# Feminist's Humanism In Art

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Today's globalized environment makes it impossible to consider identity in isolation. Feminist humanists operate from the premise that all people should be treated with respect and that society should be governed by empathy, compassion, rationality, and kindness. It questions the value placed on male superiority and female subordination. It encourages the coming together of male and female for the betterment of all people. Humanism is another word that has morphed in meaning through time and across different regions. They are the modern ladies of our culture, disguising their identities behind masks and braving the outside world.

**KEYWORDS:** Feminist, Humanism, Art, Artists and India.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The context in which a word is used provides crucial clues to its meaning. Humanism as a concept has also evolved considerably throughout the years. Humanism is a rational and empathic philosophy that values science, art, and reason above all else. It promotes the maximum feasible degree of individual autonomy and choice, within the bounds of reasonable social and ecological considerations. It advocates for the expansion of free societies and representative democracies with a focus on human rights and social fairness. It denies the existence of a supernatural realm and places human beings squarely inside the natural world, while also holding that all moral, political, and ethical norms have historical and cultural precursors.

Therefore, humanism advocates for the autonomy of individuals by stressing that one's life goals should be determined by one's own desires and needs rather than by abstract religious or ideological principles. The Journal of Humanism. Humanists think that the best way to deal with life's challenges is to figure them out on one's own. This concept suggests that man is responsible for shaping his own future. It's a worldview that draws inspiration from history but is grounded on modern research and logic.

'Humanism' as a concept originated in Europe between the Byzantine era and the Renaissance. To create a better future, humanism considered the past. It was a

4978 | Anjali Thapa

Feminist's Humanism In

return to the pure philosophy upon which the Roman Empire was founded, and hence a nod to the past. "In the humanist concept of history, progress became in a way the same as a return to the past," writes historian and author David H. Kennedy. "It meant a 'Return to the fountainhead' - a 'Renaissance', or rebirth in the literal sense of the term: that is to say the return to the original classical virtue; to the original religious inspiration of the Scriptures; to the origins of the art, to Nature and Antiquity." Over the course of many centuries, humanism developed into its current form. What began as a return to the past and a focus on the education issue, on scientific marvels and culture as the source of progress and platonic beliefs, has evolved into a cultural movement with a positive outlook on humanity's potential.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

**Ferrando, Francesca. (2016).** The purpose of this article is to trace a feminist lineage of the posthuman in art by looking at the visual works produced by women artists after the rise of first-wave feminism. Beginning with the main avant-garde movements of the first half of the twentieth century, this genealogy traces the development of the all-encompassing body examination epitomized by performance art during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. From Cyberfeminism's re-examination of technology to the artistic insights provided by critical techno-orientalist readings of the future on the one hand, and the political and social articulations of Afrofuturism and Chicana futurism on the other, the article considers the radical re-elaboration of the self that occurred during the third wave of feminism in the 1990s. Finally, this genealogy touches on factors that will become crucial in fourth-wave Feminism, including the manner in which modern female artists are tackling gender, social media, and the concept of embodiment. This work appears in a volume that brings together scholars from many fields to discuss gender studies.

**Fernandez, Maria. (2019).** Posthumanist new media art evolved in the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and it is possible that the ecologically focused works of artists like Betty Beaumont, Agnes Denes, and Patricia Johanson served as precursors to this movement. This chapter demonstrates that a clear delineation between feminist, post humanist, and new materialist art is frequently blurred in media works created between the early 1990s and the current day. This indicates that this kind of art may be traced back to past decades. The systemic preoccupations of digital artists like Natalie Jeremijenko and Karolina Sobecka find analogues in the practices of traditional artists. A number of "Smog Collectors" were created by American artist Kim Abeles starting in the 1990s. Color detection has shown that a wide variety of everyday things, from plates to chairs made of cloth, alter the chemical composition of the air around them.

BIANCA MARTUCCI-FINK (2019). This article aims to reconstruct a feminist genealogy of the posthuman in the arts via an examination of the visual works conceived by women artists in the wake of what has been retrospectively defined as first-wave Feminism. This history looks back to the main avant-garde movements of the first half of the twentieth century to trace the roots of performance art's in-depth exploration of the body during the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. Second, it takes into account Cyberfeminism and its reexamination of technology, along with the artistic insights offered, on the one hand, by critical techno-orientalist readings of the futures and, on the other, by the political and social articulations of Afrofuturism and Chicana futurism, beginning in the 1990s. Finally, this genealogy touches on topics that will become crucial in fourth-wave Feminism, including how modern women's artists are tackling issues of gender, social media, and the concept of embodiment.

Hillevi Lenz Taguchi (2017). For this project, I look at Judy Chicago's seminal feminist installation work, The Dinner Party, through the lens of contemporary intersectional feminism in order to address the issues that have been raised not only about the work itself but also about its creation, reception, and preservation over the years. In this paper, I challenge common perceptions of The Dinner Party by examining how intersectional feminism and feminist art history may provide a fresh take on divisive works without denying their importance to society or history. The historical context in which the Dinner Party was created has often stymied its ability to evolve and embrace intersectional tactics. While The Dinner Party is unquestionably located within the Second-Wave feminist movement in the United States, it is this particular historical and social context that has continually reinforced the work's existence and has made it the primary starting point for Western feminist art history. In this paper, I examine the gaps in The Dinner Party's narrative, asking what the book gains by leaving out certain characters and events. How can a new feminism be informed by this constant historical background? As a result, I provide three different perspectives on the work that turn to the past, the present, and the future in an effort to address the issues that have been raised about it and it place in the art history canon. Using this feminist framework, I argue that The Dinner Party is both a significant landmark in the history of feminist art and a rich object that grows and changes with our evolving modern feminist beliefs.

Anna Hickey-Moody et.al (2019). Using a feminist, new materialist frame to activate ethico-political research exploring religion and gender at the community level on Instagram and in arts workshops, we show how sharing one's cultural background, religious beliefs, gender identity, and sexual orientation through the practice of art entangles a diffraction of differences as 'togetherness.' Such intertwining fosters ecumenical understandings and promotes gender equality in the digital sphere. In order to better grasp this "togetherness," we employ the

concepts of diffraction, intra-action, and entanglement to demonstrate how homes, countries, wars, religious institutions, compass points, attractions, aesthetics, art, and objects of attachment all play a role. Therefore, the ideas of 'community' and 'belonging' that we explore via arts-based inquiry are products of interactions between humans and other species. Here we apply Karen Barad's feminist new materialist theories of "diffraction," "intra-action," and "entanglement" to our view of human experience as entangled with non-human components of the cosmos. To reconsider the human experiences of 'community,' 'belonging,' and 'what genuinely matters,' we apply these new materialist frameworks to feminist and intra-religious collaborative art practices and Instagram-based art groups.

#### **HUMANISM THROUGH FEMINIST ART**

Although it covers a wide range of ideas, humanism may be boiled down to the pursuit of what is best for humankind as a whole, as determined by human reason and sensibility. The prevalence of feminist themes in both male and female artists' practices beg the question: why? Because feminism is fundamentally no different from humanism, every reasonable guy should accept it. They're intertwined, which is why my exhibition will highlight the feminist movement's humanism wing via the lens of visual artists.

## SELECTED FEMINIST ARTISTS OF INDIA

There is an increasing trend in modern art to depict feminine figures from either the masculine or female perspective. This shared lexicon that these artists have adopted for their work provides fodder for analysis and discussion. Due to their symbolic nature, they cannot be separated from the worldwide context of women's predicament. This intentionality leaves room for a feminist interpretation of their method. Still, the visual value of their works is praised just as highly as the significance of the ideas they depict. There is an endless list of feminists, just as the cause will continue to thrive until every female child born in our nation is guaranteed protection and care. Until then, this conflict will go on. Among the artists chosen for this study are Anjolie Ela Menon, Madhvi Parekh, Anupam Sud, Gogi Saroj Pal, Nalini Malani, Rini Dhumal, Vasudha Thozhur, Kanchan Chander, Sheba Chhachhi, Rekha Rodwittiya, Jayasri Burman, Gauri Vemula, Bandana Kumari, and Aishwarya Sultania. Among India's elite few artists are:-

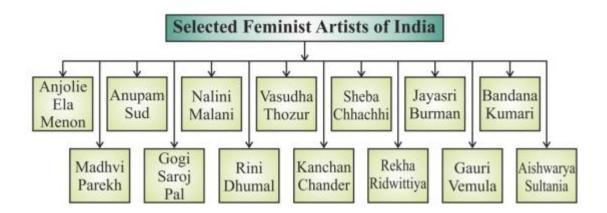


Figure 1: Selected Feminist Artists of India

# ANJOLIE ELA MENON

Anjolie Ela Menon, a mixed-race Indian American, was born in India in 1940. Lovedale, a school in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu, was where she spent her formative years of education before moving on to the J. J. School of Art in Mumbai. She went on to graduate from Delhi University with a degree in English literature. In the late 1950s, she traveled to Mumbai and Delhi to showcase her work in one-woman shows. Anjolie Ela Dev has displayed what may be considered a fledgling vision; she is very mature for her age and has all the hallmarks of an expressionist. Evocative or symbolic landscapes, faces, and people fascinate her. Her colorful aesthetic has been muted in recent photos. A clear romantic attitude seen in her early works has given way to something more contemplative and revelatory. In the 1950s, critic Richard Bartholomew praised Menon for her "rare ability" to capture the protagonist's personality and classified her works as "memories" rather than "physical spectacles."

In 1961 and 1962, she received a scholarship from the French government that allowed her to relocate to Paris and study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. She went all throughout Europe and West Asia in search of Romanesque and Byzantine art before finally coming home. Since then, she's called India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, and the former Soviet Union home. She has had over thirty solo exhibitions at venues such as the Black Heath Gallery in London, Gallery Radicke in Bonn, Winston Gallery in Washington, Doma Khudozhinkov in the Soviet Union, Rabindra Bhavan and Shridharani Gallery in New Delhi, the Academy of Fine Arts in Kolkata, the Gallery in Madras, Jahangir Gallery in Chennai, Chemould Gallery in Bombay, and the Maya Gallery in the Museum Annexe in Hong Kong. In 1988, Bombay hosted a retrospective of her work. Menon has been included in exhibitions in countries as diverse as France, Japan, Russia, and the United States. Her paintings may be seen in public and private collections all throughout the world, including museums in India and the United States. Aside from her muralist fame, she has also represented India in the Algeirs Biennale, the

Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil, and three Triennials in New Delhi. Recent London auctions of modern Indian art at Christie's and Sotheby's included her work.4 Her biography, titled simply "Anjalie Ela Menon," has been released. Her magic is a heady cocktail of introspection and ardor, with images dredged out from the depths of her mind. Since it is right to reject the ugly, the furious, and the monstrous in a setting where an indiscriminate iconoclasm attacks nearly every genre that smells of tradition, a substantial body of her work is characterized by an aesthetic consistency that swims against the stream. Even as a young artist in the 1950s, Anjolie Ela Menon painted with great instinctive conviction despite her lack of official training. Her earliest pieces, like the oil they are based on, are full of charming fire and excitement. Earlier works were full of life and energy, marked by broad, unfinished regions created with a palette knife. This method stands in stark contrast to the now-iconic high polish and flawless sheen of her work. Her two years in the Soviet Union deepened her appreciation for Byzantine and Romanesque art, and she began painting Christ-like masculine figures that are both dark and gloomy like her now bearded husband, Raja. The happy motherand-child pieces served as a counterbalance to her own parenting experience. Anjolie claims that being a mom and wife has helped her develop as an actress.

#### 2 MADHVI PAREKH

The paintings of Madhvi Parekh seem like an uninterrupted flow from her active youth. She has been actively participating in the Indian art scene for well over half a century, and her works are unique in their ability to achieve a vernacular modernism that is at once familiar and fresh. Despite the fact that she has painted every day for the last 50 years, she is quite reserved when discussing her art. The children who change into plants, the palms whose faces and flowers become the sun, the pregnant animal shapes, the flying goddesses, and the distant temples of a luminous hamlet are all original creations in her surrealist paintings. There is a sense of familiarity and distance in their strong, almost dramatic frontal look, embroidery-like backdrop, and zigzag ladder patterns that soar to nowhere. Madhvi looks back fondly on her youth, recalling, "We were always busy, with embroidery, housework, helping my father..." Her childhood in Sanjaya, Gujarat, seems to have had a significant impact on her work.

In Kolkata, Parekh and her husband Manu Parekh, to whom she was wed at the tender age of 15, lived in a modest 'barsati' with a spacious balcony that served as the Bengali landlord's puja room and provided a breathtaking, open-air panorama of the city below. After Manu showed her the work of German Expressionist Paul Klee, her hand became steadier, and she began to see the moon as a face, trees as talking figures, and bodies as pregnant women as she drew triangles, circles, and squares. The vertical rungs and framework of her works, their ascension from earth to heaven, the rangoli's looping, concentric shape, and the incorporation of forms, all stand out. Most importantly, the hidden tales of the Jataka figures are

present in the hundreds of pictures that looked to flow and swirl on the floor, treating man, beast, and plant as nearly interchangeable actors in a bountiful, joyous scene. Parekh has spent more of her life outside of Sanjaya, her hometown, than she has inside of it. Her art goes beyond simple memento mori into a realm of surreal unease, where the hamlet has been left behind and the metropolis awaits. Internal travels are recorded in the thick black lines that surpass even Rouault, and the artist, in her role as a migrant-traveler, bestows her imagination on what she observes. Therefore, the mask-like faces of South African art appear on The Last Supper, one of her greatest and most elaborate pieces.

## **3 ANUPAM SUD**

The commissioner of the 2018 Lalit Kala Akademi International Print Biennale, Anupam Sud, is a renowned artist in his field. She has recently begun working on huge canvases, mostly in acrylic, although her intaglio prints continue to reign supreme. Anupam has been exploring a variety of graphic practices, but her intaglio experiments with screen printing and lithography 9 seem particularly elegant. The term "feminist" is too narrowly applied to most of her work. Instead, her clearly rendered figures of men and women focus our attention on the human condition as a whole. The psychological strains between male and female characters, as well as between male characters and society at large, are central to her work.

Her use of chiaroscuro in her intaglio and mixed-media prints is what makes them so captivating. She received a diploma in Fine Arts from the College of Art in New Delhi in 1967 after being born in Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Printmaking was her area of expertise. She has had several one-person exhibitions in India, Korea, and the United States, and she attended the Slade School of Fine Art in London to study printing on a British Council scholarship in 1971 and 1972. She took part in 34 national and international exhibitions between 1968 and 1996, including the "Women's, International Exhibition" in New York (1975), the "Firenze Triennale," the "Third Trnennale," the "Fourth and Fifth Biennale," Valparaiso, Chile (1979, '81), the "International Print Biennale," Ljubljana (1981, '83), the "Fifth Triennale For Gallery Espace in New Delhi, she staged the "Mini Print '96" exhibition. In the 1970s and '70s, Anupam frequented print workshops led by Paul Lingren and Carol Summers.

She has participated in professional printmaking workshops in New York (1996), Berkeley (1996), and Ottawa (1990), and she represented India in an Asian printmaking workshop at Japan's Fukuoka Art Museum in 1989. From 1969 through 1995, Anupam Sud was honored 19 times for his work. She won the President of India's Gold Plaque at the Women's International Art Exhibition, New Delhi (1975), and the International Print Biennale, Bharat AIFACS, Special Award in the same year (1990), and she studied and traveled on a printmaking fellowship

in the United States. Anupam Sud's artwork reflects on the universal aspect of mankind, giving priority to humanism above feminism. At work, her social and political awareness manifests as a presumptive rather than declarative involvement. Her creativity is sparked by her in-depth understanding of art history, cultural dynamics in the Indian environment, and current events.

**Don't Touch My Halo'** holds the fruits of his achievement and the dancing apsaras with their sensuous body rhythms as glories of his life, and stands in a hard statuesque attitude in the center of the composition. The skull beneath the seat is a symbol of his concealed inner self and empty structure, in contrast to the strong gorgeous appearance (his temporary façade). The guy is glued to his seat and will not budge till his halo is safe.

'Dining with the Ego' maintains mystery in spite of material plenty; the male is shown happily eating while the lady sits at the table with an empty plate. Despite the tempting feast on the table, the scenario is unsettling to the eye. It exemplifies the male protagonist's callous attitude toward the female counterpoint. The inequality represented by an empty dish is only one example. Some of the other pieces also reflect a feminine preoccupation, with images resonating with sympathy and anguish. In a culture where males dominate marriage, physical violence, and intrusive medical procedures, women seem to be framed, however indirectly.

# **4 GOGI SAROJ PAL**

Gogi Saroj Pal is often cited as one of the 'feminist' woman painters of contemporary Indian art due to her unwavering dedication to examining the plight and psyche of her female subjects. Gogi has often written on women and the complexities and romance of the feminine experience. She came into the world in the little Indian suburb of Neoli, Uttar Pradesh. She has an impressive pedigree; her father was a freedom fighter, and her grandmother worked in social work.

Gogi has often written on women and the complexities and romance of the feminine experience. Gogi is interested in unearthing India's religious and literary traditions, and she uses these sources as inspiration and material for her work. She tracks and often creates new mythical/celestial female entities of enormous strength and potency, such as the Hathyogini-Shakti and Hathyogini-Kali — adept yogini and forceful female force, respectively — to empower women in a society where they are often denied agency. Gogi has been profoundly influenced and is fascinated by the miniature culture, especially its focus on the nayika bhed or heroine. Gogi's nayikas are a fascinating and sometimes satirical take on the diminutive heroines who are exquisitely clothed and bejeweled, and whose position is essentially as a sought, desirable lover, a beloved for whom she waits, sorrows, and beautifies herself. This is especially true of Pahari paintings and

performing traditions. Gogi's "nayikas," in contrast to these other ladies, dance languidly while nude in the middle of different acts of beautification, an ornamentation that seems to be for the self rather than for or dependent upon an external lover. These women are strong and independent. Red alta tattoos on the hands, feet, and forehead give them a traditionally feminine look while also mocking stereotypical notions of women. All of the current paintings she's done center on strong, confident women. Her creative journey has been an amazing fusion of Hindu mythology and her own mind.

## **5 NALINI MALANI**

Karachi, Pakistan, 1946 Nalini Malani has used the fallibility of memory to great effect as a lens through which to see the past. The ability to reconstruct events through memory and reverie is precisely the engine for a different kind of reconstruction, one in which a life-world and an existential poetics are reconstructed from the ashen or pus-ridden remnants of humanity and its works. This reenactment of the world reaches a floating, transient, and fluctuating stage in her art. For our viewing pleasure, and against their inclination for dissolution (to suggest by that term, at once, both physical solubility and moral transience), it seems as if objects are displayed in states of temporary halt in between transformations. As though by the same strong will of the artist, they cling precariously to the surface, and it's obvious that the magic may easily be broken at any time, destroying the spectacle. Here Malani brilliantly combines the three mediums that make up the bulk of her current practice: reverse painting on mylar, shadow plays made up of rotating mylar cylinders painted in acrylics and with directional lighting and video projections, and video installations. She has created works in response to the pressure of material and spiritual transition in the modern world by tapping into the liminality and impermanence of liminal situations and creating a conflict between the fleeting and the eternal. Part of Malani's work is preoccupied with the human body and mind under extreme conditions of stress. She has repeatedly gone through hell to unearth transformational locations. She's always had an off-and-on interest in the clinical study of how people's identities and the communal concept of culture change after experiencing trauma. Her large-scale Mutant series from the mid-1990s is another seminal body of work. These beings, who were often monochromatic and near or larger than life size, had certain features of human anatomy while also displaying a post-human state that Malani termed mutation. Both the destiny of mankind following a nuclear disaster and the treatment of women as a political, scientific, or moral issue were likely at play here. The Mutants are specters on the brink of consuming fear, and at times their bodies and limbs show tangible marks of their deformed status. One woman's torso is riddled with white dots, like the whitenoise blizzard on a detuned TV screen, and her eyes and attitude appear to fumble as they try to portray an utter feeling of doom.

In Sita/Medea I (2004) The majority of the images that make up the "near story" are contained inside a single circle, which represents the globe of a poisoned earth with its oozing blue-greens and bloody, plus-yellow intestines, as Malani blends the historical with the legendary to show two narratives as 'one interconnected structure. Sita/Medea's central character is depicted twice: She does this twice: once as an elderly hermit approaches her, and again when she reclines on the right edge, awaiting the inevitable rejection that is her destiny. Animals like as monkeys and bears serve as soldiers in Rama's army, are seen playing outside the center sphere at the top and bottom of the sculpture, as if they were upholding the earth. Malani's paintings, done on the back of clear Mylar, include subject matter that seems as if it were pieced together from the gutted, dried, and reassembled remains of human and animal carcasses.

**Transgression II** began with scenes from the Ramayana shadow drama The Scared and the Profane. Slowly turning four Mylar cylinders, illuminated by little bulbs, created a shadowy painting on the walls. When the many spins interacted, new pictures emerged. Around the 18th century, the Chinese brought the art form of reverse painting on glass to India. Chinese merchants brought them to port cities to sell and buy. These photos, about the size of a postcard, had explicit content. Tanjore's creatives took a shine to the medium and made it their own. But when handled by them, the symbols took on a religious significance. After three centuries, Nalini has returned to the secular. Because I wanted to challenge preconceptions about what constitutes "contemporary art," I worked beyond the conventions of traditional painting techniques and subject matter.

# INFLUENCE AND IMPACT OF FEMINIST WORK ON SOCIETY

Feminism in modern Indian visual arts is a different story. The limits of what can be accomplished, achieved, included, etc., within the realm of art. The artist has come to the conclusion that they can forge their own path by rejecting the status quo. Despite the fact that many women who begin studying the arts eventually abandon their studies for different reasons, those who persist are unstoppable. They are not afraid to organize and produce their own art exhibitions. They've figured out how to distribute their work while still making it. They are also role models and inspirations for a generation of female artists coming up through the ranks. Women in India's modern art scene are holding their own and may soon be able to make a splash on the global stage. Modern audiences are sophisticated and perceptive; they pick up on subtle messages about oppression, injustice, and inequality in most works. According to Simon Critchley's reading of Max Scheler's distinction between being and having, in which he discusses the peculiar position that humans occupy relative to other animals in being both selves and bodies as objects, Scheler's words are best understood as meaning, "does not our identity precisely consist in a lack of self-identity, in fact that identity is always a question for us - a quest."

# Relevance of Emerging Artists

To wit: "Have you ever seen a musical tree?" Yve Lomax describes the singing tree where hundreds of birds once perched. Artists are the birds in the musical tree, but art is the one really deserving of its song. There is a constant sense that this movement is just getting started. The tree will become melodious when each succeeding generation, like the birds, adds its own unique melody. Feminism is a movement that has always been, and always will be, about achieving equality for women. This is why I've focused on more recent discoveries like Gauri Vemula, Bandana Kumari, and Aishwarya Sultania. These creators are pushing boundaries and are always up for a new challenge. They represent the fresh ideas and energy that will soon be shared with the world at large via festivals and seminars.

# • Modern Ideologies of Contemporary

Acts of Feminism New beliefs emerge on a daily basis. Change, or rather a shift in practice, is necessary when society as a whole undergoes transformation. The goal of modern feminist theory and practice is not only gender equality, but systemic reform as a whole. If you really want to know how advanced a culture is, look at the status of its women. The status of the female child is still subpar, as shown by survey graphs from many organizations, and we urgently need to develop their latent potential so that we may advance in all spheres. This is the state in which modern feminists are actively engaged; it is a revolutionary situation. Feminist art practices demonstrate how gender shapes the social life of men and women and determines artistic representations by seeing art as an axis of power relations. Thus, gender is also seen as a symbolic component that shapes hierarchical oppositions in representation across media (literature, art, architecture, and critical debate). The time has come for us to take on the role of town criers; if we don't raise a ruckus, we'll be easily silenced.

#### CONCLUSION

Humanism is another word that has morphed in meaning through time and across different regions. Since it was the driving force behind the Renaissance in the Western world, it is now universally understood to mean fairness. Humanism used to mean celebrating the past while looking ahead to a better future. Anjolie Ela Menon's figures are imbued with the love and compassion that a mother shares with her child; the eyes and expressions are those of maternal love and empathy; so, they may be properly considered as the feminist humanists of the modern art world. She modernizes mythical figures from many different religions, including the Mother Goddess, Mary, Yashoda, and Buddha. They all appear to be conversing with the audience, despite their divine air. Madhvi Parekh isn't the first artist to depict the gods of India in a straightforward, childish style. She, too, has her artistic beginnings in the classical tradition of painting, but she sets her subjects in a very contemporary context. In the same manner, we as artists are allowed to question

and reimagine our own work. Since most works of art include figures, they may all be read via a feminist lens.

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