

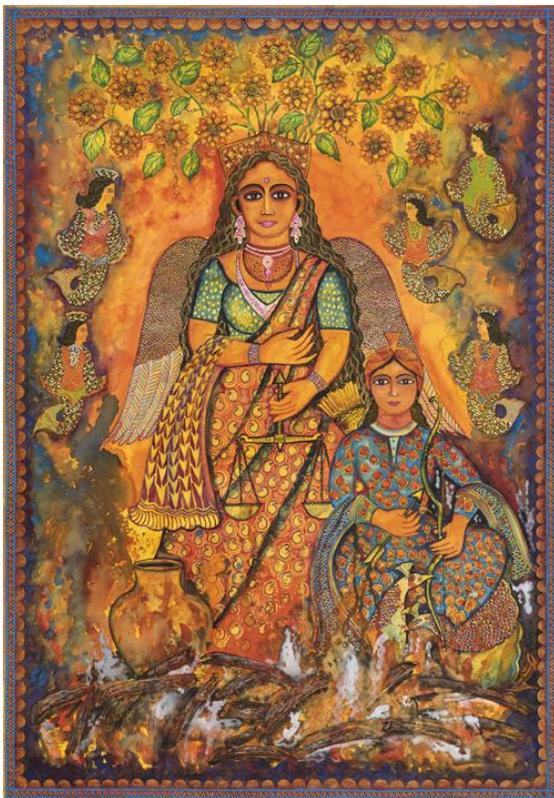
Jayasri Burman

Born of Fire: A Tale for Our Times

Aicon Gallery Exhibition January 19th – February 24th, 2018

Press Preview & V.I.P Reception: Friday, January 19th, 2018

35 Great Jones St, New York NY 10012



Jayasri Burman, *Yagna Shaini*, 2017
Watercolor, pen and ink on paper, 84 x 60 in.

We are pleased to present, Jayasri Burman's debut solo exhibition with Aicon Gallery.

The exhibition is largely comprised of eleven large-scale works on paper including a monumental triptych all centered around the story of Draupadi. Draupadi has found reverence in contemporary Indian thought as the seminal icon for resilience amid female trauma and quiet suffering. At a moment when we reflect on the lived experience of women, her story is particularly relevant.

Images of Hindu deities are ubiquitous in India – produced en masse they proliferate walls both conspicuous and inconspicuous. Draupadi is among the most popular subjects of these owing no doubt to her pivotal role in the Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*. Born in a ritual pyre of flames, Draupadi was fated to bring about the destruction of her father's enemies. She was married to a group of five Pandava brothers - an arbitrary decision made by their mother. Though she was a clever and savvy leader who directly contributed to her husbands' political empire, Draupadi is best remembered for being consistently victimized by men, all the while having no say in her own destiny. Despite her intelligence and skill, she finds herself characterized according to her value as either an object of desire, wife, or daughter.

In Draupadi, artist Jayasri Burman sees a feminist icon who should be remembered for her keen political skills, self-determination, and relatability. Simultaneously monumental and detailed, the Draupadi works reimagine the visual history of the Mahabharata without forgetting the traditions that



Jayasri Burman, *Cheer Haran*, 2017
Watercolor, pen and ink on paper, 60 x 84 in.

birthed them. Pulling from a vast coffer of Hindu mythos, Burman reimagines traditional depictions of female goddesses by imbuing them with bright color and energy. Instead of sexualizing or overly deifying goddesses, Burman chooses to celebrate them, often using nature and animal motifs to accomplish this. In these works the artist invites the viewer to go beyond the narrative that the characters represent and attempt to understand the situations they were placed in.

Burman's oeuvre weaves the iconography and stylized depictions of nature from Indian folk art, notably *Kalighat* and *Patachitra* paintings with a whimsical personal visual vocabulary to build a vivid narrative centered around women. Her subjects are sanguine, even in their strife, and are often offset by a verdant landscape. The artist who has been making work since the early 1980s regards her practice as, "a reflection of life, godliness and goodness, and a celebration of emotions through stories and colors". Burman's tranquil aesthetic, lyrical imagery and vibrant colors not only offer up an insight into the mind of an artist, but that of a gifted storyteller.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (jana@aicongallery.com) for more information.