

# GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

## Rina Banerjee

*Native Naked:*

*Unworldly to others, the sweetness of her steel arrival, as bride to others coined worldly, no longer beast, now coiled in father-kinship's sweep, her tendrils like tribes, her toe nails like seed dug deep in dry earth, leaking bloodlines, back curved to tow hard against current and cries, her wiry corners sting with salt and scent, blowing sacred conch with hot breath she could be stowed away wrapped in sharp oyster shells to reach shores where Empires broke, bottled her to go back and forth.*

**September 8 - October 27, 2018**

**3, rue du Cloître Saint-Merri, 75004 Paris**



TAKE MY HAND IN MARRIAGE AND MATRIMONIAL MONEY WITH OFFERS OF DOWRY  
AND GRANDIOSE PUBLIC WEDDINGS, 2018  
MIXED MEDIA, 80 X 50 X 30 CM  
COURTESY DE L'ARTISTE ET GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA, PARIS / BRUXELLES  
CRÉDIT PHOTO: BERTRAND HUET / TUTTI IMAGE

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to present *Native Naked: Unworldly to others, the sweetness of her steel arrival, as bride to others coined worldly, no longer beast, now coiled in father-kinship's sweep, her tendrils like tribes, her toe nails like seed dug deep in dry earth, leaking bloodlines, back curved to tow hard against current and cries, her wiry corners sting with salt and scent, blowing sacred conch with hot breath she could be stowed away wrapped in sharp oyster shells to reach shores where Empires broke, bottled her to go back and forth*, Rina Banerjee's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery in Paris.

After presenting an ensemble of six sculptures at the Arsenal Pavillion in the 57th Venice Biennale *Viva Arte Viva* in 2017, Rina Banerjee's institutional recognition will be honored this year with a retrospective which will tour a number of American museums. Starting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in October 2018, *Make Me a Summary of the World* will then travel to the San Jose Museum of Art in California in the Spring of 2019 before a larger American tour.

A monograph will be published for this occasion by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the San Jose Museum of Art.

For *Native Naked...*, Rina Banerjee brings together works from a variety of media – works on paper, paintings on wood panels and sculptures. While some works are mounted on the wall, others are on the floor, standing or sitting in the gallery space. These choices are made to underpin the conceptual frame by which Banerjee references position and location. The familiar mounted trophies that grace the walls of a hunting era with a head of an animal invite our dialogue when approaching the wall mounted steel sculptures. Rina Banerjee's sculptures incorporate a wide range of media, such as feathers, seeds, shells, glass seed beads, gourds, colored threads, silver and gold leafing, minerals, nests formations, tail motifs, horn and net structures, found objects both archaic and from commercial interior decorative markets, silks, cottons, linen, vials, bottles... Which collectively 'dress' the skeleton sculptures.

Also present in the exhibition, paintings on wood panels and watercolors on paper are a true testimony to the artist's origins (Rina Banerjee left India in 1968). Banerjee inserts in her work ideas about beauty, spirituality, diaspora and it is this lack of easy translation that preoccupies her search for transformation and renewal of what is a true union, country, nationhood, identity, sovereignty. The unconventional beauty, exotic or extreme, of her grotesque and phantasmagoric figures recalls both Indian and worldwide mythologies, but their metaphorical titles, written like failed poems, remind us they are evocative of our disruptive contemporary world. *Native Naked* clears way for a abrupt news-breaking reality while pleasures in the stabilities inherited from expanding empires.

After her last exhibitions at the gallery in 2015 (*Human Traffic*) and 2007 (*Foreign Fruit*), Rina Banerjee now pushes her contemplation of world migrations further and looks into one particular form: the marriage market and the wedding industry.

«The darker and illegitimate sides of inequities never tire to reveal an industry of mail-ordered brides, comfort women, child brides, dowry violence, etc. Throughout history, cultures have understood marriage as a currency and the wedding industry has developed from the Victorian vision as a place of where one can escape oppression and secure class mobility. One's ability to choose wisely continues to be a task that women in this colonial period exercised, securing their mobility as female guardians of power. This matrimonial industry continues to be a fertile location of cultural crossroads where provocative arguments for same sex marriage and internet match-making informs us of wider choices. Where once the church or temple and its reach could retain exclusively this role of match making, the newly ordained civil court marriage opened by way of contract an intersection between public and private domains. We went from marriages in time of war to marriages between different religious and racial groups, which created many migrations and a mobility between class and gender.» Rina Banerjee, 2018

In the sculpture *Take my hand in marriage and matrimonial money with offers of dowry and grandiose public weddings*, Rina Banerjee shows a woman's hand as being offered, crowned and wrapped in a golden entourage. The artist questions who is being offered, who decides, who gives permission, and how these codes of enactment are transgressed.

In the work *Wedding thieves, they stole her away on that blessed day, full that was a day full of frills and ruffles, borders draped, dragged, pinched to anchor, barefoot petticoat and chemise, shoulder pads and anklets, stole her from her family, waked her in mourning baked her if fires of ceremony, cooked in her in modernity*, the steel armature Banerjee generally uses to hold her sculptures is left visible as it is only covered by transparent fabric, whereas other parts of the piece are fully covered in sequins, beads, colored threads and various shells. «Women are traditionally heavily dressed and decorated for their wedding, because of the violence surrounding the exchange and the hope of promise and renewal», Banerjee declares. The abundance of cloth in bridal wear and the representation of the dressed and undressed female body is a theme the artist ruminates in her paintings and works on paper.

The title of the exhibition « *Native Naked* » refers to the naked body of these women, who, throughout their migrations, have lost their origins. Which brings the artist to wonder, what does it mean to be Native? Between nature and nurture, what defines our origins?

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**Rina Banerjee was born in Calcutta, India, in 1963. She lives and works in New York.**

Since the end of the 1990s, she has exhibited in numerous international institutions, such as the Musée Guimet (2011) and the Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton (2014) in Paris. She will benefit from an important retrospective which will open in October 2018 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then travel to the San Jose Museum of Art in the Spring of 2019 before the Fowler Museum at UCLA in Los Angeles, the Frist Art Museum in Nashville and the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in Durham, until 2021.

The artist has also taken part in major international group shows and biennials, notably *VIVA ARTE VIVA*, 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (Italy) and *Hello, City!*, Asia Pacific Contemporary Art, Daejeon Museum of Art (South Korea) in 2017, *Greater New York 2015*, at MOMA PS1, New York (USA) in 2015, *Donation Florence et Daniel Guerlain*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (France) in 2014, the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) and Queensland, (Australia) in 2013, *INDIA : ART NOW*, ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, (Denmark) in 2012, *The Matter Within : New Contemporary Art of India*, Yerba Buena Art Center, San Francisco (USA) in 2011, and *Fantasmagoria, le monde mythique*, Les Abattoirs, Toulouse (France) in 2010.

Rina Banerjee's artworks feature in many prestigious private and public collections, such as the Whitney Museum (New York), SF MoMA (San Francisco), the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Philadelphia), the Centre Pompidou - Musée National Art Moderne (Paris), the Yale University Art Gallery (Connecticut), the Fondation Louis Vuitton pour l'Art Contemporain (Paris), the Boghossian Foundation - Villa Empain (Brussels), the Mont Blanc Collection (Switzerland), as well as at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain 'Les Abattoirs' (Toulouse).

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**Paris** Bourg-Tibourg

**Meuser**

*Trocknen Lassen*

September 8 - October 27

**Paris** Cloître Saint-Merri

**Rina Banerjee**

*Native Naked...*

September 8 - October 27

**Bruxelles**

**Edi Hila**

*Open Museum*

September 6 - October 27

**Wang Keping**

November 9 - December 22

**Nú Barreto**

November 9 - December 22

**Valérie Belin**

November 15 - January 2019

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