



Hammering the Patriarchy, Cast glass, 2019. Collection of the Artist.

The works thus form a temple of sorts, one in devotion to all Hindu and Indian women, and perhaps all women more generally, that asserts a wider range of possibilities, futures, and ways of living. Balancing between heritage and progress, the glass works counter tradition with new ways of thinking while maintaining a respect for the past. Breaking the mold set out for her and other women like her, Raval urges a rethinking of standards and traditions that are often still held by older generations and can cause friction between the young and old in our communities. Moving from the updated goddess figures of the Patriarchy series to more subtle criticisms in which she herself applies the modified standards and possibilities for women that she articulates, Ameer Raval's works build upon long-held traditions to envision a new reality for this moment and the future. Between heritage and progress, Raval finds something special, and a hope for new opportunities and ideals.

PETER FLANNERY, CURATOR

AMEE RAVAL

Ameer Raval is a marketing professional armed with a master's in business and has more than a decade of experience as a business professional Raval decided to pursue her passion for Glass and enrolled in the glass program of Sheridan. A recent graduate from Sheridan College, her exploration of the medium led her to explore her culture and heritage and inspired her to use glass as a medium to make sculptural objects. Exploring one's cultural identity often leads to nostalgia and mystique. The deep-rooted cultural beliefs have been the inspirational force guiding her body of work. Raval's area of practice explores East Asian culture and heritage with an emphasis on temple architecture relevant to traditional patriarchal norms followed by society to mold women in a set pattern. She strives to bring meaning to the age-old stories and relate them with new age philosophy.

“My work is a reflection and celebration of the rich Asian culture, traditions, and heritage, they guide my spirituality and echos in my art forms.”

Ameer Raval



Breaking of the Traditional Mold, glass, silver, 2020. Collection of the Artist.

Cover Image: Sinking the Patriarchy, Cast glass, 2019. Collection of the Artist.

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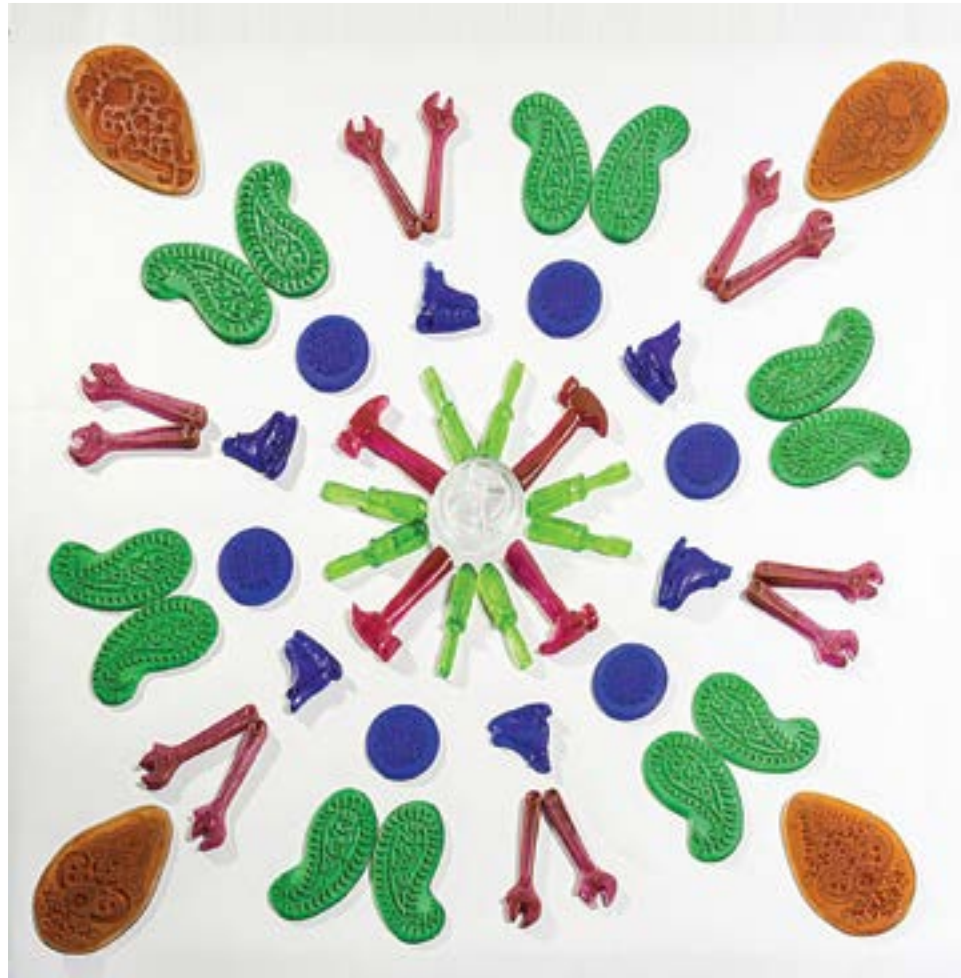
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The Musagetes Fund



BREAKING THE MOLD AMEE RAVAL



Mandala of My Dreams, Glass, sand, wood, 2019-2020. Collection of the Artist.
Below: Mandala of My Dreams (detail), glass, sand, wood, 2019-2020. Collection of the Artist.

FOREWORD:

This is the third exhibition in our Emerging Talents series and we are presenting the work of Ameer Raval. A graduate from the glass program at Sheridan College, she brings together Hindu Indian traditional heritage with contemporary issues in sculptures and installations. The Emerging Talents series is managed by Peter Flannery, our Assistant Curator, who also curated this first solo exhibition for Raval. I wish to thank again The Musagetes Fund, held at Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, as well as The C3 Group for their support of this program and its publications.

DENIS LONGCHAMPS, PHD
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR



BREAKING THE MOLD

AMEE RAVAL

Blending her Hindu, Indian heritage with contemporary ideas in the transparency and luminosity of glass, Ameer Raval demonstrates the complexity and cultural relevance of feminist issues that surround her identity and heritage. At a crossroads between an older generation steeped in traditions that are intertwined with the patriarchy, and a more progressive movement towards equality and liberation for women, Raval uses the forms and imagery of her glass works to explore ways of balancing tradition with progress.

In her Patriarchy series, Raval makes a subtle comparison between the respect for goddesses in typical Hindu temples in comparison with the treatment of ordinary women. Employing the same poses and cultural signifiers as sculptures of goddesses that would typically be carved from marble and stone, her glass sculptures add symbols of sexual liberation to counter the standards of a heteropatriarchal society. Through traditional temple imagery with a contemporary twist, Raval's sculptures invite the viewer to see the women depicted equally for their strength as much as their tenderness and fragility as she seeks to afford these women who stand in for those around us with the same respect as goddesses.

While Ameer Raval recognizes the social impacts of equality that have been slowly growing through political changes and education, the patriarchal roots of her culture illustrate the ways in which certain aspects of society have remained resistant to change. Indian girls are often encouraged to follow certain cultural paths to become a good wife and homemaker, and to adhere to specific codes of conduct. As would be expected, few similar practices are followed by Hindu men or boys, leading to what may become subconscious adherence to patriarchal standards in both men and women.

While at first glance the figures of the Patriarchy series appear like typical goddesses that have been cast in lead glass colours, it is the experience of looking more closely and experiencing the transparency and opaqueness of the



Fracturing the Mold, Glass, metal, 2019. Collection of the Artist.

figures that truly reveals the deeper symbolism of these striking works. Bearing various male-centric symbols such as tools or boxing gloves, the figures glow through the light that shines through them; ordinary women who counter the patriarchy depicted as traditional goddesses. Through their strength and fragility, and in the modifications to their motifs, the figures provide a new way to think about the differences and similarities between valued traditions and a progressive path forward.

In *Mandala of My Dreams*, Raval presents a more subtle criticism of patriarchal ideals and modes of living that are central to her Hindu, Indian heritage. The mandala form itself is a cultural reference to the "Rangoli" that are often created by women during the Festival of Lights. By drawing the patterns on the ground at the entrances of their homes, the women invite the goddess of prosperity to bless the household. Often created using floral imagery and bright colours, Rangoli are typically created using repeating patterns and images to produce intricate, symmetrical designs.

Rather than creating her mandala from coloured sand, flour, rice, or flower petals, Raval has employed cast glass in the form of various tools and traditional motifs. In bright colours reminiscent of Rangoli, the individual glass items depict saws, wrenches, hammers, pliers, and other tools commonly associated with men and male labour. Arranged in a repeating, symmetrical pattern, the separate items come together in a single work that Raval sees as a modern Indian woman's dream of the possible careers that lay before her. Through a modification of this traditional form, she invites a meditation on the patriarchal standards that continue to define contemporary life and offers a reimagining of the possibilities for young women to pursue a wider range of careers and ways of living.

In the creation of the glass tiles that line the walls of the gallery space, Raval herself acts upon the expanded possibilities for women by mimicking traditional wood panels cast in glass and silvered artistically. Generally made by male wood-carvers, the panels serve as a model which Raval recreates. Forming a counterpart to the wood panels, the glass tiles are produced from a non-traditional medium, by a woman, breaking from tradition twice while maintaining the core elements of the work without change. Returning to the temple architecture and design that were central to the Patriarchy series, these panels illustrate once again the roles assigned to men and women and the ways in which subtle changes to form, material, and the creator themselves can produce subtle criticism while maintaining a respect for tradition and heritage.



Following Patriarchy, Cast glass, 2019. Collection of the Artist.