur ce texte. Sur le plan de la forme d'abord. Ce n'est pas une phrase au sens strict, on note l'absence d'un point final comme si elle se poursuivait en dehors du cadre. La construction porte sur le rythme, le choix d'allitérations et d'associations qui le produisent. On imagine une élaboration du texte avec ses ébauches, ses hésitations, ses repentirs avant d'arriver à cette version définitive. Certains commentateurs de son travail évoquent même des résonnances poétiques. Peut-être serait-il plus pertinent de lire les titres à voix haute après tout.

L'aspect narratif est évident. L'intrigue tourne autour de la naissance d'un «*third kind of bird*» associé à ce «*peculiar other*» qui marque son altérité radicale. L'on part d'une situation d'exploitation de richesses (colonisation?), puis la migration ou l'exil, un nouveau site de résidence, mais le laissant à la marge, appartenant ni à son lieu de départ, ni à son lieu d'arrivée. En somme, la naissance d'une nouvelle espèce par ce déplacement : il faut faire résonner cette lecture avec les propos de Rina et ce qu'elle appelle la «troisième identité». Cependant, ne pas y voir une référence obligée au penseur Homi Bhabha, fer de lance des *post-colonial studies*, et sa notion d'«espace tiers» (*third space*). Le propos renvoie à une analyse critique des oppositions réifiées entre centre et périphérie, identité et altérité qui les rigidifient dans des concepts stériles. Il s'agit d'introduire l'ambiguïté et l'ambivalence qui caractérisent la situation postcoloniale comme espace «*liminal*» dans laquelle les différences culturelles s'articulent et produisent des constructions imaginées de l'identité nationale et culturelle.

Derrière leurs atours de fable, les titres interrogent le rapport à la localité, à l'altérité, et dessine la voix d'une culture aux contours diasporiques, d'une zone sans frontières clairement identifiables. Ce thème des identités issues de situations post-coloniales est plus appuyé dans le titre associé à une étrange sculpture, un personnage zoomorphe vêtu d'une robe rouge. Son surnom est «*Western Style*» (2011), le titre dit :

*/ She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesha who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself shipwrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother's full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and groomed a ram-like under stress.*

*of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and grew ram-like under stress /*

Là encore, l'adjectif «*peculiar*» revient pour qualifier la bizarrerie du personnage. Il faut dire que la divinité Ganesh est déjà en soi une représentation hybride, une tête d'éléphant associée à un corps humain. Outre les références récurrentes dans ses textes au panthéon hindou, cet intitulé laisse apparaître une intrigue similaire à *Captivity* dans laquelle la cause du déplacement forcé implique explicitement l'empire colonial. Le dernier segment du titre s'appuie sur des détails autobiographiques du parcours familial<sup>2</sup>. Il est intéressant de souligner l'implicite qui se dessine entre «*bidesh*» et «*desh*» dans lequel peut se reconnaître l'opposition entre «*routes*» et «*roots*» des théoriciens de la globalisation. Dans certaines localités du nord-est de l'Inde et du Bangladesh, en langue sylheti, «*desh*» fait référence au lieu communautaire et de résidence familiale, «*bidesh*» renvoie à l'ailleurs, «*bideshi*» désigne l'étranger<sup>3</sup>.

Il ne s'agit plus de voir l'identité comme unitaire, mais au contraire d'en saisir les contours à travers le mouvement, l'interconnexion, la mixité des références. Les personnages des titres sont des créatures qui prennent possession de leur identité, se métamorphosent en des formes nouvelles, inédites. Dans les œuvres graphiques, il est particulièrement tangible de rencontrer des créatures mi-oiseaux mi-femmes donnant un aperçu de ce monde, d'une culture nouvelle en train de se faire. En sous texte, se lit une représentation des cultures postcoloniales travaillées par des constructions et des sociabilités diasporiques. Les titres affirment fortement le principe de mobilité – une mobilité à l'œuvre dans les construits identitaires –, alors que la conception classique tend à se polariser sur les constances communautaires maintenues à travers le temps et l'espace. «*The complexity of composition, your origin is not recognized by a singular Nation*<sup>5</sup>», prévient Rina. Cette approche postnationale s'incarne particulièrement dans les procédures de fabrication de ses sculptures – peut-être plus que dans les sculptures elles-mêmes – faites de l'assemblage de matériaux aux origines diverses et aux trajectoires distordues.

Elle donne, malgré tout, une résonnance autobiographique et pousse à appréhender son travail sous les termes d'une mythologie individuelle. La lecture autobiographique semble d'autant plus séduisante qu'inlassablement revient le référent féminin en acteur des enjeux posés par le texte. Mais lorsqu'elle se prononce à ce sujet, l'artiste corrige : «*"She" is human and unknowable undefined – While he is in exile. In mythological narratives, the "she" is on trial bewildering unrealized rejected, abject. She is not alone and in this I mean all that contests he is she in this resistance to defined binary. She reaches to be connected to blur definition and containment to contagious and linked, invested in change transformation, border less and mobile. Mobility/freedom resists time and space, history drawn out of land marked and ordered circular gaps.*<sup>6</sup>» Les thèmes qui travaillent les titres sont évoqués dans ces propos, il n'empêche, la récurrence de cette référence féminine renforce la présence d'un personnage unique qui traverse les textes et les péripeties.

Dans le cas de Rina, le titre est conçu après la réalisation de la pièce – «*when I find myself for the first time a viewer examine my own work. I take this other identity to reflect on the work taking some freedom to realize that the text can often lead the image and it can speak to add another layer of meaning*<sup>7</sup>». Le travail ne semble vraiment terminé que lorsque l'objet créé est doté de l'intitulé qui le fera passer d'artefact visuel au statut d'œuvre à part entière. Le titre se capte à la jonction de la production et de la réception. Il ne se veut pas illustration ou scénario à partir duquel la pièce émergerait, au contraire c'est l'œuvre qui active un récit à partir d'indices qui lient le texte à l'objet auquel il se rapporte. Le titre ne vient pas déposséder l'œuvre de son autonomie, il faudrait plutôt envisager la relation entre la pièce et son titre comme le serait un diptyque.

On se retrouve donc dans une relation où le textuel ne l'emporte pas sur l'objet. Il n'offre pas de solution, même si le réflexe premier du spectateur est de construire le titre dans une relation métaphorique, descriptive ou même illustrative de l'œuvre. Le spectateur cherche à repérer dans l'ordre du texte des éléments qui se rapportent à la pièce. Cette inclinaison s'établit d'autant plus naturellement que l'aspect narratif du texte est soutenu par le figuratif des sculptures ou des œuvres graphiques.



*She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesha who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself shipwrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother's full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and groomed a ram-like under stress, 2011*

# Sculptures

*Captivity* est évident de ce point de vue : la cage, la vigne, les oiseaux de la sculpture se retrouvent ordonnés au sein du texte qui socle en retour la sculpture dans un tissu narratif. *Western Style* renvoie à ce personnage hybride habillé à l'occidental, sa tête protubérante dans laquelle on pourrait voir une trompe, le Ganesh du texte peut-être. En fait, seule la première partie du titre peut se rattacher à la sculpture, la suite nous entraîne vers une autre dimension. Pas certain que le texte éclaire totalement les pièces, en revanche, il les déplace au sein d'un récit.

Si l'on veut bien admettre le travail de Rina selon ce dispositif de diptyque, de représentation qui combine le visuel et le textuel, il est possible de circuler autrement à travers son travail. Le texte est peut-être trop à l'étroit dans sa fonction de titre : le sortir du cartel pour l'exposer comme une partie intégrante de l'œuvre, peut-être imprimé sur les cimaises, modifierait sa relation à l'œuvre qu'il accompagne. Cette opération pourrait du même coup changer la perspective du travail et donner toute sa place à la narration qui traverse l'œuvre de Rina Banerjee.

1. Pierre-Marc de Biasi, Marianne Jakobi, Ségolène Le Men (dir.), *La Fabrique du titre. Nommer les œuvres d'art*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2012.

2. Pour un commentaire de la pièce par l'artiste : [www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJkOcAukEn0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJkOcAukEn0)

3. Cf. Katy Gardner, « Desh-Bidesh: Sylheti Images of Home and Away », dans *Man*, vol. xxviii, n° 1, 1993, p. 1-15. Dans cet article l'anthropologue montre que le terme *bidesh* est associé à la migration et à l'économie qui en découle tandis que *desh* est lié au domaine de l'identité du groupe, de la spiritualité et de la famille.

4. Lorsque ma sculpture a été intégrée à la Biennale de Whitney en 2000, j'avais pleinement conscience de l'impact du titre de l'œuvre. Cette sculpture faisait référence à la maladie infectieuse comme racine de l'évidente mondialisation de nos liens, et l'œuvre était très précisément liée à l'épidémie de SIDA dont on croyait à tort qu'elle serait éradiquée en 2000. L'épidémie était un problème pour les Africains et les Indiens. Pour les cartels, le musée [Whitney Museum of American Art] ne voulait pas d'un titre plus long que « Infectious Migration ».

5. "Elle" est humaine et mystérieusement indéfinie – alors que lui est en exil. Dans les récits mythologiques, "elle" subit le procès, curieusement non reconnue, rejetée, méprisable. Elle n'est pas seule : je veux dire par là que la seule chose qui s'oppose à lui, c'est elle, avec sa résistance à toute binarité définie. Elle atteint à une désignation floue, confinement, contagion, engagée qu'elle est dans une mutation,

sans frontières, mobile. La mobilité/liberté résiste au temps et à l'espace ; l'histoire du pays a dessiné et organisé des espaces circulaires.

6. Quand je me trouve pour la première fois en position de spectateur face à mon propre travail, j'utilise cette autre identité pour réfléchir sur l'œuvre avec une certaine liberté, et je réalise que le texte peut souvent guider l'image, qu'il peut par ses mots lui ajouter une autre strate de sens.



Rina Banerjee in her studio in Garment District, New York, 2015



Rina Banerjee in her studio in Garment District, New York, 2015



Tropicalization of nature,  
Henri Rousseau restraint,  
2007



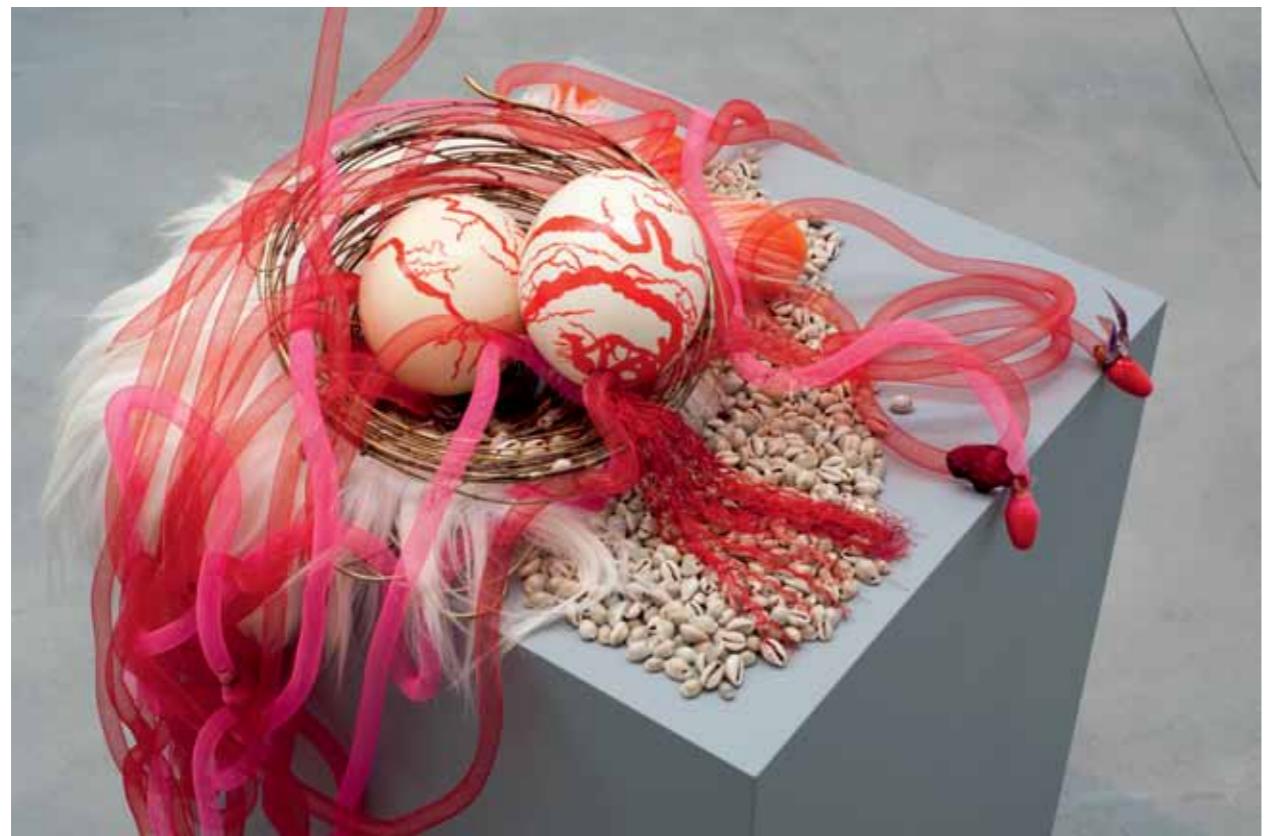
She dazzled the gardener with her branches so  
brazen, so feathered and fearless, she warmed his  
breath, tickled his taste and then reached deeper  
with horn and nails to puncture his need to greed.  
Greed indeed that sent her branches to bleed at  
harvest's knock, 2007



From the oyster's shell it fell  
with a neck of dangling bells a  
flirtatious alligator who put upon  
us a bodily spell, 2006



Wondering heron, 2007



To touch two genders too  
quickly made by god to be  
eternally apart, his world and  
hers was nested, entangled,  
2012



When could this "Oriental Flower" bloom  
is it's virtues of native curled into its  
own, pitted with an alien heritage, ethnic  
co-habitation and unnatural segregation  
unveiled will it then leave place gasping  
for a way out into our volatile air to bloom  
again, 2009



Ground had risen to sprout new plant, uttered  
first spoken its difference from black black  
soil toward a white tight sky, a colored sapling  
winged but bashful gifted a diversity with one  
sharp bite of chromosomes monstrous as it  
devoured what it is in air and earth to live again  
each time different slanted time, 2013





Difference must leave its cave and cease  
to be monster, not a level thorny and pointed  
pierce to emasculate the persistence of  
powerful middle – fat and feathery finds fault  
with it neck, arm and ankle, 2013



Clarified butter, sesame oil, coconut fat and mustard paste could not untangle or unravel the tail end of her long line - she was like scattered flower pink shrimp everywhere and anywhere perfumed with staying power her Devine Naga permanently our lover, 2014



2007

2011

*Shows at Galerie Nathalie Obadia  
Paris/Bruxelles*



2009

2012

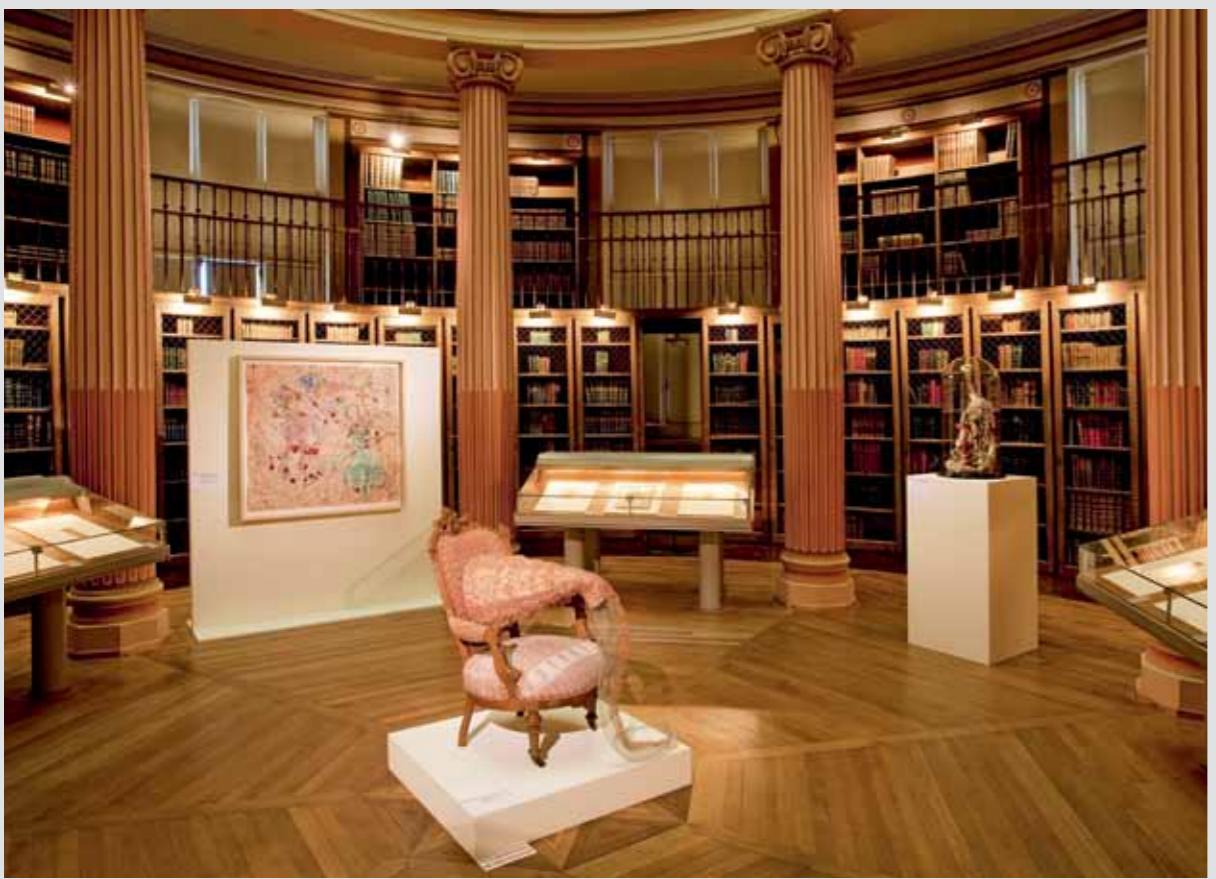




Take Me, Take Me,  
Take Me... to the  
Palace of Love,  
2003

For the entire city  
a fragile hostility  
dazzling silks and no  
constraints, 2009

*Chimeras of the India & the West*  
musée Guimet, Paris, 2011



Her black growth  
produced such a  
sprinkle of intimate  
fears that a  
shadow of silver  
emerged from it  
to watch herself  
watching and  
followed all worldly  
movements, 2006

Upon civilizing  
home an absurd  
and foreign fruit  
grew, ripened, made  
food for the others,  
grew snout, tail, and  
appendage like no  
other, 2010

She slithers, she  
slides, she smiles at  
the Gardens edge,  
2007



The world as  
burnt fruit - when  
empires feuded for  
populations and  
plantations, buried  
in colonial and  
ancient currency  
a Gharial appeared  
from an inky melon -  
hot with blossom  
sprang forth to  
swallow the world  
not yet whole as  
burnt fruit, 2009







Blue Boy, a princely devil : no other gender with no other place to go, no, no - baby girls toppled and thrown like popcorn swallowed and chewed. Blue Boy devours what is unwanted, this princely deity and but at once a devil will answer your prayer for each couple fertile and friendly to choose a boy born to world is to choose the world not without a tail lost free to chase it's nose, 2013



Explores not fortune tellers travel back and forth at last to tell you whats not and whats what, they maybe made made of every leather his head looks to too many paths curious of all that appears vast, whats remote and feared and repulsive can, 2014



What on earth can be more blessed by mine nostalgia's rest... in the presence of the overwhelming white her tedious ethnic dress made her effortlessly brute - a fruit of nature as is I, her sinking sweat, her reliable ethnographic addiction brought upon her a self and a self-inflicted gaze, 2008



Little Red Riding hood and her tattle tail, 2010



Upon civilizing home an absurd and foreign fruit grew, ripened, made food for the others, grew snout, tail, and appendage like no other, 2010



Her captivity was once someone's treasure and even pleasure but she blew and flew away took root which grew, we knew this was like no other feather, a third kind of bird that perched on vine intertwined was neither native nor her queens daughters, a peculiar other, 2011



With or without name she was blue and  
who knew when she would slip into another  
mood for her understandable unwillingness  
to do, to speak to, to feel and determine  
her next move rests in her nest as would  
a Refugee, 2009



In thick bush and among thieving  
nomads devotion was mined and all  
the world could be saved as missionary  
was made into medicine, 2014





Make a me a summary of the world, she was his guide and had travelled on camel, rhino, elephant and kangaroo, dedicated to dried plants, glass houses – for medical study, vegetable sexuality, self-pollination, fertilization her reach pierced the woods country by country, 2014



She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesha who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself shipwrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and grew ram-like under stress, 2011



Winter Flower – Raw materials from sea and from foul and even from some exotic mice was eaten by a world hungry for commerce made these into flower, disguised could be savoured alongside whitened rice, 2010



A flock of geese, ugly duckling,  
few golden eggs well stolen  
which of these is she - who is  
mother country?, 2012



Soldier: overseas and out of place his  
species seeded dead to grow as common  
place, bore beautiful flowers of wound,  
carnage discovered a resin sticky like  
sweat. He had courage and loyalty when  
everyone wept and came home emptied  
while we slept, 2014



Disrobed, torn,  
ripped by wind,  
in open ocean,  
in land, in this  
far, far exterior  
shipwrecked with  
boastful flesh on  
land's edge she  
landed, 2014

Beneath the surface  
away from land the  
wreckage of big  
Empire split to be  
spoken, not to be  
broken, pitted and  
potent with pollut-  
ants powered to  
command did this to  
press three to four  
nations always ready  
to leap into motion,  
in brief eruptions  
came emancipation,  
cultural collisions,  
tumbled and trem-  
bled to form brave  
nation, 2015

She drew a  
premature prick,  
in a flutter of  
transgressions,  
abject by birth  
she new not what  
else to do with this  
untouchable reach,  
unknowable body as  
she was an ancient  
savage towed into  
his modern present,  
2011

Gargantuan  
Crawler, 2014

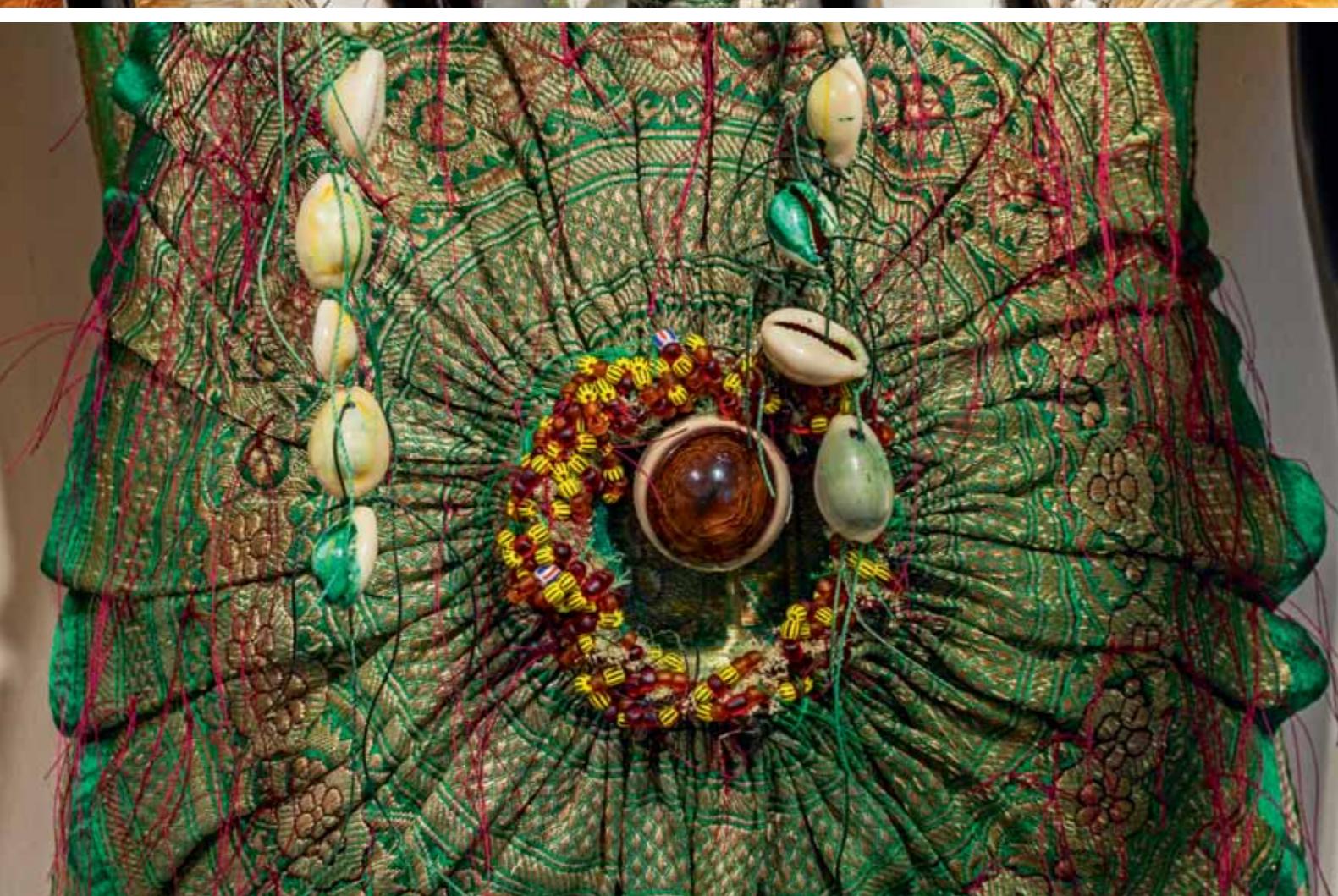
Mangroves of Alien  
and Native froze  
and foamed, rose  
and rose, opened  
and closed and one  
in all grew calm who  
knew, 2014

*Migration's Breath*  
Ota Fine Arts, Singapore, 2015



Under the wander-  
ing reach these  
are the parts of the  
world wind water  
lava light live, 2014

The globe warmed  
like egg and once  
thrice with crack to  
open she could pick  
and pick by hook of  
finger, eating-eaten  
in the curl of nails  
one a terrible beauty  
of faithful spouse she  
is yellow in all battles  
“with sun when moon  
plays like a mouse”,  
2014



She drew a premature prick, in a flutter  
of transgressions, abject by birth  
she new not what else to do with this  
untouchable reach, unknowable body as  
she was an ancient savage towed into  
his modern present, 2011



Ethnic and Race braided long hairs and coiled and entwined. Oh how it made and made ,ate, ate in shade, slumbered and soiled her reflection to see this faked-nations make me small sweet cakes, 2014







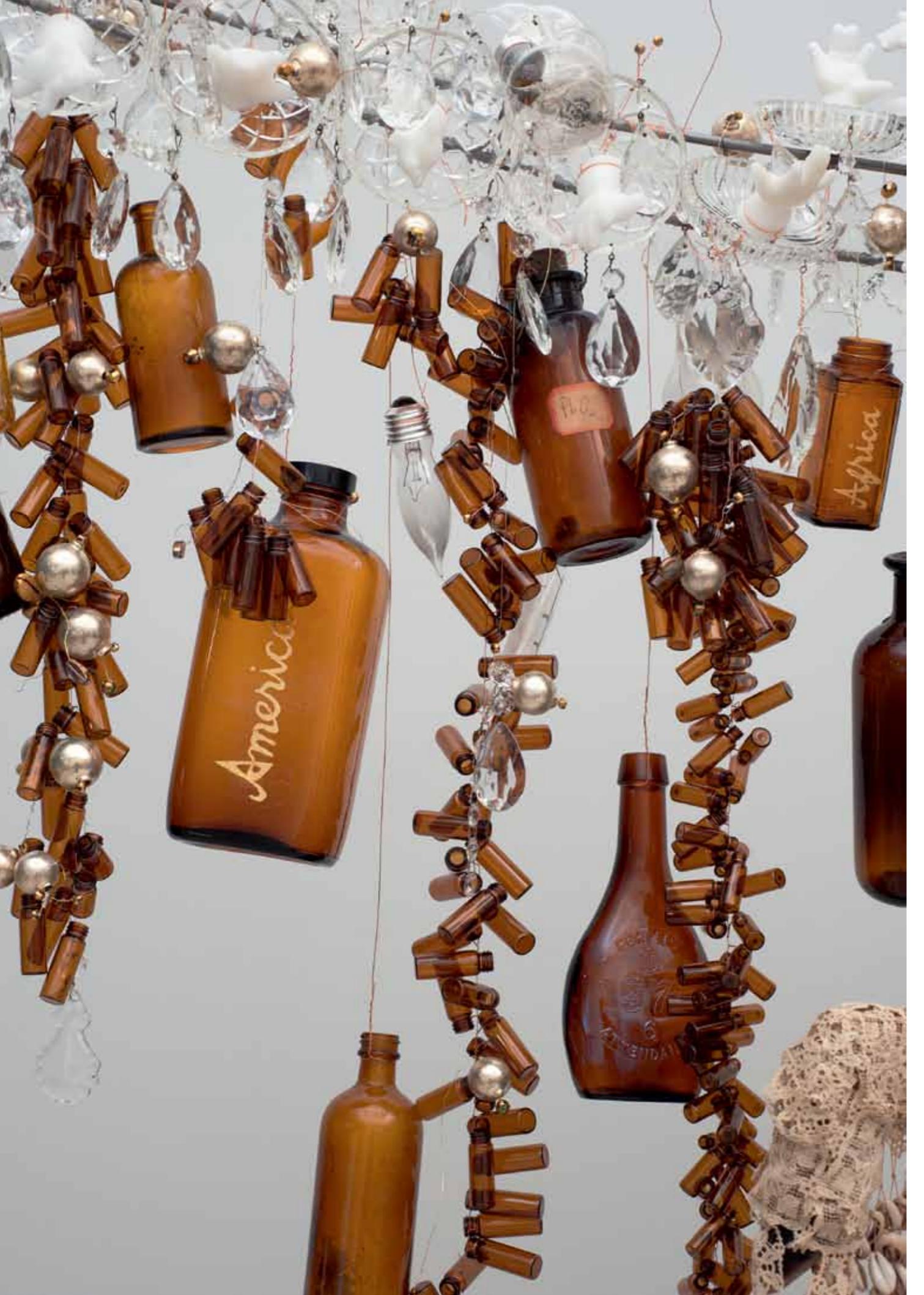
Under the wandering reach  
these are the parts of the  
world wind water lava light  
live, 2014



She's my country... her breathe exploded of putrid death and folly. Her tresses snagged the most prickly greed, lured lonely cultures to wet their beds severed family and prayed on hope... she is at war, 2009



A lady of commerce - Wooden. Hers is a transparent beauty, her eager sounds, her infinite and clamorous land and river, ocean and island, earth and sky... all contained, bottled for delivery to an open hole, a commerce so large her arms stretched wide and with her sulfurous halo - a ring of glass, she will swallow it all, 2012





Wild and Monstrous, enhanced and induced,  
artificially mutated, genetically mimicked  
- this was her human garden, persistently  
disloyal to everything living, inert and or even  
plastic. She was too curious to rest flung  
herself into a infinite cosmic dance severed  
herself from home and internal bone, 2012



My turtle dove a muskrat  
bird she was, 2009



Flourish me different in wind and drift  
and breezes set sail always in motion and  
mindful adaptation, in not yet settled in  
fertile selection, in open folds and cease-  
less creases, in remote reaches this was  
wrinkled and snagged... 2014



A heart of two anchors, take one bird and take one  
butcher, from ear to ear, it's a familiar end yet she  
was with a wide grin, while meat and medicine  
poured, even played with the poverty of country,  
was still an unknown friend! So she withdrew her  
smile to clear one anchor that was not her faith,  
the other was my mother's brother, enchanted  
china, giggled with Africa and strayed to stay in  
whips of lamb leather, feathers stained, her shells  
would raise the last anchor human hate, 2011



In a Land Far Far Away, 2007



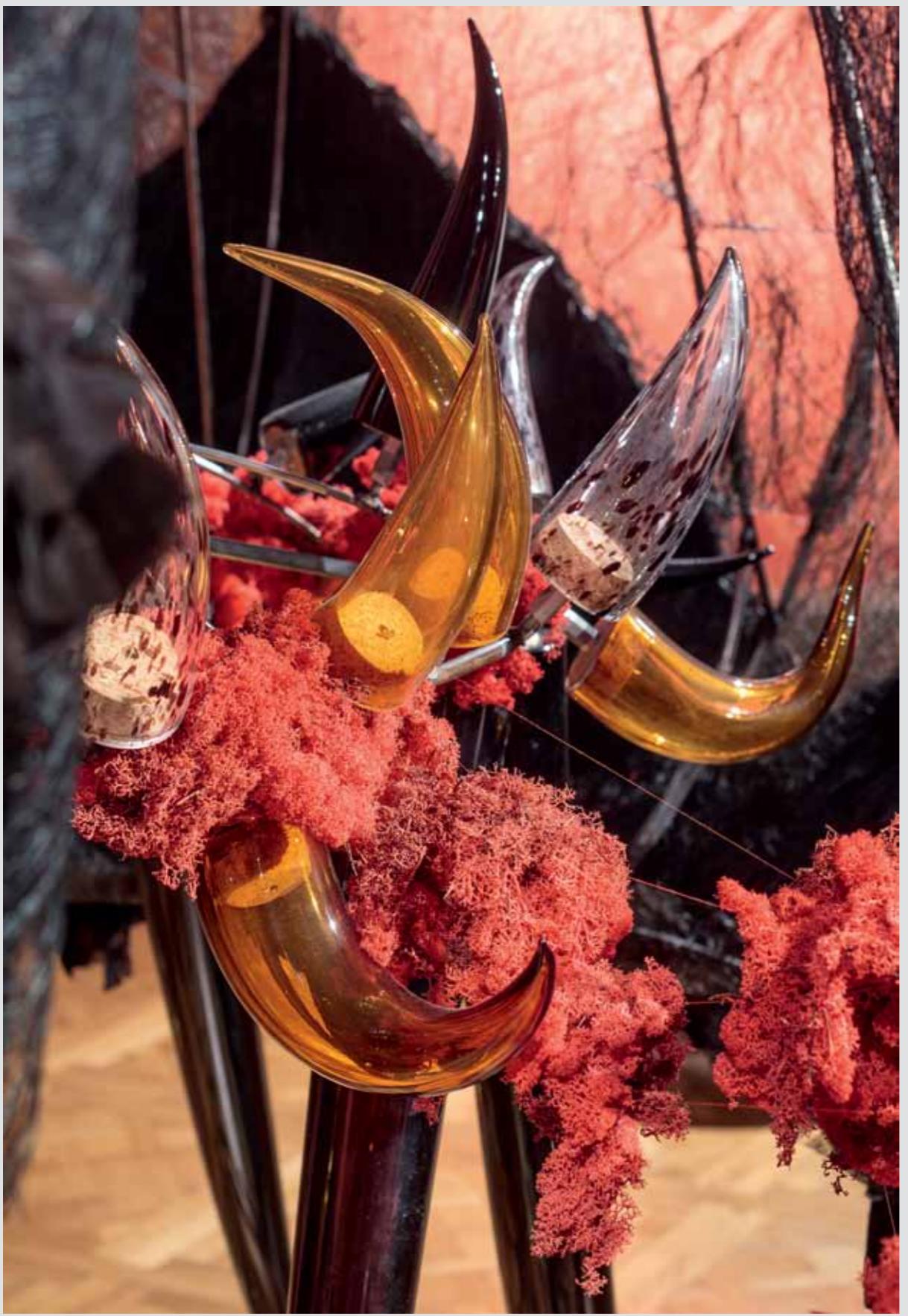
In an unnatural storm a world fertile, fragile and desirous, polluted with excess pollination, hungry to seize an untidy commerce also gave an unknowable size to some mongrel possessions, excreted a promiscuous heritage, sprayed her modern love, breathed deeper than any one place arching her back threw new roots that glitter on hard ground, make fire of crown, empire, religion bathe unseasonable hope to alter what could not be warm, 2008



A very dry and very tidy heat swept into her land,  
 lulled her country to a simmering sleep and all the  
 while - culture was left ungroomed and grisly - grew  
 an African horn, paddle her vessel, grew wild green  
 Chinese umbrellas dry and dirty skirted about to  
 catch each gentle wind for sale, blew hard a creamy  
 and fertile commerce, 2008



Mangroves of Alien and Native  
 froze and foamed, rose and rose,  
 opened and closed and one in  
 all grew calm who knew, 2014



*In the Darkest Blossom was a Mythical Beast,  
Mythical Island, Mythical Sea*  
55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Glassstress, Venice, 2013





*A world lost*,  
Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution,  
Washington DC, 2013



Paintings  
& Drawings



Her breath of blood and her  
hair of glass could siren all  
disease to fantastic end,  
2006



Charmed by Climate and Cottony  
Faces, 2006



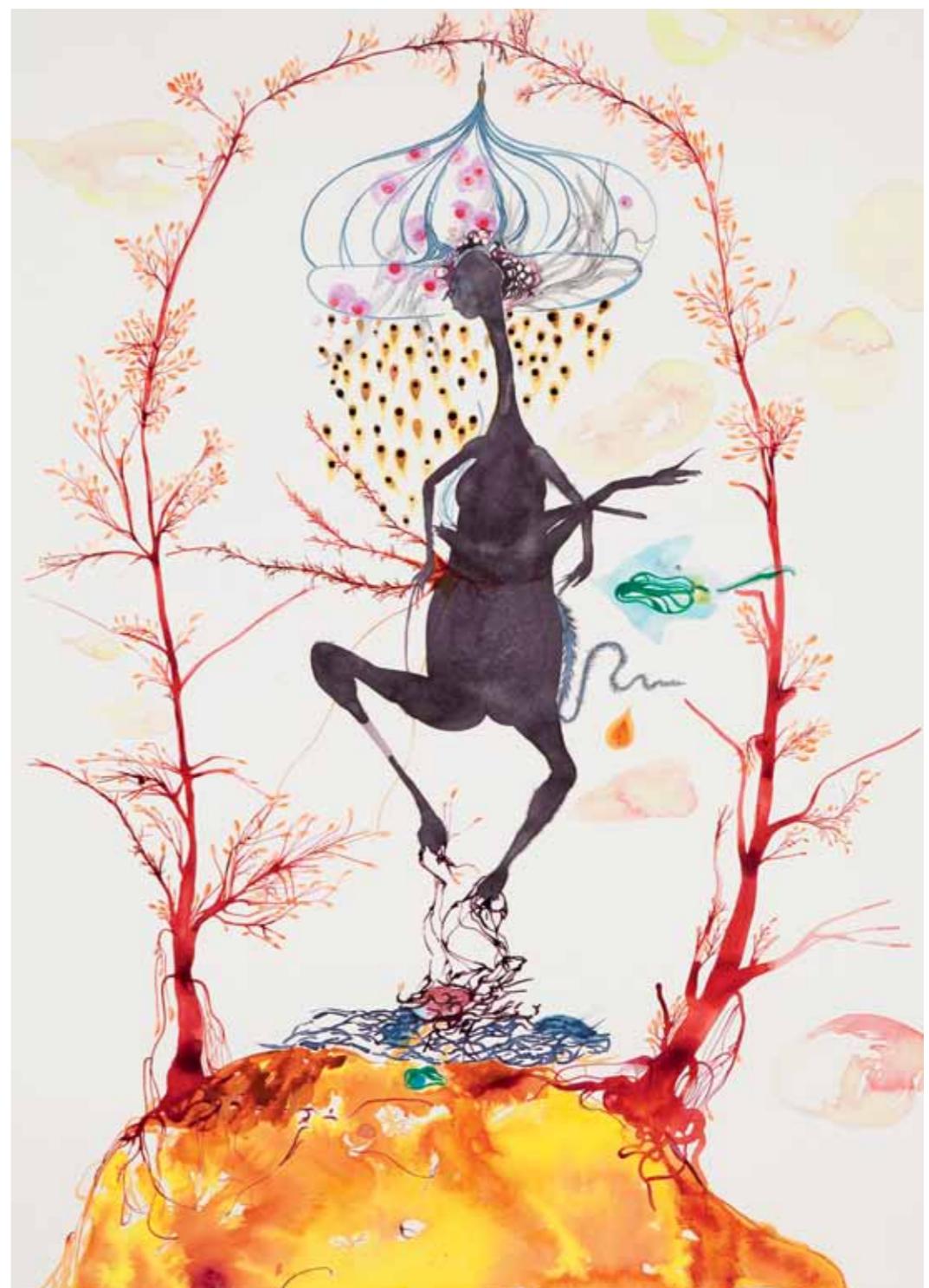
Weakened by velvet waters,  
hot flowers and mossy  
clouds he became anxious  
and fetal like, 2009



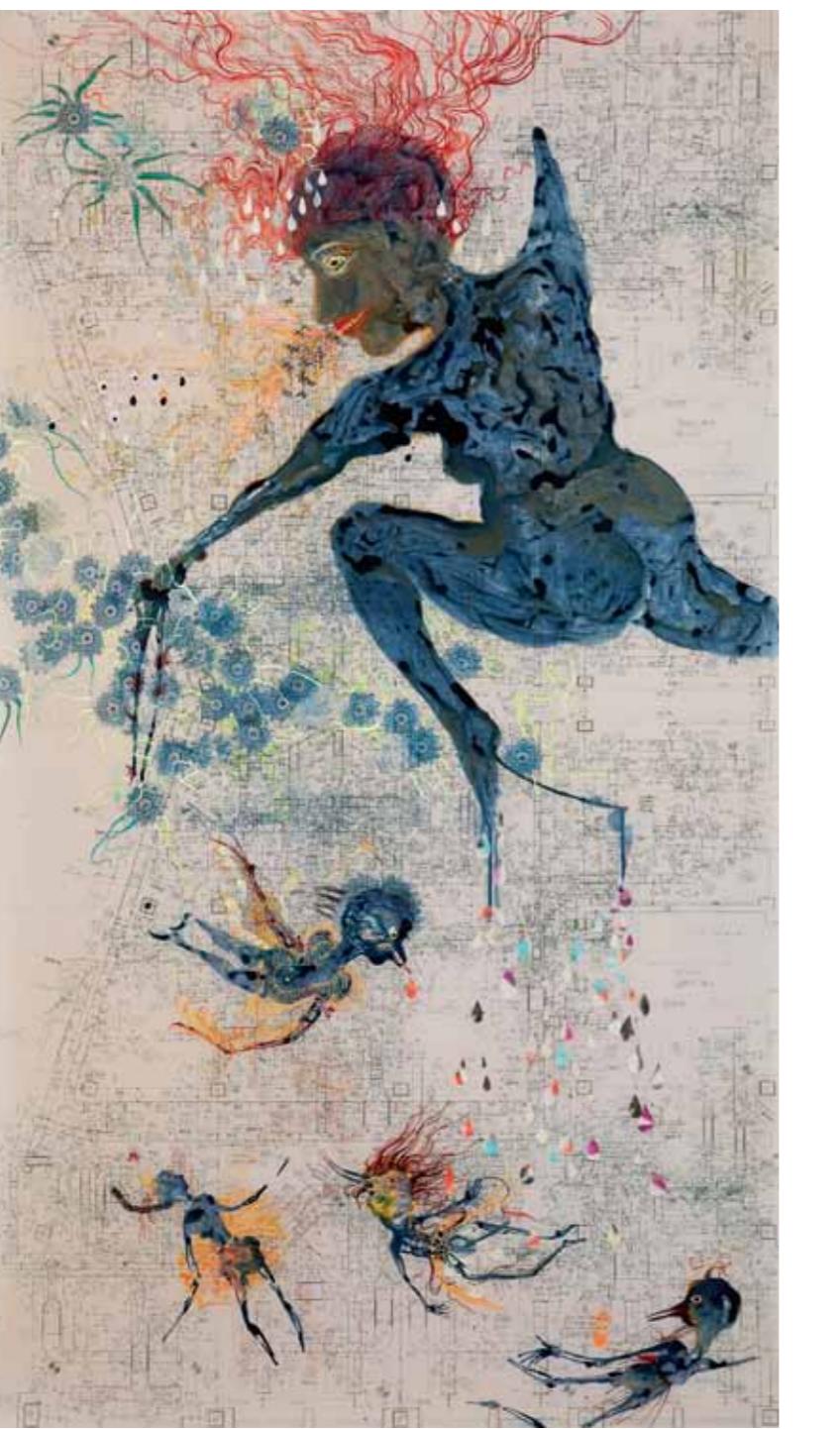
He was chosen for his fantastic spray of  
pattern and Flirting orange lashes and note  
that his bite or sting Could silence any  
apparent indifference to human concerns  
- his fruit was... compassion, 2008



In making Nation the Queen  
plucked her two bodies as one  
punch in time, 2009



In a puzzeling and awkward move-  
ment given nothing hidden in its  
way - why or how can two places  
rooted in one would, could sink  
shed and swell to reach high and  
beyond to meet merge to become  
one place yet again, 2009



With oily body and oil producing folly her  
letters and ideas not fluid but greasy  
shined on earth a glamour for greed that  
other creeds fell hungry with need, 2009







A collision central to our imagination,  
a god of one, one particle without mission  
clapping bones, clatter, freed red fruit for  
a million seasons, 2012



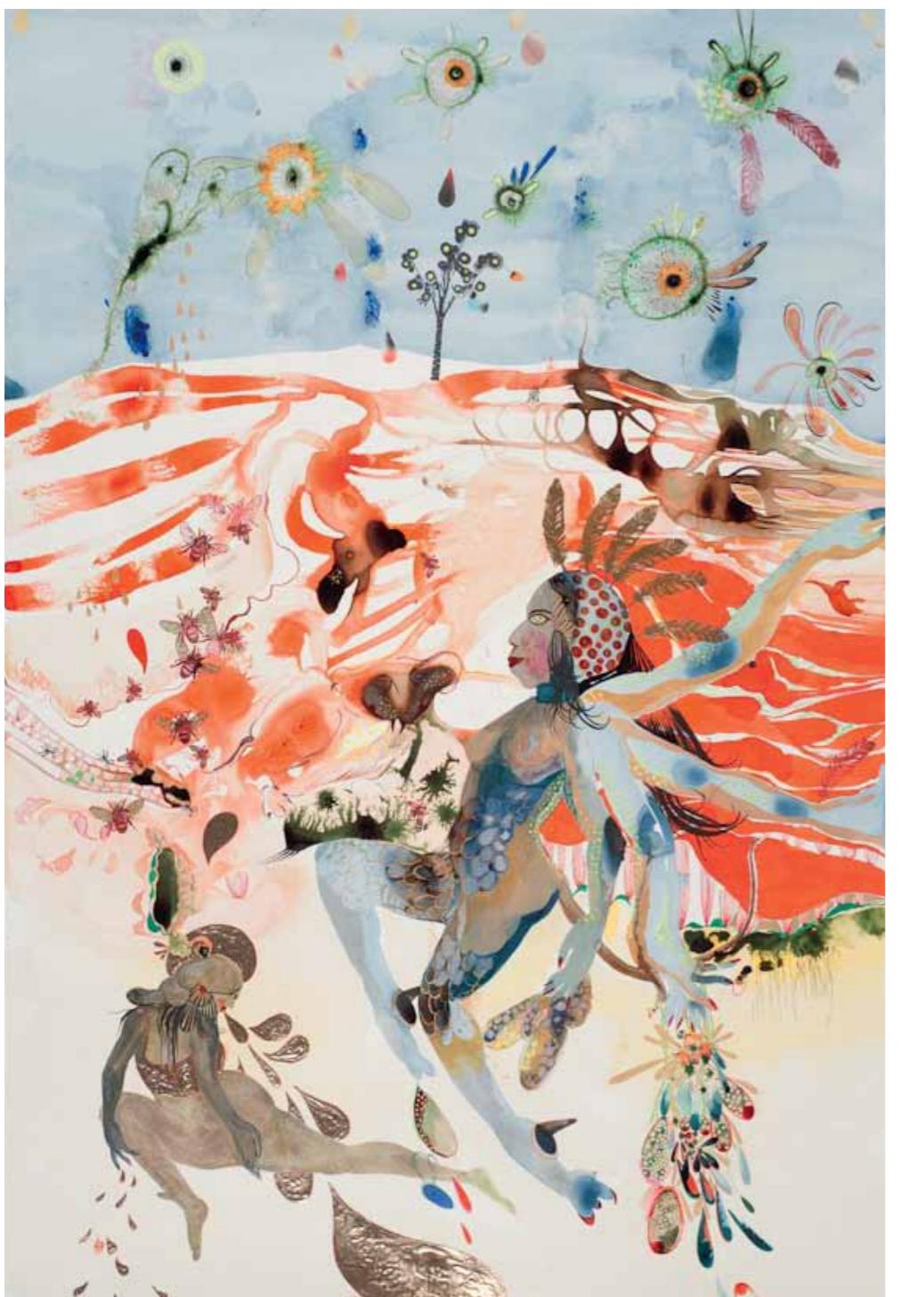
Without morning, throughout day and without end she  
cooled the burning of land with thick threads of her bodies  
blood, sweat, and ample tears as there was not water, not  
mist, not cloud, not rain and her bird she who did blow  
a collective wind from the breath of one thousand oppressions  
that would embrace the whole earth, erase misery that once  
was wet with human need, 2012



With beak and some bacon she  
lowered her tail bone at waters edge  
looked high up at the sky, 2012

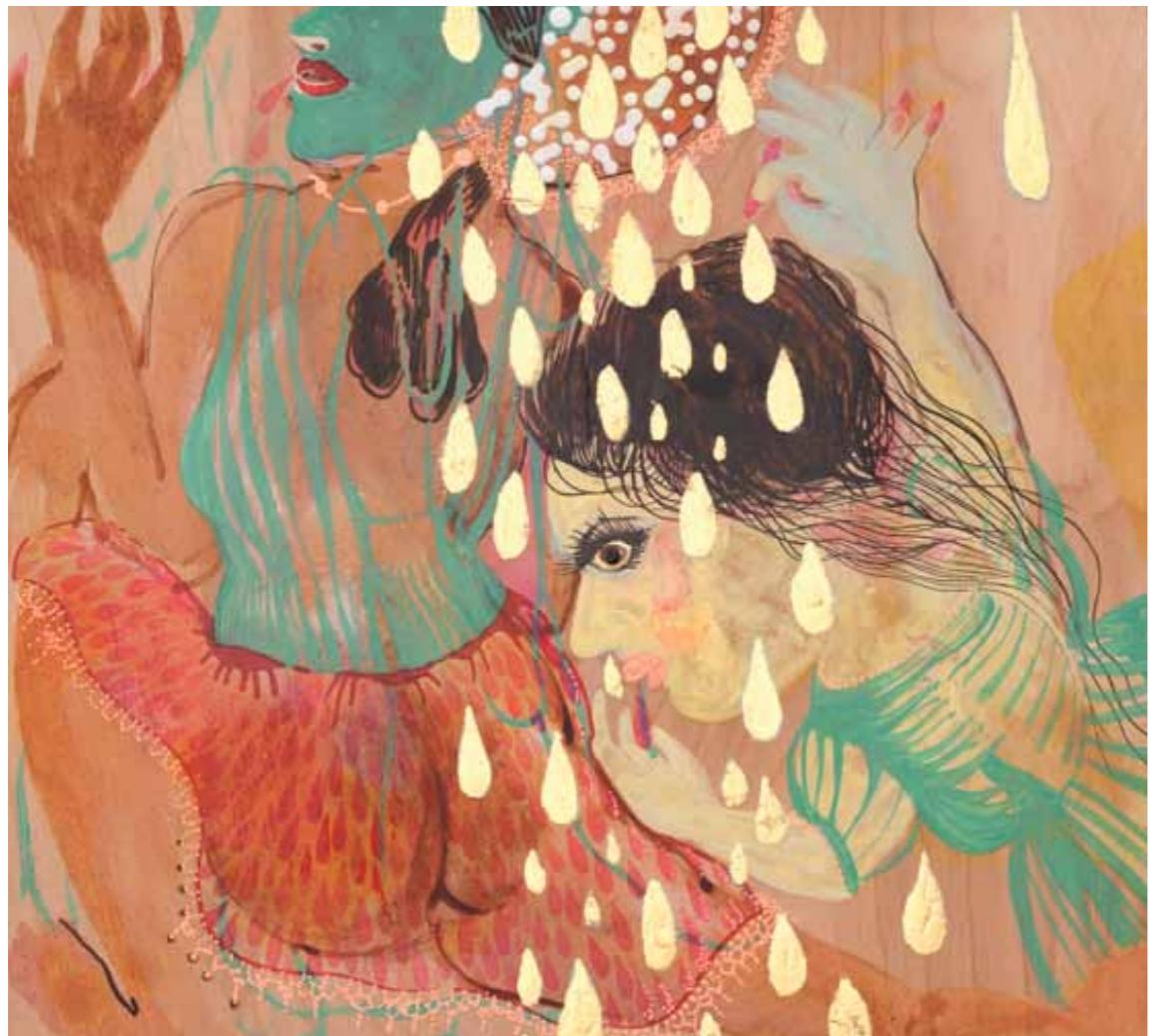


Like night burglars with bated breath he and she her  
family's neighbors who knew pronounced and claimed  
generation 20,000 as their family name like glue,  
qualified 14 cultures as home, for all of them knew that  
the evidence, sweeping and tireless, wryly joyous would  
rise that they all cling to fear if they, 2011



A trickle of lava and migration's  
pollutants preserved the earth as a  
liquid landscape but Hanuman and  
Sita skipped and sang expanding  
their populations, 2012





Her reach extended – to grasp this other body, collected teal colored ropes, teal string and threads from all that could have been cloth or face was all but drawn out, then sucked in with mouth and in this eating the world showered gold tears, 2012

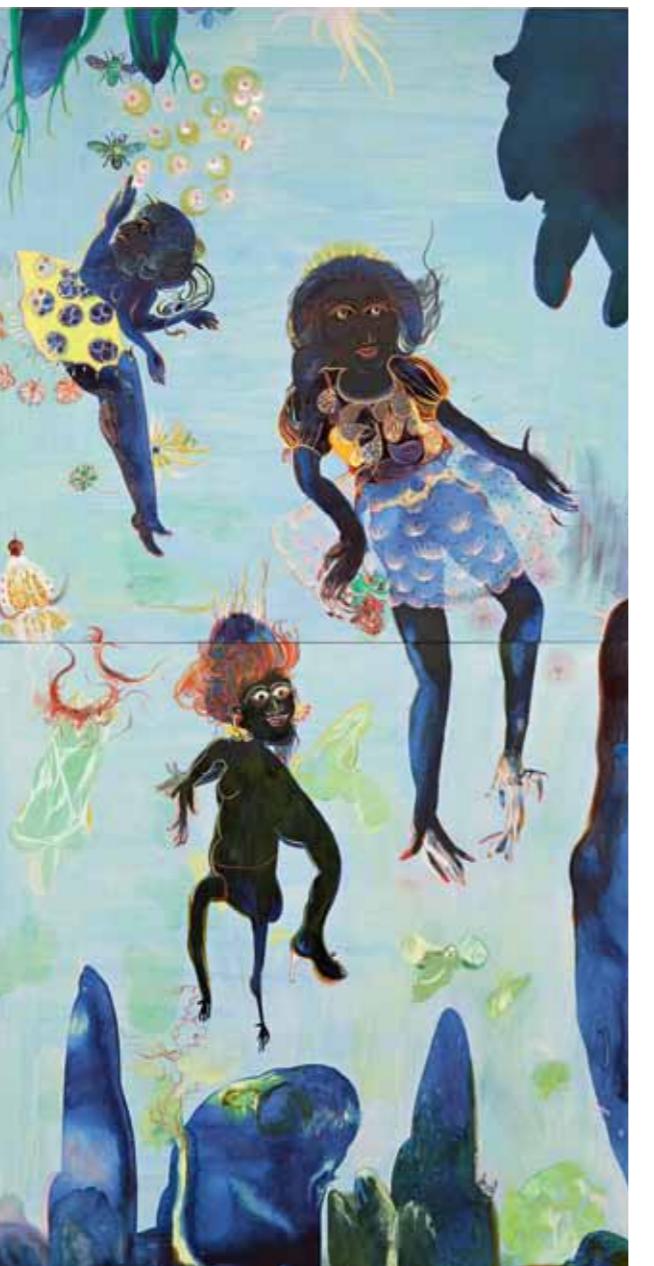


Lovely was this witch who drew her orange eggs, 2013



Beneath the surface away from land the wreckage of big empire split to be spoken, not milky, not broken, pitted and potent with pollutants pressed three or four nations to leap into motion in brief eruptions emancipation, commerce, cultural collisions, collected ceremonies, not traditions  
– not even Christian, 2014

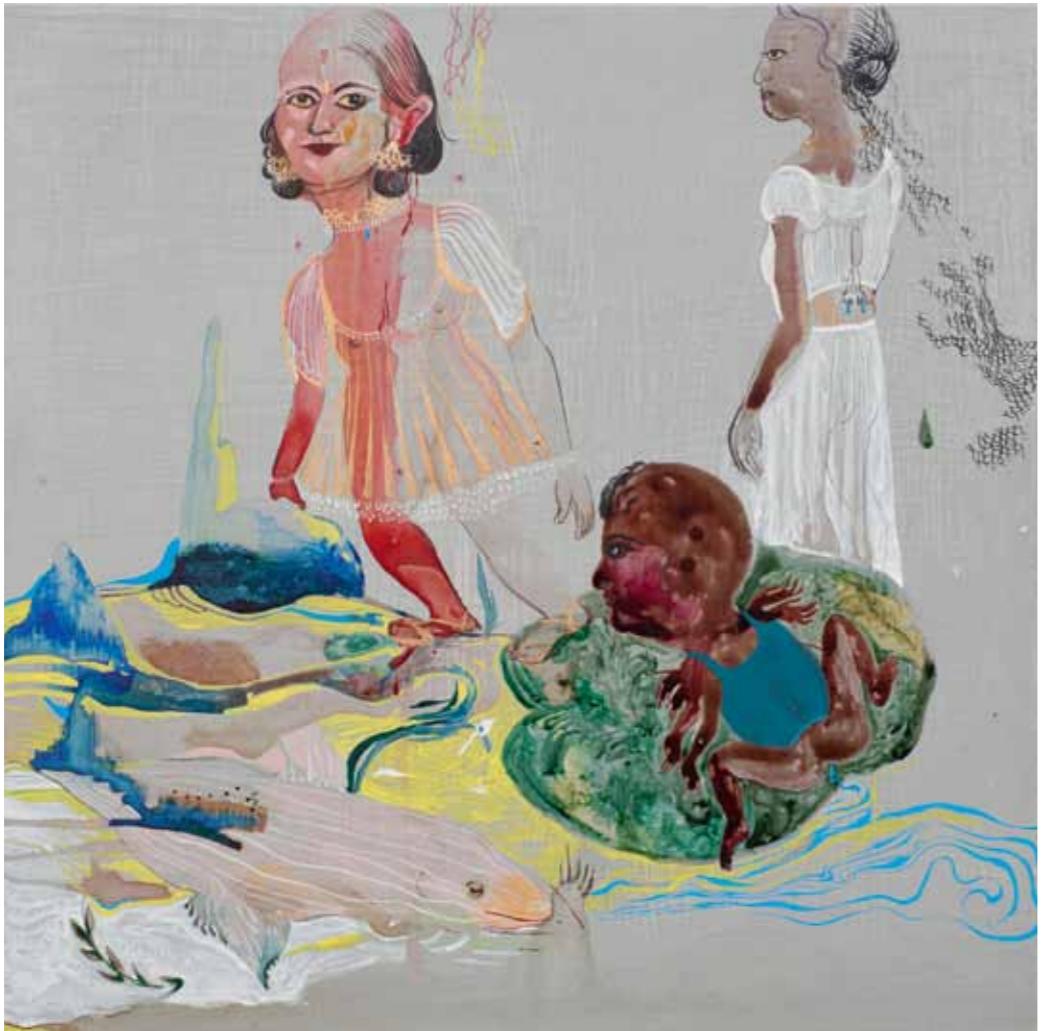




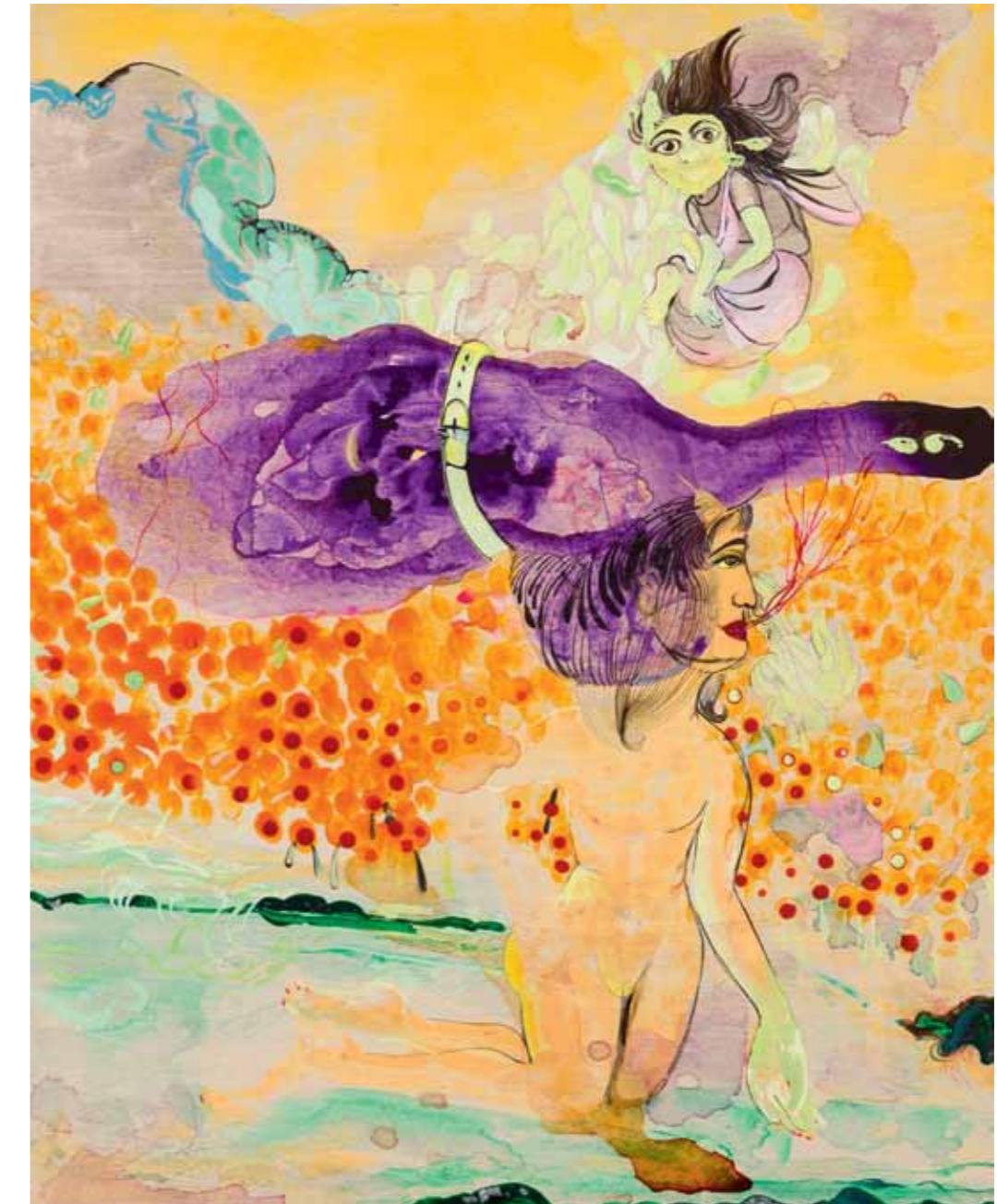
These Oceans can open, spray scent,  
come and send away, piles of tight circles,  
criss cross to wet lands at the waters  
edge, faulted five and so many cities,  
deposited pollinated people and heated  
commerce to coalesce, 2015



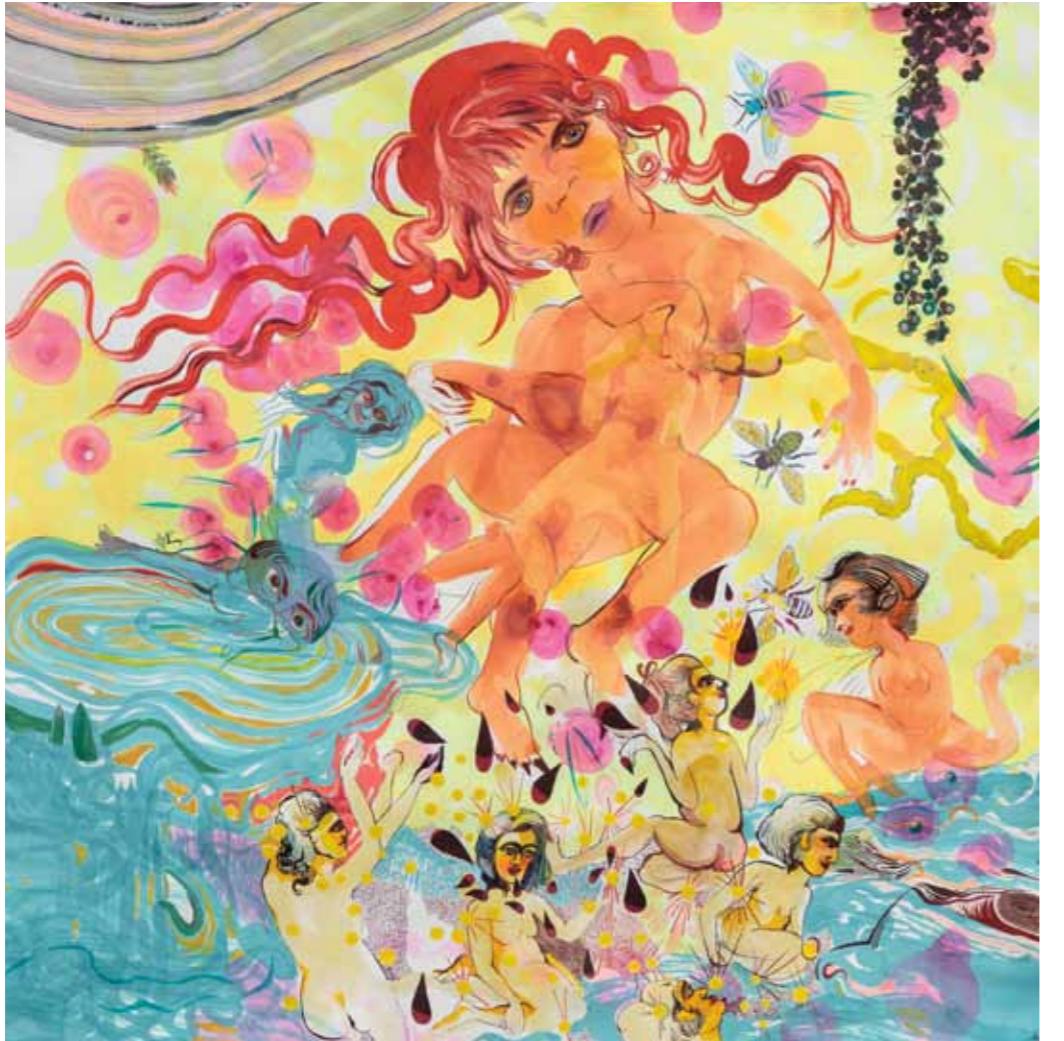
With Cunning and some evolutionary  
kindness she tasted all things with  
delight and a curious fear that remained  
timeless, 2013



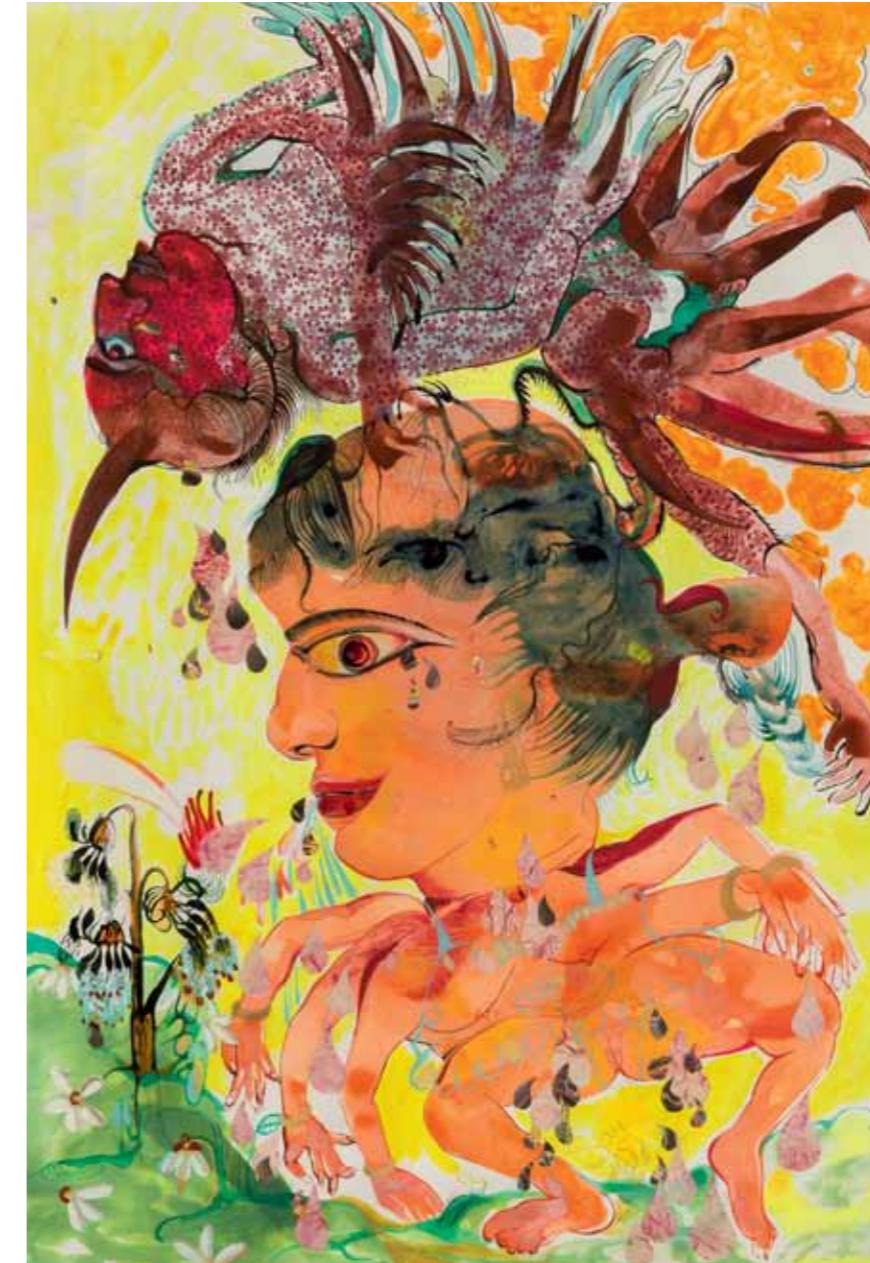
Blistered she began a new as frog  
and widow tempered by colonial and  
victorian age daintiness even and even  
native speakers knew that taste was  
weapon and pedestal for the few,  
2012-2013



Confined to a single brain she vehemently  
denied all against all advice, secured a  
earthly kneel to prop, her back, grew by  
mouth out her innovations to evolve and  
resolve the most valuable thought, spread  
rapidly her social primate call, 2013



Disrobed, torn, ripped by wind,  
in open ocean, in land, in this far,  
far exterior shipwrecked with  
boastful flesh on land's edge  
she landed, 2014



Gargantuan Crawler, 2014



The task, virtues of courage,  
loyalty and the perils of desire,  
fear, 2012



Virgin birth, worshippers  
path, 2012



In transplant of people battle of all  
things grew funny and fickle until new  
things could be gotten and old things  
forgotten, 2014





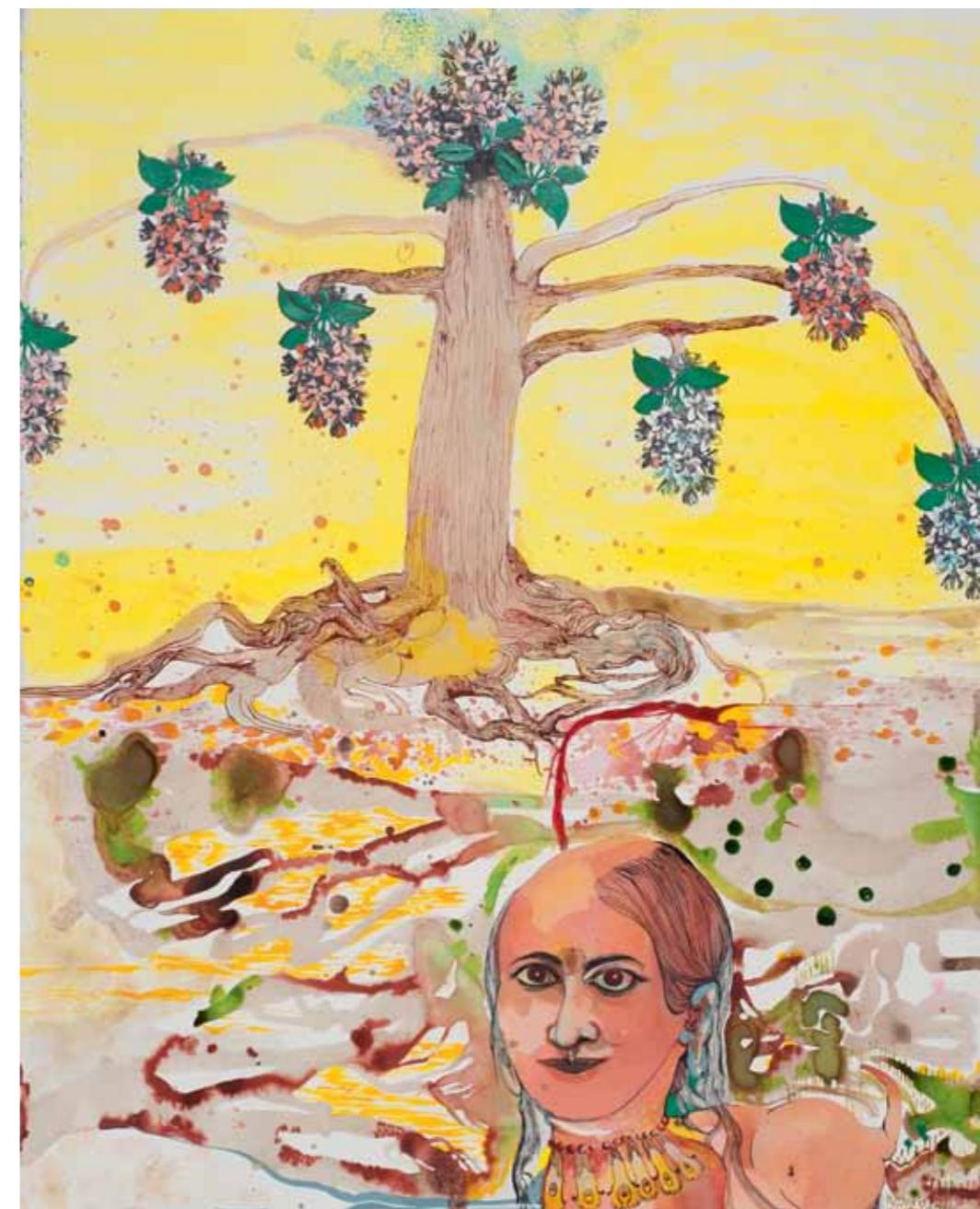
I have so much to tell you that  
no one should hear..., 2013



A Ring of selfless idealism transcended  
her humanity floated her above oceans  
visual bliss contained body and beauty  
beating its belly and banished the material  
for spiritual seasons, 2012



Sexual separation, 2012



The tree flowered immortal and  
wordless meaning in experience,  
temporal, innocent, 2012



Friendly Fertility and Fuel – when she twinkled  
the stars signaled and swallowed like they  
where eating green pickles. This and that  
went past one million years perhaps one pinky  
and truly inky cloud rushed and wrinkled this  
planet's surface with stinky new life an then  
an oily black carbon collected under rivers as  
fossils spoiled gave us some oil, 2012



Sweet Baby, 2014



Human traffic, 2015



# List of works

- 38.** *Tropicalization of nature, Henri Rousseau restraint*  
2007, cow horn, fans, light bulbs, dry gourd shell, feather fans, string, sticks, wire  
48 x 33 1/8 x 29 7/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 39.** *She dazzled the gardener with her branches so brazen, so feathered and fearless, she warmed his breath, tickled his taste and then reached deeper with horn and nails to puncture his need to greed. Greed indeed that sent her branches to bleed at harvest's knock*  
2007, deer horn, pigeon feather fan, brass bells, cotton thread, faux hair, faux fur, plastic flower, aluminum Chinese strainers  
32 x 21 x 29 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Private collection, USA
- 40.** *From the oyster's shell it fell with a neck of dangling bells a flirtatious alligator who put upon us a bodily spell*  
2006, metal bells, steel, eater fan, apple seed necklace, dry preserved alligator head, dry loofa  
13 1/8 x 23 5/8 x 42 1/2 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
- 41.** *Wondering heron*  
2007, ostrich eggs, horn, feathers, strings, 79 7/8 x 38 x 54 3/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2007, © photo, musée Guimet, Paris, dist. RMN/Raphaël Chipault/Benjamin Soligny
- 42.** *To touch two genders too quickly made by god to be eternally apart, his world and hers was nested, entangled*  
2012, steel, ostrich eggs  
10 x 13 x 14 in.  
Pedestal 31 7/8 x 21 5/8 x 21 5/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 43.** *When could this "Oriental Flower" bloom is it's virtues of native curled into its own, pitted with an alien heritage, ethnic co-habitation and unnatural segregation unveiled will it then leave place gasping for a way out into our volatile air to bloom again*  
2009, metal structure, feathers, plastic, wood, fabric, shells  
102 3/8 x 110 1/4 x 110 1/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, Private collection, Paris
- 44-45.** *Ground had risen to sprout new plant, uttered first spoken its difference from black black soil toward a white tight sky, a colored sapling winged but bashful gifted a diversity with one sharp bite of chromosomes monstrous as it devoured what it is in air and earth to live again each time different slanted time*  
2013, feathers, glass beads, glass vials, steel, wire, acrylic horn, ceramic ball and horn  
24 x 36 x 18 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts, 2013
- 46-47.** *Difference must leave its cave and cease to be monster, not a level thorny and pointed pierce to emasculate the persistence of powerful middle – fat and feathery finds fault with it neck, arm and ankle*  
2013, feather fans, light bulbs, glass tiger's eye, feather trim, steel, plastic, basket, glass beads, thread, ruffle trim, acrylic horn, ceramic horn  
24 x 36 x 15 5/8 in.  
Courtesy of the artist, Private collection
- 48-49.** *Clarified butter, sesame oil, coconut fat and mustard paste could not untangle or unravel the tail end of her long line – she was like scattered flower pink shrimp everywhere and anywhere perfumed with staying power her Devine Naga permanently our lover*  
2014, steel, textiles, beads, pearls, feather fan  
39 3/4 x 38 1/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2014 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
- 50.** *Show at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, 2007*  
*Show at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, 2009*  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2009 © photo, Musée Guimet, Paris, dist. RMN/Raphaël Chipault/Benjamin Soligny  
Kirin Nadar collection, New Delhi
- 51.** *Show at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, 2011*  
*Show at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, 2012*  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
- 52-53.** *Show "Chimeras of the India and the West" at Musée Guimet, Paris, 2011*  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2011, © photo, Musée Guimet, Paris, dist. RMN/Raphaël Chipault/Benjamin Soligny  
*Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... To the Palace of Love*  
2003, plastic, antique Anglo-Indian Bombay dark wood chair, steel and copper framework, floral picks, foam balls, cowrie shells, quilting pins, red coloured moss, antique stone globe, glass, synthetic fabric, shells, fake birds, 161 x 161 x 226 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2003, © photo, Musée Guimet, Paris, dist. RMN/Raphaël Chipault/Benjamin Soligny
- 54.** *Details*  
*The world as burnt fruit – when empires feuded for populations and plantations, buried in colonial and ancient currency a Gharial appeared from an inky melon – hot with blossom sprang forth to swallow the world not yet whole as burnt fruit*  
2009, fans, feather, cowrie shells, resin alligator, skull, globe, glass vials, light bulbs, gourds, steel wire, Japanese mosquito nets  
253 x 90 x 90 in.  
Kirin Nadar collection, New Delhi
- 55.** *Details*  
*Take Me, Take Me, Take Me... To the Palace of Love*  
2003, plastic, antique Anglo-Indian Bombay dark wood chair, steel and copper framework, floral picks, foam balls, cowrie shells, quilting pins, red coloured moss, antique stone globe, glass, synthetic fabric, shells, fake birds, 161 x 161 x 226 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2003, © photo, Musée Guimet, Paris, dist. RMN/Raphaël Chipault/Benjamin Soligny
- 56-57.** *Blue Boy, a princely devil: no other gender with no other place to go, no, no – baby girls toppled and thrown like popcorn swallowed and chewed. Blue Boy devours what is unwanted, this princely deity and but at once a devil will answer your prayer for each couple fertile and friendly to choose a boy born to world is to choose the world not without a tail lost free to chase it's nose*  
2013, glass, ceramic, glass beads, synthetic hair, metal jewelry, fresh water pearls, silk threads, shells, silver leaf, glass plate base and glass dome cover 30 x 20 x 10 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2013 Isabella del Frate Rayburn collection, USA
- 58.** *Upon civilizing home an absurd and foreign fruit grew, ripened, made food for the others, grew snout, tail, and appendage like no other*  
2010, plastic, antique Anglo-Indian Bombay dark wood chair, steel and copper framework, floral picks, foam balls, cowrie shells, quilting pins, red coloured moss, antique stone globe, glass, synthetic fabric, shells, fake birds  
40 1/8 x 30 x 40 1/8 in.  
Private collection, Switzerland
- 59.** *What on earth can be more blessed by mine nostalgia's rest... in the presence of the overwhelming white her tedious ethnic dress made her effortlessly brute – a fruit of nature as is I, her sinking sweat, her reliable ethnographic addiction brought upon her a self and a self-inflicted gaze*  
2008, gourd, vintage travel vanity box, faux hair braided bun, porcupine needles, gold trim, vintage porcelain doll head, shells, rhinestone, teflon fishing wire, metal wire basket, rabbit fur stole, light bulbs, pigeon feather fans, cowry shell choker and shoulder bangle, cotton sari, resin buffalo horns, silk strings, red powder sindur  
82 x 56 x 55 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 60-61.** *Little Red Riding hood and her tattle tail*  
2010, rooster feather, steel, knitted mesh, wood, rhinestone, deity eyes, wooden doll, mink fur, cowry shell, thread, 60 x 29 7/8 x 24 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2010 © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal Florence and Daniel Guerlain Collection, Paris
- 62.** *Upon civilizing home an absurd and foreign fruit grew, ripened, made food for the others, grew snout, tail, and appendage like no other*  
2010, plastic, antique Anglo-Indian Bombay dark wood chair, steel and copper framework, floral picks, foam balls, cowrie shells, quilting pins, red coloured moss, antique stone globe, glass, synthetic fabric, shells, fake birds, 40 1/8 x 30 x 40 1/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2010 © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal Private collection, Switzerland
- 63.** *Her captivity was once someone's treasure and even pleasure but she blew and flew away took root which grew, we knew this was like no other feather, a third kind of bird that perched on vine intertwined was neither native nor her queen's daughters, a peculiar other*  
2011, Anglo-Indian pedestal 1860, Victorian birdcage, shells, feathers, gourds, grape wine, coral, fractured charlotte doll heads, steel knitted mesh with glass beads, Kenyan tourist sculptures and apple gourds 84 x 72 x 84 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 64-65.** *With or without name she was blue and who knew when she would slip into another mood for her understandable unwillingness to do, to speak to, to feel and determine her next move rests in her nest as would a Refugee.*  
2009, metal structure, feathers, fabric, shells, bells, skull  
69 1/4 x 37 x 28 3/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2009 © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 66-67.** *In thick bush and among thieving nomads devotion was mined and all the world could be saved as missionary was made into medicine*  
2014, feathers, silk, stone beads, turtle shell, glass, silk flowers, doll parts, brass candlesticks, Cowrie shells, porcelain on copper, Plexiglas 74 x 22 in.  
43 x 14 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 68-69.** *Make me a summary of the world, shi was her guide and had travelled on camel, rhino, elephant and kangaroo, dedicated to dried plants, glass houses – for medical study, vegetable sexuality, self-pollination, fertilization her reach pierced the woods country by country*  
2014, wood rhino, Chinese umbrellas, linen, beads, pewter soldier, grape vines, glass chandelier drops, wire, nylon and bead flower  
108 x 84 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 70.** *She was now in western style dress covered in part of Empires' ruffle and red dress, had a foreign and peculiar race, a Ganesh who had lost her head, was thrown across sea until herself ship-wrecked. A native of Bangladesh lost foot to root in Bidesh, followed her mother full stop on forehead, trapped tongue of horn and grew ram-like under stress*  
2011, shells, rooster feather, gourds, epoxy resin horns, ceramic balls, plastic netting, amber glass vials, glass bulbs, full glass doe eyeballs, polyester dress and mannequin 66 x 84 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 71.** *Winter Flower – Raw materials from sea and from foul and even from some exotic mice was eaten by a world hungry for commerce made these into flower, disguised could be savoured alongside whitened rice*  
2010, oyster shells, fish bone, thread, cowrie shells, fur, deity eyes, copper trim, ostrich egg, epoxy American buffalo horns, steel, fabricated umbrella structure, steel stand, pigeon feather fans  
65 x 65 x 53 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2010 © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal Private collection, Switzerland
- 72.** *A flock of geese, ugly duckling, few golden eggs well stolen which of these is she-who is mother country?*  
2012, ostrich eggs shells, 23 k gold leaf, feather fan, gold silk vintage Indian Sari, steel, glass, copper, silver, cotton quilt, thread, globe, plastic beads  
28 x 42 x 18 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 73.** *Soldier: overseas and out of place his species seeded dead to grow as common place, bore beautiful flowers of wound, carnage discovered a resin sticky like sweat. He had courage and loyalty when everyone wept and came home emptied while we slept*  
2014, gourds, porcelain, cowrie shells, mannequin parts, silk, glass beads, feather fans, brass Moroccan lantern, acrylic horn  
81 x 20 x 30 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 74-75.** *Migration's Breath, Ota Fine Arts, Singapore, 2015*  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang
- 76-77.** *She drew a premature prick, in a flutter of transgressions, abject by birth she new not what else to do with this un-touchable reach, unknowable body as she was an ancient savage towed into his modern present*  
2011, female mannequin form (14 years tall girl), amber bottles, epoxy American buffalo horns, steel arm brace, Banarasi Indian wedding sari trim (silver, silk), Victorian replica doll head, Indian jewelry (22 kt gold plated), glass magnifying dome, replica deer eye (glass), wooden elbow bangles (Congo), wood 92 x 43 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

Beneath the surface away from land the wreckage of big empire split to be spoken, not to be broken, pitted and potent with pollutants pressed three to four nations always to leap into motion in brief eruptions emancipation, commerce, cultural collisions, collected ceremonies, not traditions – not even Christian  
2014, ink, acrylic, paper  
90 x 52 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*Gargantuan Crawler*  
2014, ink, acrylic, paper  
22 x 15 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*She drew a premature prick, in a flutter of transgressions, abject by birth she new not what else to do with this un-touchable reach, unknowable body as she was an ancient savage towed into his modern present*  
2011, female Mannequin form (14 years tall girl), amber bottles, epoxy American buffalo horns, steel arm brace, Banarasi Indian wedding sari trim (silver, silk), Victorian replica doll head, Indian jewelry (22 kt gold plated), glass magnifying dome, replica deer eye (glass), wooden elbow bangles (Congo), wood, 92 x 43 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*Mangroves of Alien and Native froze and foamed, rose and rose, opened and closed and one in all grew calm who knew*  
2014, steel, plastic, nylon, light bulbs, shells, wires, cotton thread, feather  
52 x 27 x 32 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*Under the wandering reach these are the parts of the world wind water lava light live*  
2014, steel, plastic, nylon, light bulbs, shells, wire, steel, cotton thread, feathers, globe, branches  
47 x 44 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*The globe warmed like egg and once thrice with crack to open she could pick and pick by hook of finger, eating-eatenin the curl of nails one a terrible beauty of faithful spouse she is yellow in all battles "with sun when moon plays like a mouse"*  
2014, ink, acrylic, collage on handmade paper  
35 x 36 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

*76-77. She drew a premature prick, in a flutter of transgressions, abject by birth she new not what else to do with this un-touchable reach, unknowable body as she was an ancient savage towed into his modern present*  
2011, female mannequin form (14 years tall girl), amber bottles, epoxy American buffalo horns, steel arm brace, Banarasi Indian wedding sari trim (silver, silk), Victorian replica doll head, Indian jewelry (22 kt gold plated), glass magnifying dome, replica deer eye (glass), wooden elbow bangles (Congo), wood 92 x 43 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts © photo, Quek Jia Liang

- 78-81. *Ethnic and Race braided long hairs and coiled and entwined. Oh how it made and made, ate, ate in shade, slumbered and soiled her reflection to see this faked-nations make me small sweet cakes*  
2014, linen, glass, shell, acrylic paint, resin, silk wedding sari, horn, jute, beads, glass, trim, steel armature  
62 x 32 x 31 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts  
© photo, Quek Jia Liang
- 82-83. *Under the wandering reach these are the parts of the world wind water lava light live.*  
2014, steel, plastic, nylon, light bulbs, shells, wire, steel, cotton thread, feathers, globe, branches  
47 x 44 x 35 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts  
© photo, Quek Jia Liang
84. *She's my country... her breathe exploded of putrid death and folly. Her tresses snagged the most prickly greed, lured lonely cultures to wet their beds severed family and prayed on hope... she is at war*  
2009, Texas long horn steer skull, cowrie shells, steel planters, Hindu ceremony thread, antique mannequin, globes, wire, kitchen towel rack, glass beads, brass bells, Chinese umbrella, Japanese mosquito net, bone beads, copper trim, African necklaces, Chinese lantern, 22 carat gold powder, lin, bamboo  
96 x 50 x 101 5/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2009  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Collection Les Abattoirs - FRAC Midi Pyrénées, France
- 85-86. *A lady of commerce – Wooden. Hers is a transparent beauty, her eager sounds, her infinite and clamorous land and river, ocean and island, earth and sky... all contained, bottled for delivery to an open hole, a commerce so large her arms stretched wide and with her sulfurous halo – a ring of glass, she will swallow it all*  
2012, wood, glass, metal, stone and wire  
44 x 28 x 15 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 87-88. *Wild and Monstrous, enhanced and induced, artificially mutated, genetically mimicked – this was her human garden, persistently disloyal to everything living, inert and or even plastic. She was too curious to rest flung herself into a infinite cosmic dance severed herself from home and internal bone*  
2012, vintage Banarasi sari of gold thread, maroon colored silk, additionally gold filled wire, copper wire, steel structure wire, African cowrie shell, Indian cow horn, Indian brass beads, sheering, feather fans, 500 watt bulbs with ceramic and gold color brass base, used burnt assorted bulbs, plastic foliage, quilting pins, Indian cotton quilt  
48 x 32 x 41 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
89. *My turtle dove a muskrat bird she was.*  
2009, hand dyed crochet lace, beetle wings, glass teddy bear eyes, turtle shell, wire, glass beads, pearls, pins  
17 3/8 x 14 1/8 x 3 3/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2009  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Private Collection, Switzerland
- 90-91. *Flourish me different in wind and drift and breezes set sail always in motion and mindful adaptation, in not yet settled in fertile selection, in open folds and ceaseless creases, in remote reaches this was wrinkled and snagged...*  
2014, steel, textiles, beads, pearls, feather fan, light bulb, horsehair tubing  
29 x 26 x 36 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 92-93. *A heart of two anchors, take one bird and take one butcher, from ear to ear, it's a familiar end yet she was with a wide grin, while meat and medicine poured, even played with the poverty of country, was still an unknown friend! So she withdrew her smile to clear one anchor that was not her faith, the other was my mother's brother, enchanted china, giggled with Africa and strayed to stay in whips of lamb leather, feathers stained, her shells would raise the last anchor human hate*  
2011, mosquito net, fish bone, umbrella, artificial horn and pigeon feathers  
91 x 43 x 38 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2011  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Collection of Ota Fine Arts
94. *In a Land Far Far Away*  
2007, two ceramic bowls, iron elephant door stopper, five gourds, 6 chinese white umbrellas, 30 assorted feather fans  
120 x 36 in.  
Courtesy of the artist  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
95. *In an unnatural storm a world fertile, fragile and desirous, polluted with excess pollination, hungry to seize an unidy commerce also gave an unknowable size to some mongrel possessions, excreted a promiscuous heritage, sprayed her modern love, breathed deeper than any one place arching her back threw new roots that glitter on hard ground, make fire of crown, empire, religion bathe unseasonable hope to alter what could not be warm*  
2008, steel dome, conversation chair piece made of wood, cotton, shells, wooden altars, glass amber medicine vials, wire chandelier, glass chandelier, ostrich eggs, dry and hollow gourds, paper and plastic globes, plastic eggs, amber glass beads, white pigeon feather fans, grey pigeon feather grey, Chinese umbrellas, brass light fixtures, plastic and wooden miniature animal figurines, black ceramic horns  
275 5/8 x 157 1/2 x 157 1/2 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2008  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Private collection, France
96. *A very dry and very tidy heat swept into her land... lulled her country to a simmering sleep and all the while – culture was left ungroomed and grisly-grew an African horn, paddle her vessel, grew wild green Chinese umbrellas dry and dirty skirted about to catch each gentle wind for sale, blew hard a creamy and fertile commerce*  
2008, crib, floor piece, umbrellas, peacock feathers, linen, muskrat skulls, sand, coral, light bulbs, bamboo, cowry shell  
57 x 104,3 x 69,2 in.  
Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2012  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
97. *Mangroves of Alien and Native froze and foamed, rose and rose, opened and closed and one in all grew calm who knew 2014, steel, plastic, nylon, light bulbs, shells, wire, cotton thread, feather*  
52 x 27 x 32 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts, 2014,  
© photo, Jeanette May.
- 98-99. *Show at 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Glasstress, Venice, 2013:*
- In the Darkest Blossom was a Mythical Beast, Mythical Island, Mythical Sea*  
2013, glass, steel, shells, feather, plastic  
116 x 25 in.  
Courtesy Glasstress 2013
- 100-101. *A world lost, Show at Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian, Washington*  
2013, shells, stones, wood trails, coral, figurines, ostrich eggs, horns  
131 x 234 x 128 in.  
Courtesy Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution
104. *Her breath of blood and her hair of glass could siren all disease to fantastic end*  
2006, ink and acrylic on paper  
19 1/4 in. diameter  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles
105. *Charmed by Climate and Cottony Faces*  
2006, ink and acrylic, peacock hair, collage on paper, 30 x 20 in.  
Courtesy of the artist © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
106. *Weakened by velvet waters, hot flowers and mossy clouds he became anxious and fetal like*  
2009, mixed media on paper  
27 3/4 x 19 5/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti  
Private Collection, Switzerland
107. *He was chosen for his fantastic spray of pattern and Flirting orange lashes and note that his bite or sting Could silence any apparent indifference to human concerns – his fruit was... compassion*  
2008, ink, acrylic, collage on paper  
30 1/4 x 22 5/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2008  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
108. *In making Nation the Queen plucked her two bodies as one punch in time.*  
2009, ink, acrylic, collage on paper  
29 3/4 x 22 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti  
Razia Currimjee Collection, Mauritius
109. *In a puzzeling and awkward movement given nothing hidden in its way – why or how can two places rooted in one would, could sink shed and swell to reach high and beyond to meet merge to become one place yet again.*  
2009, ink, acrylic, on paper  
41 3/4 x 29 7/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
- 110-111. *With oily body and oil producing folly her letters and ideas not fluid but greasy shined on earth a glamour for greed that other creeds fell hungry with need*  
2009, ink, acrylic on Mylar digital print, 73 1/4 x 41 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2009  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 112-113. *Sudden dispossession paled her already pliant body, spawned new green hope in her air drying and in a incorrigible haste she was all a thing of the world not a place*  
2009, ink, acrylic on Mylar digital print  
40 1/8 x 74 3/4 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti  
Donation of Florence and Daniel Guerlain, 2012, Musée national d'art moderne/Centre de création industrielle collection
114. *A collision central to our imagination, a god of one, one particle without mission clapping bones, clatter, freed red fruit for a million seasons*  
2012, acrylic, ink, mica, collage on paper  
11 1/4 x 15 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti  
Private collection, Paris
115. *Without morning, through- out day and without end she cooled the burning of land with thick threads of her bodies blood, sweat, and ample tears as there was not water, not mist, not cloud, not rain and her bird she who did blow a collective wind from the breath of one thousand oppressions that would embrace the whole earth, erase misery that once was wet with human need*  
2012, ink and acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
116. *With beak and some bacon she lowered her tail bone at waters edge looked high up at the sky*  
2012, ink and acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles
117. *Like night burglars with bated breath he and she her family's neighbors who knew pronounced and claimed generation 20,000 as their family name like glue, qualified 14 cultures as home, for all of them knew that the evidence, sweeping and tireless, wryly joyous would rise that they all cling to fear if they*  
2011, ink and acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 1/2 in.  
Courtesy of the artist, © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
- 118-119. *A trickle of lava and migration's pollutants preserved the earth as a liquid landscape but Hanuman and Sita skipped and sang expanding their populations*  
2012, watercolor on paper  
44 x 30 in.  
Courtesy of the artist, © photo, Simon Chantassirivisal
120. *Her reach extended -to grasp this other body, collected teal colored ropes, teal string and threads from all that could have been cloth or face was all but drawn out, then sucked in with mouth and in this eating the world showered gold tears*  
2012, acrylic, ink on wood panel  
10.75 x 11.2 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles
121. *Lovely was this witch who drew her orange eggs*  
2013, acrylic, ink on Birch panel  
9 x 12 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles
- 122-123. *Beneath the surface away from land the wreckage of big empire split to be spoken, not milky, not broken, pitted and potent with pollutants pressed three or four nations to leap into motion in brief eruptions emancipation, commerce, cultural collisions, collected ceremonies, not traditions – not even Christian*  
2014, ink, acrylic on paper  
90 x 52 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts, 2014  
© photo, Jeanette May
134. *I have so much to tell you that no one should hear...*  
2013, ink and acrylic on paper and wood panel  
12 x 9 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
135. *A Ring of selfless idealism transcended her humanity floated her above oceans visual bliss contained body and beauty beating its belly and banished the material for spiritual seasons*  
2012, acrylic, ink, gold on paper  
30 x 22 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
136. *Sexual separation*  
2012, ink, acrylic on paper  
22 1/2 x 15 1/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles  
Private collection, France
137. *The tree flowered immortal and wordless meaning in experience, temporal, innocent*  
2012, ink, acrylic on paper  
30 x 22 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2006 © photo, Bertrand Huet/Tutti
138. *Friendly Fertility and Fuel – when she twinkled the stars signaled and swallowed like they were eating green pickles. This and that went past one million years perhaps one pinky and truly inky cloud rushed and wrinkled this planet's surface with stinky new life an then an oily black carbon collected under rivers as fossils spoiled gave us some oil*  
2012, ink, acrylic on paper  
15 1/8 x 11 3/8 in.  
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Bruxelles, 2012  
© photo, Simon Chantassirivisal  
Collection of Franci Neely
139. *Sweet Baby*  
2014, ink, acrylic, collage on paper  
24 x 16 in.  
Courtesy of the artist and Ota Fine Arts, 2015  
© photo, Jeanette May
- 140-141. *Human traffic*  
2015, ink, acrylic and collage on water color paper Arches  
90 x 40 7/8 in.  
Courtesy of the artist
- © photos Rina Banerjee, 7,11,12,15,16,19,26 (top), 31/Armory Art Fair © photos Mequitta Ahuja (top); Studio, Chelsea, 2011 © photos Manjari Sihare (middle); Selfie © photos Rina Banerjee (bottom), 9 / © photos Manjari Sihare, 25,32 / © photos Simon Chantassirivisal, 35 / © photos Jeanette May, 36
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# Biography

Rina Banerjee was born in Kolkata, India in 1963. She grew up in London, England, and eventually moved to New York, NY. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Polymer Engineering at Case Western University in 1993 and took a job as a polymer research chemist upon graduation. After several years, she left the science profession to receive her Masters in Fine Arts from Yale University in 1995. Banerjee's work has been exhibited internationally, including but not limited to New York, NY; Paris, France; London, England; Tokyo, Japan; Los Angeles, CA; New Delhi, India; Milan, Italy; Singapore; and notably a solo exhibition at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC in 2013. The artist's works are also included in many private and public collections such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Centre George Pompidou, Paris, France; Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Queens Museum, Queens, NY; and the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY. Rina Banerjee currently lives and works in New York City.

## Education

1995  
Yale University, School of Art, Painting and print making, Master of Fine Art  
1993  
Case Western Reserve University, Case Institute of Technology, Polymer Eng.

## Biennials

2015  
Asian Art Biennial, National Museum of Fine Arts, Taipei, Taiwan  
2013  
Glasstress, 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, Berengo Studio, Venice, Italy  
2012  
7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT<sub>7</sub>), Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia  
2011  
Yokohama Triennial - Our Magic Hour, Japan, Curated by Akiko Miki  
2006  
Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial 2006, Hatchi, Japan, Curated by Fram Kitwaga  
2005  
Greater New York Show, PS1 MoMA, Curated by Klaus Biesenbach  
2000  
Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA

## Solo shows

2016  
*Den Frie*, Copenhagen, Denmark  
2015  
SCAD, Savannah, USA  
Rina Banerjee: Migration's Breath, Ota Fine Arts, Singapore  
Human Traffic, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France  
2014  
Disgust, LA Louver, Venice, Los Angeles, USA  
2013  
A world lost, Site specific installation, Sackler Gallery, The Smith-

sonian's Museums of Asian Art, Washington DC, USA  
Espace Gallery, New Delhi, India  
Haunch of Venison Gallery, London, United Kingdom  
What am I made of and how do you know my name, Ota Fine Arts, Tokyo, Japan

2012  
Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India  
Creationism's kiss, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, Belgium

2011  
Chimères de l'Inde et de l'Occident, musée Guimet, Paris, France  
Imagining the other half of the world from here, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France

2010  
Forever foreign, Haunch of Venison, London, United Kingdom  
Without face: Cultivating the foreign, Armory Show, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, New York, USA  
Wild Things, Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense, Denmark

2009  
Look into my Eyes..., Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, Belgium

2008  
Allure, Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India  
Art Unlimited, Galerie Obadia, Paris, Art Basel 39, Basel, Switzerland

2007  
The Wilderness Within, Galerie Volker Diehl, Berlin, Germany  
SHContemporary Art Fair, Shanghai, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, China

Foreign Fruit, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris

2006  
Silver pearl girls and Gardens, VOLTA show 02, NP Gallery, Basel, Switzerland  
Fantasies Without Travel Will Travel, AMT Gallery, Como, Italy

2002  
Phantasmal Pharmacopeia, Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, USA

2001  
Phantasmal Pharmacopeia, Debs & Co., New York, USA  
Antenna, Bose Pacia Modern, New York, USA

2000  
Auf Wiedersehen, Admit One Gallery, Chelsea, New York, USA  
Exoticism was for sale, Project room, Debs & Co, New York, USA

2009  
Interrupting Entropy: Selections from the Betlach Collection, Santa Clara University, University Library Gallery, Santa Clara, CA, USA

2014  
Kaleidoscopic India, Maison Guerlain, Paris, France  
Astralis, Espace culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris, France

Des hommes et des mondes, Collège des Bernardins, Paris, France

2013  
Donation Florence et Daniel Guerlain, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France  
Sculptrices, Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, France

2012  
Hors les murs, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, Belgium  
India Today - Copenhagen tomorrow, Arken Museum, Denmark

Misunderstood, Noga Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, Israel

2011  
The Matter Within: New Contemporary Art of India, Yerba Buena Art Center, San Francisco, USA

Roundabout, Tel Aviv Art Museum, Israel  
What is Sculpture, CRG Gallery, New York, USA

2010  
Bring me a Lion, Hunt Gallery, Webster University, St Louis, USA  
Fantasmagoria, le monde mythique, Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France

The Road of Marvels, Path of Elegance, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium

The 242nd Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London, United Kingdom

Finding India, Moca, Taipei, Taiwan

2009  
Marvellous reality, Lalit Kala Academi, Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi, India

Rina Banerjee & Raquid Shaw, Thomas Gibson Ltd., London, United Kingdom

Anomalies, Rossi & Rossi gallery, London, United Kingdom

Wonderland-Through the looking glass, Kade, Amersfoot, The Netherlands

Mythologies, Haunch & Venison, London, United Kingdom

2008  
Pretty is as Pretty Does, Site Santa Fe, USA

Distant Nearness, The Norman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, USA  
War is Everywhere, Gallery Bodhi Art, Mumbai, India  
Indian Focus, Espace Claude Berri, Paris, France  
Dessins de la Collection Florence et Daniel Guerlain, services culturels, Ambassade de France, New York, USA

2007  
An Archeology, The Anita Zabludowicz Art Collection, London, United Kingdom

I Fear I Believe, Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India

2005  
Agra, "Building of a legend," Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, USA

Looking in the Eye of the Beholder, Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, USA

Fatal Love: Exhibition of South Asian Contemporary Art Now, Queens Museum of Art, New York, USA

Smack-Mellon, Sunset/Sunrise, Smack-Mellon Contemporary Art Space, Brooklyn, New York, USA

2004  
Open House, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York, USA

Specificity, Riva Gallery, New York, USA

2003  
Yankee Remix, Artists Take on New England, Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art, North Adams, USA

ARCO, Madrid, Spain

5x5 Contemporary Art on Contemporary Artists, Whitney Museum of American Art, Phillip Morris Space, New York, USA

1999  
R.A.W. Bodies of Resistance, Hartford, Connecticut, USA  
Out of India, Queens Museum of Art, New York, USA

## Publications (selection)

2013  
Rina Banerjee What am I Made of and How do you Know my Name, Tokyo (Japan), Ota Fine Arts

2011  
Rina Banerjee, Chimères de l'Inde et de l'Occident, Paris (France), Éditions Dilecta

2009  
Mythologies, Haunch of Venison, London (United Kingdom) Thomas Gibson Fine Art

Connaissance des Arts, special India, Paris (France)

2008  
Everywhere is War, text by Shaheen Merali, India, Bhodi Art Publication

2007  
Made By Indians, Beaux Arts Magazine

Montblanc Cutting Edge Art Collection, Germany

I Fear I Believe I Desire, text by Gayatri Sinha, Gallery Espace Publication,

Exotic Industries, Germany, Publication Volker Galerie Volker Diehl

2006  
Catalog of the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial (Japan)

2005  
Greater New York Show, text by Sarah Kessler, New York (USA), PS1/MoMA

2004  
Agra, The Building of a Legend, text by Karina Corrigan, Essex (NJ, USA), Peabody Essex Museum publication

2003  
Yankee Remix, text by Laura Heon, Massachusetts (USA), Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art Publication

Open House/Working In Brooklyn, text by Charlotta Kotik, Tumelo Mosaka, Brooklyn (USA), Brooklyn Museum Publication

Art Practice as Research: Inquiry into the Visual Arts, text by Grame Sullivan, Beverly Hills (USA), SAGE Publications

2002  
20th Century American Contemporary Art, Erica Doss, Oxford (UK), Oxford Art History Publication

Phantasmal Pharmacopeia, text by Susette Min, Philadelphia (USA), Publication Painted Bride Art Center

2001  
Publication Bose Pacia Gallery, text by Deepali Dewan, Rina Banerjee, Sujata Moorti, Mora Beauchamp Byrd, Brooklyn (USA), Bose Pacia Gallery

2000  
Biennial, text by Susan Harris, New York (USA), Whitney Museum of American Art

## Private and public collection

Centre Pompidou, Paris, France  
The Marino Golinelli Collection, Bologna, Italy  
Fondation Louis Vuitton pour l'Art contemporain, Paris, France  
Mont Blanc Collection, Switzerland  
Fondation Daniel et Florence Guerlain, Les Mesnuls, France  
Boghossian Foundation, Villa Empain, Brussels, Belgium  
Anita Zabludowicz Art Trust, United Kingdom  
Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France  
Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi, India  
Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA  
The Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA  
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, USA  
New York Public Library, New York, USA  
Vera List Center, New School, USA  
Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Western Michigan University, USA  
Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University, USA  
Yale University Art Gallery, USA  
RISD Museum of Art, USA  
Art, Design and Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, USA  
University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, USA  
Pacific Film Archive, USA  
Queens Museum, USA  
University Museum of Contemporary Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA  
Williams College Museum of Art, USA  
Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, USA  
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, USA  
Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, USA  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, USA  
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, USA  
Mills College Art Museum, USA  
Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, USA  
Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin, USA  
Ackland Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA  
Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State, USA  
Bard College, Studio Arts Department, New York State, USA

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