Several artists in general and particularly artists belonging to minority sexual identities have experienced moral policing and censorship in the twenty-first century. The point to be noted is that the so-called negative public responses to LGBTQ art can easily be identified as motivated by fringe groups within the majority Hindu/ right-wing political party, which position themselves as the custodians of public morality. As a result, artists practice strict self-censorship, avoid exhibiting in public spaces, and tend to show only in protected private galleries; they tend to use the internet to sell their work directly to foreign (or national) buyers or find sponsorship. It is also a matter of concern that many younger-generation artists, while taking part in LGBTQ events such as pride marches, generally prefer working without the limitations of identitarian labels such as "gay" or "lesbian" and prefer the more fluid category of "queer." Suffice it to say that LGBTQ art is a highly constrained category today in India, although it has had a vital, compelling presence in the contemporary art scene since the 1990s.

SEE ALSO *The Art of Queering Asian Mythology; New Media in Asia; Section 377 and Section 377A; Section 377 in South Asia*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hyman, Timothy. *Bhupen Khakhar*. Mumbai: Chemould, 1998.

Joseph, Sherry, and Pawan Dhall. "No Silence Please, We're Indians!" In *Different Rainbows*, edited by Peter Drucker, 157–178. London: Gay Man's Press, 2000.

Kapur, Geeta. "Bhupen Khakhar." In *Bhupen Khakhar*, edited by Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 28. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2002. Exhibition catalog.

Khakhar, Bhupen. "Pages from a Diary." In *Yaraana: Gay Writing from India*, edited by Hoshang Merchant, 34–36. New Delhi: Penguin, 1999.

Khakhar, Bhupen. "A Story." In *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History*, edited by Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, 294–297. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Khakhar, Bhupen. *Bhupen Khakhar: Maganbhai's Glue, Pages from a Diary, Vadki, Phoren Soap, and Maujila Manilal*. Translated by Ganesh Devy, Naushil Mehta, and Bina Srinivasan. New Delhi: Katha, 2001.

Mortimer, Caroline. "India's Supreme Court Could Be about to Decriminalise Gay Sex in Major Victory for LGBT Rights." *Independent* (London), 8 January 2018. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/india-homosexuality-legalise-law -gay-lgbt-couples-supreme-court-ruling-a8148896.html

Panikkar, Shivaji K. "Indigenism: An Inquiry into the Quest for 'Indianness' in Contemporary Indian Art." In *Indian Art: An Overview*, edited by Gayatri Sinha, 112–125. New Delhi: Rupa, 2003.

Shah, Tejal. *Info*. Tejal Shah. http://tejalshah.in/info/

Zitzewitz, Karin. *The Art of Secularism: The Cultural Politics of Modernist Art in Contemporary India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

The Art of Queering Asian Mythology

ALPESH KANTILAL PATEL
Associate Professor, Contemporary Art and Theory
Florida International University, Miami

An examination of LGBTQ-themed artwork through the lens of Asian mythology.

In 2017 the Museum of Contemporary Art in Taipei organized the first major museum exhibition of artwork dealing with LGBTQ themes across China, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. In much the same way, this entry examines works of art—from paintings, photography, and videos to installation, performance, and zines—that explore LGBTQ themes not only from East Asia but also from South Asia and Southeast Asia. While a broad array of countries and subjectivities are covered, the rationale for bringing these particular works together for analysis is not driven by an interest in being comprehensive. Rather, the works are connected by a common theme: they all use the lens of Asian "mythologies" to queer, or rework, traditional concepts of sexuality.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), the term *mythology* can refer to "a body or collection of myths, especially those … belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition," as well as more generally a "set of beliefs which underpins or informs a particular point of view." The first section of this essay focuses on the former definition, or more specifically, artworks that destabilize an Asian myth or legend and thereby reimagine nonnormative subjectivities. For example, Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra's video reworks the manner in which Spanish colonialists co-opted the Philippine mythological figure Manananggal— seen as a threat to their homophobic and sexist views—as something to malign. Chitra Ganesh's photograph draws on the legend of a famed Indian princess who fought against the British but whose visual depiction is largely nonexistent in the historical record. Focusing on the princess's bravery, Ganesh depicts her as a heroine in armor and thereby effectively transgendered.

The other section of the essay meditates on the *OED*'s second definition of *mythology*, according to which the term need not refer to classical understandings of myths, legends, or stories. *Mythology* can refer to the way beliefs structure societies and become naturalized or the myths of society that promulgate certain truths as normative. Indeed, this is the bedrock of the work of Mumbai-based scholar Devdutt Pattanaik, as well as French philosopher Roland Barthes's canonical *Mythologies* (1957), in which he critiques French

SUNIL GUPTA (1953–)

An artist whose practice is decidedly transnational in scope, Sunil Gupta is a Canadian citizen, a leading figure in London's Black Arts movement, and the most prominent queer photographer in India, one who is also involved in curatorial, writing, and activist projects. Born in New Delhi in 1953, he moved to Montreal, Canada, in 1969 where he attended college, played an inaugural role in Canadian LGBT activism, and made amateur work. In 1976 Gupta studied photography under George Tice, Lisette Model, and Philippe Halsman at the New School for Social Research in New York City, and his series *Christopher Street* (1976) captures a unique moment for the gay West Village—"post-Stonewall and before AIDS," in Gupta's words (2011, 27).

When Gupta moved to London in 1978, he developed a photographic practice consonant with the bold and controversial era of identity that aimed to challenge the white hegemony in British arts. After completing degrees from West Surrey College of Art and Design, Farnham (1981), and the Royal College of Art, London (1983), he joined the Greater London Council's Race Equality Unit, which led to *Reflections of the Black Experience* (1986), the first show on black British photography (Brixton Art Gallery). Two years later, he cofounded Autograph: The Association of Black Photographers, the first institute dedicated to black photography in London. Photo series such as *Exiles* (1986), *"Pretended" Family Relationships* (1988), and *Ten Years On* (1984–1985) reflect a queer racialized lens through intimate documentary techniques, whereas his *Trespass* (1992–1995) series' digital montage imbricate queer and migratory narratives. In 1995 Gupta was diagnosed with HIV, and *Homelands* (2000–2003) and *From Here to Eternity* (1999) make personal connections between his ailing body and the various landscapes of his life (India, Canada, and the United Kingdom). Soon, however, his photography came to consider a life, even a love life, with HIV.

In 2004–2005 Gupta returned to New Delhi and became a leading artist and activist in LGBT representation. This period overlaps with the High Court of Delhi's 2009 repeal of Section 377, an antisodomy law from the colonial period. The photo series *Mr. Malhotra's Party* (2007–2012) and *Love, Undetectable* (2009) shed light on a new "outness" and queer subjectivity among Indians, while *The New Pre-Raphaelites* (2008–2009) and *Sun City* (2010) engender a queer aesthetic as campy *tableaux vivants* full of cheeky visual citations. These last two series depart from his characteristic documentary eye. Gupta returned to London in 2012 and, in his mid-sixties, decided to pursue a doctorate at the University of Westminster.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gupta, Sunil. *Pictures from Here*. London: Chris Boot, 2003.

Gupta, Sunil. *Wish You Were Here: Memories of a Gay Life*. New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2008.

Gupta, Sunil. *Queer*. New Delhi: Vadehra Art Gallery, 2011.

Singh, Radhika. "Interview: Sunil Gupta." *Exposure* 41, no. 1 (2008): 14–25.

Natasha Bissonauth
Visiting Assistant Professor of Writing
Haverford College, Haverford, PA

popular culture and mass media. The artworks discussed in this section of this essay are concerned with how mythology reveals truths for what they are: fabrications or distortions. In this way, LGBTQ subjectivities become part of—rather than stand outside of—the fabric of society. For example, the paintings of Balbir Krishan that are discussed point to how same-sex sexuality is already part of the fabric of society and therefore hardly unnatural or deviant, whereas MuXi's work suggests the fluidity of gender, rather than gender naturalized as a binary. Moreover, the zines of Thanh "Nu" Mai and Aiden Nguyễn serve as a bridge between Vietnam's art and LGBT communities to work against the implicit homophobia of the former and the conflation of the latter with the vapidity of nightlife culture.

Overall, mythologies (broadly construed) can be powerful modes to naturalize homophobia or stereotypes, and it is therefore not surprising that the artists discussed in this essay are keen to reimagine them. In the end, what emerges is a composite image from this constellation of disparate works that reimagine the heteronormative mythologies that undergird societal and cultural norms across Asia.

Myths as Connected to Legends

This section focuses on two works that destabilize Asian myths to reimagine nonnormative subjectivities: a video by Australian artists Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra, and a photograph by US-based artist Chitra Ganesh.

***Figure 1: Screen Capture from the Video* Ex Nilalang *by Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra.** The section titled "Balud" in the video features a close-up shot of the mythological female known as Manananggal, who is a beautiful woman by day and a "monster" by night, here played by the* bakla *performer Jai Jai. The video portrays the creature with sympathy, thus connecting her to other marginalized populations.* PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTIN SHOULDER OF CLUB ATE.

Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra: *Ex Nilalang* The title of the video *Ex Nilalang* (2015)—by Justin Shoulder (1985–) and Bhenji Ra (1990–), artists of Filipino descent who are based in Sydney, Australia—can be roughly translated from Tagalog as "creature" or to "create," with the *ex* from Latin meaning "out of" and "out from." The title is fitting both for the reference to folkloric beings in the work and the provocative notion that the often-maligned creature in most mythological traditions can be a creator rather than a destroyer. About twenty minutes long, the video is composed of three parts—"Balud," "Dyesebel," and "Lolo ex Machina"—which reimagine Philippine mythological folklore, pop culture, and ancestral spirits, respectively. This entry will examine the first two parts.

"Balud" focuses mostly on the face of an exquisite figure with dazzling, glittering blue makeup and colorless eyes (see Figure 1). She begins a mellifluous song of lament, and when the camera zooms out, her previously unseen wings and long nails come into view. Depicted is the mythological female known as Manananggal—a beautiful woman by day and a "monster" by night. Spanish colonialists turned this figure into something to be feared, supposedly as a way to combat what they perceived as both the precolonial Filipinos' unabashed sexual liberation of women and their high regard for nonbinary and trans

subjects. In the video, Manananggal is played by Jai Jai, a well-known performer in the *bakla*/trans community of the Philippines. *Bakla* refers to categories as diverse as transvestite and homosexuality. Jai Jai presents us with a more sympathetic version of the supposed monster and, in so doing, helps us begin to reimagine the marginalized.

The second part of the video, "Dyesebel," is based on the artists' visits to clubs in Manila, where they got to know the city's trans community. From these experiences emerged the idea of an underwater nightclub populated by mermaids, inspired by the urban *bakla* milieu. The artists drew on pop culture, too, by incorporating the name of a popular soap opera in the Philippines: *Dyesebel*. Dyesebel's story is, like that of Manananggal, a sad tale. She was born to human parents but was half-human, half-fish. Feared by the community in which she lived, Dyesebel was eventually thrown out of the city and exiled to the sea, where she befriended other mermaids.

Like Manananggal, the siren-mermaid in Philippine mythology is threatening to human society. For *Ex Nilalang*, the artist Ra takes on the role of Dyesebel, while friends from Manila's trans nightclub scene portray the other siren-mermaids. They frolic in the waters, seemingly carefree. The underwater scene is meant to be close in sensibility to the Manila trans nightclub scene, which is

both a safe haven and a place to celebrate the community's penchant for all things glamorous. The coming together of LGBTQ subjects in nightclubs produces alternative communities of belonging. Art historian Michelle Antoinette writes that the shared space of this symbolic aquatic world invokes "not only the fluid spaces of the Philippine island archipelago, but also of the fluid contact zone for queer-based connection between the Philippines and its diasporas" (2017, 70). In this way, the work reaches beyond the Philippines to the diaspora.

Chitra Ganesh: *The Awakening* The work of New York City–based and lesbian-identified artist Chitra Ganesh (1975–) is concerned with Asia and its diaspora, much like that of Shoulder and Ra in "Dyesebel." Ganesh is well known for her murals and drawings but less so for her photographs, such as *The Awakening* (2004), which is discussed here. This work ostensibly explores a historical figure that has reached legendary status: the rani, or princess, of the town Jhansi in India, who famously defied the British in the mutiny of 1857 to 1858. The title is ironic, given that the photograph depicts the princess (the

artist herself) lying lifeless in the snow. She has a red bandanna covering her head, a bloody wound on one of her forearms, and blood smeared on her cheeks. Her eyes are rolled back. There is a trail of blood in the snow; footsteps are visible in the snow, too, but it is unclear whether they belong to the princess. While the construction of the ornate silver armor out of modest materials, including cardboard, tinfoil, duct tape, a Frisbee, soldering wire, binder fasteners, and a belt, suggests the precariousness of her act—indeed, she failed in her quest to defeat the British—Ganesh focuses on the steely resolve of the character as embodied by the armor, generally reserved for men, that protects her arms, chest, and legs, as well as the trident that lies next to her (see Figure 2).

When doing research for the photograph, Ganesh found that there was little imagery connected to this otherwise famous figure. As she noted in a 2017 email to Alpesh Kantilal Patel, this lack of imagery might be due, in part, to the fact that armor production and representation were strictly guarded and largely secret in order to preserve methods and strategies from enemy knowledge. Nonetheless, the visual gaps in the archive were curious to

Figure 2: Armor Created for the Photograph Awakening *(2004), by Chitra Ganesh.* *Lesbian-identified artist Ganesh constructed this armor in her representation of the legendary princess of the historic town of Jhansi in India, famous for defying the British in the Mutiny of 1857–1858.* IMAGE COURTESY OF CHITRA GANESH

Figure 3: **This Is Not Dark Life–VII** *(2001), by Balbir Krishan.* *Indian artist Krishan, who is both gay and disabled, downloaded printed gay pornography from the internet as the background of this painting, which was part of the series* Out Here and Now *on exhibit in New Delhi in 2011 and 2012.* IMAGE COURTESY OF BALBIR KRISHAN

her, especially since the heroine took on a role reserved for men. Ganesh's depiction of a transgendered rani provides a way forward to navigate these erasures and was informed by her participation in Sexually Liberated Asian Artist Activist People! (SLAAAP!), a group with which she was involved in the late 1990s and early in the first decade of the twenty-first century that promoted alternative narratives of queer Asian subjectivity. SLAAAP! encouraged photo-based interventions in the streets through the distribution of postcards, posters, and flyers. *Awakening*, though, was intended for the gallery space.

As she wrote to Patel in the aforementioned email, "Where history ends, myths begin." So, while the photograph might depict death, it is a metaphorical moment of awakening to new subjectivities hitherto unrepresented. Finally, Ganesh noted that when she was growing up in the West in the 1980s, the only photographic images of South Asian girls and women were those that positioned them as individuals who needed to be "saved." Ganesh was aware that viewers in the United States, in particular, might have these as their only visual reference points for these subjects. With

Awakening, her viewers were getting something unexpected: a strong woman who is able to fight for herself.

Myths that Naturalize Norms in Society

This second section explores a broader array of work by artists who attempt to reimagine naturalized norms in society relating to sexuality—that is, myths that effectively have been turned into truths, which in some cases explicitly exclude LGBTQ subjectivities.

Balbir Krishan In a radical shift of British colonial-era law, India decriminalized sex acts between same-sex subjects in 2009. However, by 2013, the courts in India returned to considering same-sex acts a crime, and the laws once again deemed same-sex sexuality as unnatural. In this context, Balbir Krishan (1973–), an artist based in New York and New Delhi, challenges this development through his paintings and drawings. For example, a large section of his work *This Is Not Dark Life–VI* (2011) is covered in fields of blue, within which he has painted barely visible traces of bodies performing various sexual

acts. On the left side, he creates a silhouette of a figure by leaving areas of the canvas unpainted. However, the artist digitally printed onto the "bare" canvas black-and-white snippets of gay male pornography that he found on the internet. The light green paint used to render the legs of another figure in repose reveals to a lesser degree the pornography underneath. Krishan's painting poetically brings to the fore that which was kept clandestine in India: that men do have sex with each other. Moreover, the work suggests that gay male sex is part of the foundation of society—indeed, it is literally the ground on which the painting is executed. Krishan digitally printed pornography on the bare canvas of another painting, *This Is Not Dark Life–VII* (2011) (see Figure 3). He covered this canvas primarily in green acrylic paint and depicted multiple figures of different sizes. Parts of some of their bodies are painted red, and, while no overt sex acts are depicted, pornography is visible under the thin layer of paint used to fill the silhouettes. It is worth noting that India's Supreme Court decriminalized same-sex sexual activity in a 6 September 2018 ruling.

Both of the works discussed above were part of the series *Out Here and Now* (2011), which was installed in the eponymously titled exhibition in New Delhi at Lalit Kala Akademi in 2011 and 2012. As Krishan described in an unpublished 2017 interview with Alpesh Kantilal Patel, the exhibition coincided with his decision not only to come "out" as gay but also as a professional artist. Illustrating the stakes involved, he was attacked from behind by an unidentified assailant while delivering remarks during the opening reception, and several of his works were either damaged or destroyed. Some, such as a large watercolor with ballpoint ink on paper titled after the aforementioned series of which it is a part, were taken by the police as evidence and not returned. This particular work displays Krishan's skill in employing fields of color, as evidenced by the golden-yellow he chose for the background and the sapphire blue-green of one of the heads and torsos of the two figures, who are depicted either just before or after performing anal sex. Its unabashed depiction of a gay male sex act distinguishes it from the works previously discussed.

In an earlier work on paper titled *Dream of My Handicapped Life* (2009), Krishan depicts two figures without heads but conjoined at the shoulders. This work differs in character and color palette from the works he showed in 2012, but not in his expert use of abstraction and color to explore identity politics. The mixture of thin washes of brown, gray, and black paint applied by the artist make the figures appear bruised or sickly. The figures do not have legs below the knees, and their fingers seem unnaturally long. What could have been a loving portrait of two men embracing or kissing becomes instead something potentially monstrous. The pile of red roses at their feet seems ironic. Given that Krishan lost both of his legs below the knee when he attempted suicide by jumping onto railroad tracks, the work can be read as autobiographical. The drawing implies that the categories "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," "transgender," and "queer" tend to obscure other identifications, and that they implicitly concern able-bodied individuals. While there has been a strong interest more recently in the West in thinking about LGBTQ studies and disability studies in tandem, this is not the case yet in South Asia. In this way, Krishan's work is particularly groundbreaking in its insistence on conceptualizing LGBTQ and disability as both/and rather than either/or.

Queer Feminist Works in China In a similar vein but in connection to East Asia, the exhibition *WOMEN* 我們 homes in on how the subjectivities of women are often obscured within explorations of LGBTQ lives. Organized by San Francisco–based curator Abby Chen, it opened at EMG Gallery in Shanghai in 2011 and traveled to the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco in 2012, as well as to the Miami Beach Urban Studios (MBUS) gallery, part of Florida International University in Miami, in 2013. The exhibition took shape initially as an exploration of feminism through contemporary Chinese art and visual culture, a woefully unexamined topic in the art world. The title of the exhibition, *WOMEN* 我們, is instructive. It is a play on an English-Mandarin homophone: the characters, which mean "we" in Chinese, are pronounced like the English word *woman*. The title succinctly reveals the crux of the exhibition's curatorial conceit: to examine issues relating to women in China while shifting and stretching the very terms of what the categories of "woman" and "China" signify. The exhibition kept the category of woman under question through its inclusion of works by artists who are not biologically female, as well as of works concerned with gender ambiguity or gay male sexuality. All of the works described in the next paragraph were part of the exhibition.

Shanghai-based emerging artist MuXi's (1983–) video installation *É* 蛾 (2011; Moth) depicts a graceful, seminaked, and androgynous dancer onto whose back digital drawings of a caterpillar becoming a moth are superimposed. While caterpillars do not have morphological characteristics that distinguish males from females, moths do. Usually female moths are larger than their male counterparts, even though the genetic blueprints dictating development and growth are the same for both. By juxtaposing the equally ambiguously gendered caterpillar and dancer with the supposedly mature and gendered moth—whether male or female is beside the point—the work suggests that sexual dimorphism is as "natural" as the fluidity, rather than fixity, of gender.

Meiren'er 美人兒 (2009; My little one) by Er Gao and Li Zhe—collectively known as Er Gao Production— is less metaphorical than MuXi's *É* 蛾. It is an hour-long

documentary that includes reflections of various members of the LGBTQ community in Guangzhou on their lifestyles. While homosexuality is not illegal in China, its existence is not officially recognized. Underscoring the danger in making their nonnormative subjectivities visible, some of the documentary's participants wear masks of various kinds. Yet these often carnivalesque and exaggerated masks ultimately serve more as bold avatars than as something to hide behind.

In contrast to the installation and documentary discussed previously, *Zhanling shanghaiditie* (2012; Occupy Shanghai Subway) by the lesbian advocacy group Shanghai Nvai and Shanghai-based artist Ling Gao (1980–), was designed to be staged outside of a museum or gallery as a bold intervention into the public sphere. The work is, in

***Figure 4: Photo from Gao Ling's* Hey! TTTTouch Me! (2010).** *Gao Ling and other women wore tea strainers as bras over their clothing while riding the Shanghai subway to protest the official recommendation that women dress more modestly to avoid sexual harassment on public transportation. The sexualization of a domestic item conflates—and thereby disrupts—the construction of women as either housewives or whores.* GAO LING, *HEY! TTTTOUCH ME!*, 2010, PERFORMANCE, SUBWAY, SHANGHAI (PHOTOGRAPH BY GAO LING)

large part, a comment on the response of Shanghai's metro authorities to the sharp rise in sexual harassment of women on its trains. The metro asked women to "please be self-dignified to avoid perverts." That is, instead of the metro seeking redress by demanding that male perpetrators change their ways, it asked women to literally re-dress themselves. In a protest against the metro authorities' response, which effectively shifted blame from men to women, Gao and other women rode the subway wearing clothing that resembled burkas and full-face veils while holding tablets that read "It's a dress, not a yes" and "Want to flaunt, not a taunt." When Sina Weibo—China's version of Twitter—asked some 45,000 people what they thought of the Shanghai metro's call for modest dressing, 70 percent of respondents wrote that women should be careful to dress so as to avoid sexual harassment. This is the sort of reaction Gao hoped to curb, and it points again to the complexity of feminism in contemporary China. The women in the subway performance also wore tea strainers as bras (see Figure 4). Gao's installation *Hey! TTTTouch Me!* (2010) includes tea strainers hung up as if on a kitchen rack. In this work, the sexualization of a common domestic item conflates—and thereby disrupts—the construction of women as either housewives or whores.

Thanh "Nu" Mai and Aiden Nguyễn's Underground Zine *Vănguard* When artists Thanh "Nu" Mai (1983–) and Aiden Nguyễn (1994–) moved to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) from New York City, they found a disjuncture between the LGBTQ and art communities, with little overlap. This led them to found the zine *Vănguard* in 2014, billed as a safe platform for Vietnamese LGBTQ-identified subjects to freely express themselves through visual arts and written works. In the foreword of the inaugural issue, Mai and Nguyễn wrote that the zine is meant to be a vehicle through which the LGBTQ community can "redefine art and dismantle conventionality" (2014, 2). The magazine also aimed to create a space for an LGBTQ community that is not defined by nightlife, with which queer culture is often conflated.

The production of the magazines is often a group effort, given that they are largely made by hand. The building of the issues themselves brings together the LGBTQ and art communities. Issues feature everything from drawings, digital art, and photographs to essays, poems, and short stories in both Vietnamese and English. The slim first issue of only twenty-two pages included several spreads of photographs, many of which were taken in New York City. One photograph depicts the transgender club diva Amande Lepore. Also in the issue is an essay on the colonial genealogy of the slur word *bê đê* for effeminate homosexuals in Vietnam. The second issue was slightly larger at thirty-six pages, with essays primarily in Vietnamese and the photography more explicitly connected to Vietnam rather than the diaspora.

Photographs showed naked males standing in large-scale urns and naked women lounging confidently, with cigarettes in hand. The artwork also included collage, as well as a mixture of colorful, pop-inspired drawings, often sexual in nature but always playful. For instance, the front cover of issue 2 includes a series of hearts that on closer inspection are seen to be breasts and ball sacks. Overall, four issues had been produced as of 2017 and were available primarily in Vietnam and Boston. Digital versions of every issue are available online, effectively expanding *Vănguard*'s reach.

Conclusion

All the artists discussed in this essay do not so much suggest dismantling societies wholesale—a difficult feat given the complex ways in which homophobia is often embedded in them—as they do creating new ones, however flawed. Put another way, the artworks revel in mythologies as "fake facts," but unlike Barthes's essays in *Mythologies*, the artworks do not function as negative critique. In their indulgence of mythologies and their capacity for reimagining the world around us—as filled with everything from women warriors and those who wear tea strainers as bras in public to a glittery "monster" with a sonorous voice and an ambiguously gendered human-as-moth—the artworks are generative and generous, and they point toward a more hopeful and ethical future.

SEE ALSO *The Art of Identity in India; Bakla; Boys Love (*Yaoi*) Manga; Graffiti and Graphic Art*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Antoinette, Michelle. "Monstrous Territories, Queer Propositions: Negotiating the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, between Australia, the Philippines, and Other (Island) Worlds." *Asian Diasporic Visual Cultures and the Americas* 3, nos. 1–2 (2017): 54–85.

"Balbir Krishan, Gay Indian Artist, Attacked during Exhibition of Erotic Works." *Huffington Post*, 6 January 2012. https://www .huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/06/balbir-krishan-gay-indian_n _1189480.html

Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. Translated by Richard Howard and Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012. First published in French in 1957.

Chen, Abby, ed. *WOMEN* 我們. San Francisco: Blurb, 2015.

Chinese Culture Center. *Occupy Shanghai Subway*. 2014. https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=15-lOczB50U

Drucks, Achim. "Chitra Ganesh: Subversive Myths." *Deutsche Bank Artmag*, 19 July 2010. http://db-artmag.com/en/61 /feature/chitra-ganesh-subversive-myths/

Ganesh, Chitra. Accessed on 28 August 2018. http://www .chitraganesh.com/

Jerosch, Rainer. *The Rani of Jhansi, Rebel against Will: A Biography of the Legendary Indian Freedom Fighter in the Mutiny of 1857– 1858*. Translated by James A. Turner. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2007.

"Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra." Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art. Accessed on 28 August 2018. https://www .qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/apt8/artists/shoulder, -justin-and-bhenji-ra

Mai, Thanh "Nu," and Aiden Nguyễn. "Foreword." *Vănguard* 1 (2014): 1–4. https://www.vanguardzine.com/issue-1

"New Fangled Feminism: Self-Dignified Indeed." *Economist/ Shanghai*, 29 June 2012. https://www.economist.com/blogs /analects/2012/06/new-fangled-feminism

Vaidl, Dharvi. "He Lost Legs, Art Gave Him a New Life." *Times of India*, 2 December 2015. https://timesofindia .indiatimes.com/city/delhi/He-lost-legs-art-gave-him-a -new-life/articleshow/50003606.cms

Asexuality

ELA PRZYBYLO
Ruth Wynn Woodward Postdoctoral Fellow, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
Simon Fraser University, Canada

The range of definitions that can apply to this sexual identity from the perspective of asexual communities, scientific research, and queer and feminist theory.

The sexual identity and orientation of asexuality has a rich cultural, historical, and political life, even as it continues to be overlooked and neglected in LGBTQ2+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, plus) spaces and narratives. Commonly understood as not being sexually attracted to anyone, the very modes of defining asexuality are nuanced and contested. This entry explores various definitions and debates around asexuality from the perspectives of asexual communities, scientific research, and queer and feminist approaches, focusing on Western research and communities. It begins with an exploration of asexual activist efforts to define asexuality and question compulsory sexuality. Following on this, it depicts how scientific research has handled asexuality and some of the ways it seeks to define asexuality. Next, it explores feminist and queer approaches to asexuality as they intersect with gender, race, and ability.

Defining Asexuality, Redefining Sexuality: Asexual Activisms and Countercultures

Online asexual communities include the online platform called the Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN), as well as blogs and social networking sites, such as Reddit and Tumblr. Offline, asexual organizing happens locally and internationally, including through