

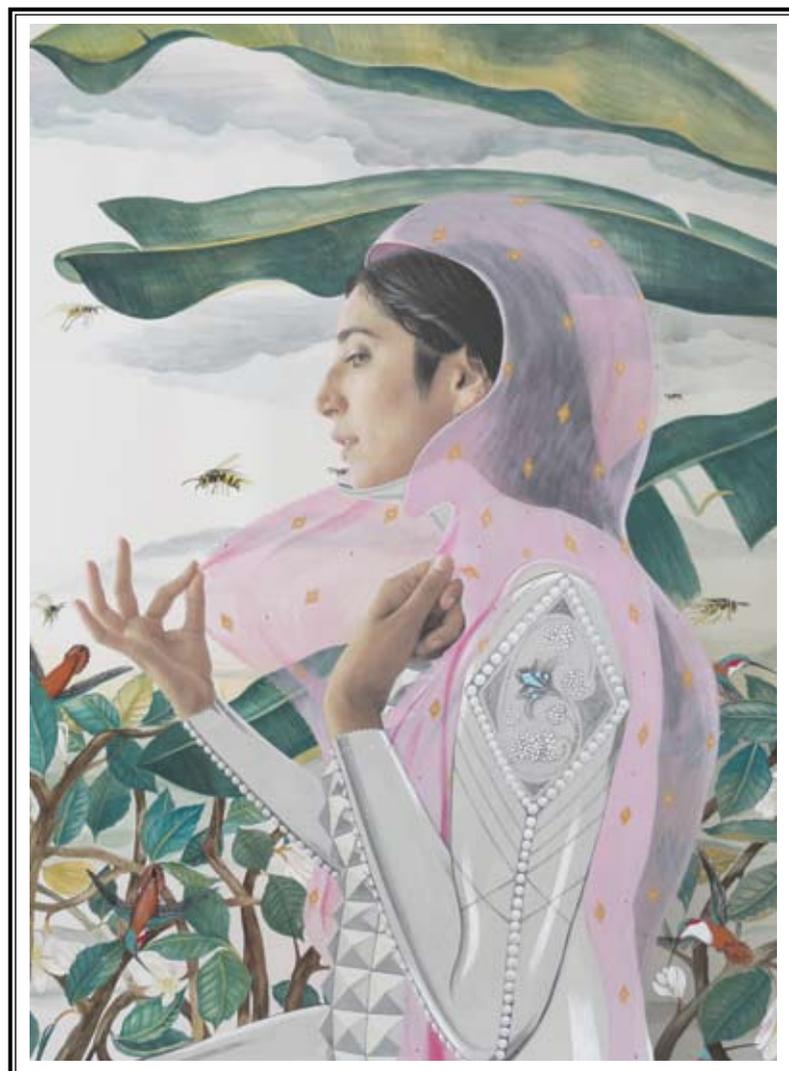
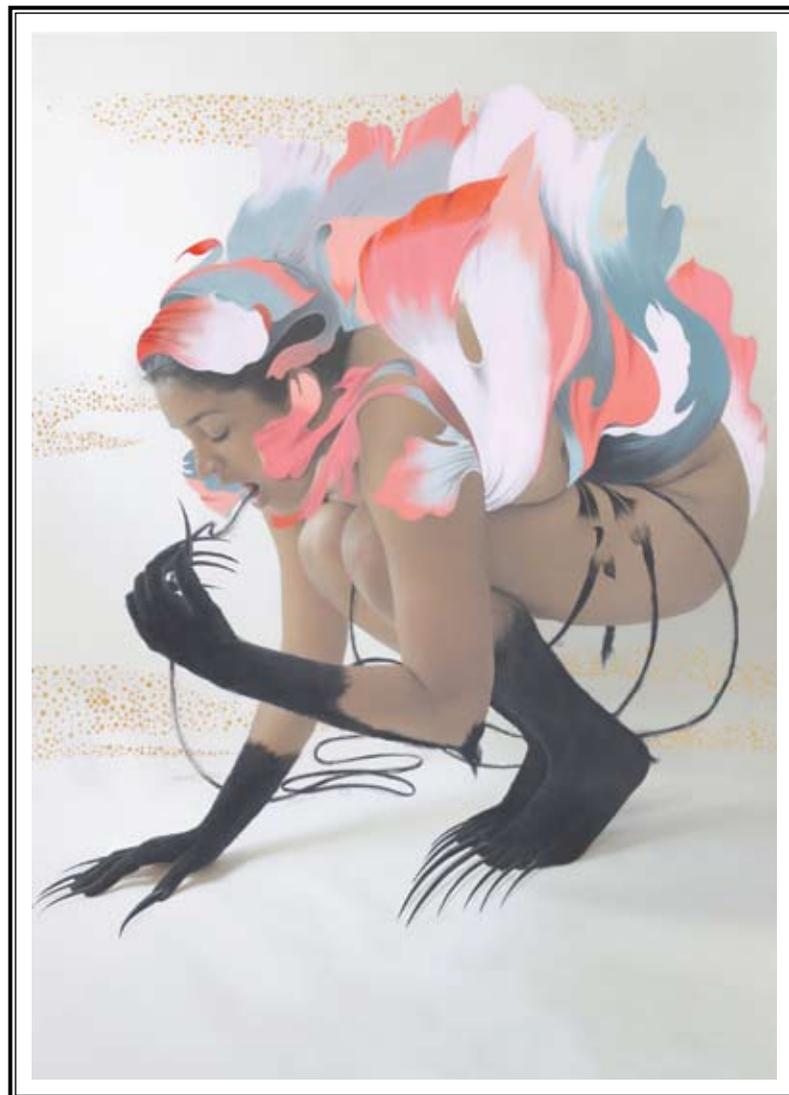
# Second Solo Exhibition By Rajni Perera

A Sri-Lankan born artist whose work floats between Western and Immigrant culture, Rajni Perera's work is an East-West dialogue of ideas, concerning immigrant identity issues, female sexuality, and science fiction and fantasy. Based in Toronto, Perera has exhibited her work internationally and will present her second solo exhibition at Saskia Fernando Gallery from 23 December 2016 to 20 January 2017.

The artist begins her creative process by photographing her subject and then working on the image 'embellishing' the portrait using miniature painting techniques. The first series of these works was exhibited at Saskia Fernando Gallery in 2015, the series Maharajas was accompanied by an audio interview per portrait, exploring the workings of contemporary masculinity, the blurring line of gender involved in male

representation, and each subject's view on these issues. The six portraits were a continuation of the series Maharanis and a continued attempt at contemporising embellished photography.

The second part of the series, Maharanis, the concept of the spectacle was exaggerated to produce a series of images that comment on the kitschy, glitzy side of Western media's interpretation of the East, which responded in kind by re-appropriating it's own projected image. The series was also an exploration in divinising monarchy and the fabrication of the divine through an embellished-photography lens. In early 2016 Perera exhibited two works at Art Dubai titled the Royal Couple. The diptych touched on aspects of colonial monarch portraiture while taking it into the realm of the surreal by exaggerating the glamour of 17th century



court photographs. The subjects perform the role of King only with imaginary surroundings; there is no base for them to visualise the glimmering backdrops of their seats at the throne, the beginnings of a contemporary embellished photograph.

The medium of self-portraiture and portraiture is investigated as a window into the practices of the glitterati who commissioned a lot of the first portraiture around turn of the century India. By heightening the aspect of glamour into absurdity, the image of the monarch becomes elevated to the semi-divine and the connection between them-

selves and the public become sinuous, the gaze a downward / upward power play. The stage is set.

In this new series of work Perera 'explores issues of hybridity, sacrilege, irreverence, the indexical sciences, ethnography, gender, sexuality, popular culture, deities, monsters and dream worlds. All of these themes marry in a newly objectified realm of mythical symbioses.

'The Surreal Body' by Rajni Perera will be open to the public from 23 December to 20 January 2017 at Saskia Fernando Gallery, 41 Horton Place, Colombo 7.