

**GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA**

PARIS - BRUSSELS

# Mithu Sen

## Cannibal Lullaby

9 October — 21 December 2013  
Rue Charles Decoster 8 - Brussels 1050



Mithu Sen, *Cannibal Lullaby* #3, 2013. Mixed technique on acid-free paper, hand-made to measure, 80,1 x 109,2 cm

The Nathalie Obadia Gallery is delighted to present the work of Mithu Sen in her first exhibition in Belgium.

Born in Western Bengal in 1971, and a graduate from the prestigious Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan with an MFA degree, Mithu Sen lives and works in New Delhi. She is one of the most recognized contemporary artists on the Indian art scene along with Subodh Gupta, Bharti Kher, Rina Banerjee and Jitish Khallat.

The *Cannibal Lullaby* exhibition at the Nathalie Obadia Gallery in Brussels falls within the "Indian season" launched by Europalia.India in cooperation with BOZAR (Brussels Centre for Fine Arts) and many other Belgian and international partners. In its 2013 version, this art festival is devoted to deciphering the many facets of ancient, modern and contemporary Indian art. In this regard, BOZAR will as of 5 October 2013 be showcasing a work by Mithu Sen as part of the "Corps de l'Inde" [Bodies of India] exhibition, organised by Naman P. Ahuja, an eminent specialist in Indian art and culture. The curator's choice, corroborated by the participation of Mithu Sen in the *Word.Sound. Power* group show currently at the Tate Modern (London), confirms the international stature of this artist.

For her first solo exhibition in Belgium, Mithu Sen has invested a confined space in the gallery. In this intimate setting, the size of a curiosity shop, three drawings from the Cannibal Lullaby series (2013) cohabit mischievously with the fascinating wall sculpture *I Chew, I Bite*.



The grigris and fetishes dear to Mithu Sen float and turn, as they are wont to, round large leaves drawn and stained with haemoglobin, in dynamic arrangements that make them similar to installations.

Death and sensuality are intimately connected in the poetic universe of Mithu Sen. Skulls kiss and skeletons brush against each other in a joyful macabre dance where flesh and blood blend with voluptuousness. The teeth bite. The bite, whose erotic scope is claimed by Mithu Sen for that matter, is equally synonymous with anger as with love in the artist's subversive mind. This fertile duality gives rise to a clever mix of black humour and shivers, gentleness and violence, gnashing teeth and tender kisses which enliven each of her creations. The ambivalent atmosphere exuded is not sombre or pessimistic. Quite the contrary, it is joyous like a burlesque carnival where Mithu Sen's skeletons have fun provoking the viewer whose feelings fluctuate between fear and excitement.

*I Chew, I Bite* or *Cannibal Lullaby #3* summarise this formal and spiritual ambiguity to good effect.

For Mithu Sen, bites are concurrently the instruments of an erotic game and attitudes of attack or defence. This dichotomy illustrates the fragile balance struck by the artist between calm and aggressive, poetic and irreverent works.

The ensuing tension is not without reference to animist religions where genies breathe both good and evil, depending on the disposition of the beings or things that they inhabit. This mystical dimension is to be found in the very execution of the drawings by the artist, who arranges them on tablets reminiscent of votive altars. Around them, distorted daily implements or toys flutter about to assume the roles of poltergeist that beckon us to venture, alone or in a group, in the sensory universe of Mithu Sen.

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1971 in West Bengal, India. Lives and works in New Delhi, India.

2001 PG Programme (Visiting) Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, United Kingdom  
1997 MFA (Painting) Visva Bharati, Kala Bhavan, Santiniketa, India  
1995 BFA (Painting) Visva Bharati, Kala Bhavan, Santiniketa, India

## SOLO EXHIBITION (SELECTION)

2013 : *Cannibal Lullaby*, Nathalie Obadia Gallery, Brussels, Belgium  
*I am a Poet* - Performance (part of the exhibition Word. Sound. Power) / Tate Modern, Project Space, London, United Kingdom

2012: *Devoid*, Nathalie Obadia Gallery, Paris, France  
*In House Adoption*, Gallery Steph and Nature Morte, Singapore

2011 : *In Transit*, Espace Louis Vuitton, Taipei, Taiwan

2010 : *Black Candy (iforgotmypenisathome)* Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai / School of Art and Aesthetics, JNU, New Delhi / Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi, India

2010 : *Nothing lost In Translation*, Nature Morte, Berlin, Germany

## GROUP EXHIBITION (SELECTION)

2013 : *Europalia*, Corps de l'Inde at Bozar, Brussels, Belgium

2012 : *How Am I?*, Kastrupgårdsamlingen Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Cynical Love*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Noida, India  
*Crossings*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India

2011 : *Spheres 4*, Galleria Continua, Le Moulin, France  
*Window in the Wall India and China: Imaginary Conversations*, Pear Lam Fine Art, Shanghai, China  
*Generation in Transition*, new art from India, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, and Vilnius, Lithuania

2010 : *Spiral Jetty*, Nature Morte, New Delhi, India  
*Public Enemy Number 1*, Exhibit 320, New Delhi, India

## PRIZES

2012 : Nirox Foundation, Johannesburg, South Africa  
2010 : Skoda Award on Indian Contemporary Art  
Britto International Artist Workshop, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
2008 : Awagami / MOMAT residency, Tokyo, Japan  
YFLO (FICCI) Young Achievers Award  
2006 : UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Brazil (Sacatar Foundation)

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For more information, please contact Constance Dumas

constance.dumas@galerie-obadia.com — + 32 (0) 2 648 14 05 / +32 (0) 477 93 44 63

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**Galerie Nathalie Obadia**  
**Brussels**

**Joris Van de Moortel**  
***Getting Comfortable Slowly***  
5 September - 16 November 2013

**Mithu Sen**  
***Cannibal Lullaby***  
9 October - 21 December 2013  
Opening on October 9th, 2013

**Xu Zhen by Madeln Company**  
21 Novembre - 18 Janvier 2014  
Opening on November 21, 2013

**Galerie Nathalie Obadia**  
**Paris**  
Cloître Saint-Merri

**Rosson Crow**  
***RECONSTRUCTION***  
7 September - 2 November 2013

**Carole Benzaken**  
***Oui, l'homme est un arbre des champs***  
14 November - 11 January 2014  
Opening on November 14th, 2013

**Galerie Nathalie Obadia**  
**Paris**  
Bourg-Tibourg

**Jean Dewasne**  
***ANTISCULPTURE***  
12 September - 31 October 2013

**Brook Andrew**  
7 Novembre - 31 Décembre 2013  
Opening on Novembre 7th, 2013

**Sarkis**  
9 January - 2 March 2014  
Opening on January 9th, 2013