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Renluka Maharaj: *Lambi Kahani (Long Story)*

May 6, 2022 – July 2, 2022

Public Reception, Saturday, May 7, 3-5p

RULE Gallery, 204 E San Antonio St, Marfa, TX

(Marfa, TX) RULE Gallery is pleased to present *Lambi Kahani (Long Story)*, an exhibition of new work by Renluka Maharaj at our Marfa, TX, gallery. This will be the artist's second solo with RULE, but her first at the Marfa location. An opening reception will be held Saturday, May 7th from 3 to 5p. The gallery will host a talk by the artist starting at 4pm on May 7<sup>th</sup>.

In her new exhibition, *Lambi Kahani (Long Story)*, Renluka Maharaj continues to investigate her Indo-Caribbean heritage, drawing attention to the impact of western colonialism and consumerism on the people of India and the Caribbean. Using a multidisciplinary approach, Maharaj repurposes advertising images of indentured Indian women in Trinidad and Tobago, made in the 1800's by French photographer Felix Morin. His photographs, originally used as marketing schemes, invited tourism to the 'exotic' West Indies. The women pictured had no say in their appearance or use, but were instead objectified, dressed, and posed for a western audience, their names not even recorded in the archives.

For Maharaj, reclaiming, transforming, and reimagining this history was a way to remove the colonial, white-male gaze and honor and protect these women through her own vision. Her resulting works are visually complex portrayals highlighted in vivid color and elevated with the details they deserved. The multiple iterations of each female subject on her canvas emphasize the gaze of the women depicted, ultimately engaging the viewer in the power stance of the model. The repetition also calls to mind the multi-limbed goddesses and gods of the Hindu religion. In their final forms, the unstretched canvas works are backed with chintz, a luxury Indian textile heavily Westernized in the late 1700's and cheapened by mass production techniques. Each piece is suspended from a neon-colored acrylic rod, integrating the traditional and contemporary in a manner that celebrates her cultural legacy while updating it for the new millennium.

For Maharaj, the works in *Lambi Kahani* are her way of bringing attention to a long story of which most people are not aware and of sharing the history of women who, while never voiceless, were long silenced.

**Renluka Maharaj** (b. Trinidad and Tobago, West Indies) lives and works between Colorado, New York City, and Trinidad. Maharaj completed her BFA at the University of Colorado Boulder and her MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she received the Barbara De Genevieve Scholarship. Her works are in institutional collections, including The Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, Joan Flasch artist book collection, Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Flaten Art Museum, St. Olaf College, and special collections at the University of Colorado Boulder as well as numerous private collections. Her work has been recognized with awards, including Fellowships from Vermont Studio Center, Fountainhead Residency, Miami, and Virginia Center For Creative Arts. She has also recently been accepted into the highly competitive year-long residency in Newark, New Jersey, which will culminate in a solo show.

**RULE Gallery**, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historical art movements to a broader audience.