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Rithika Merchant continues her Chloé association with this collection

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PUBLISHED: FEB 11, 2019 | 17:49:27 IST

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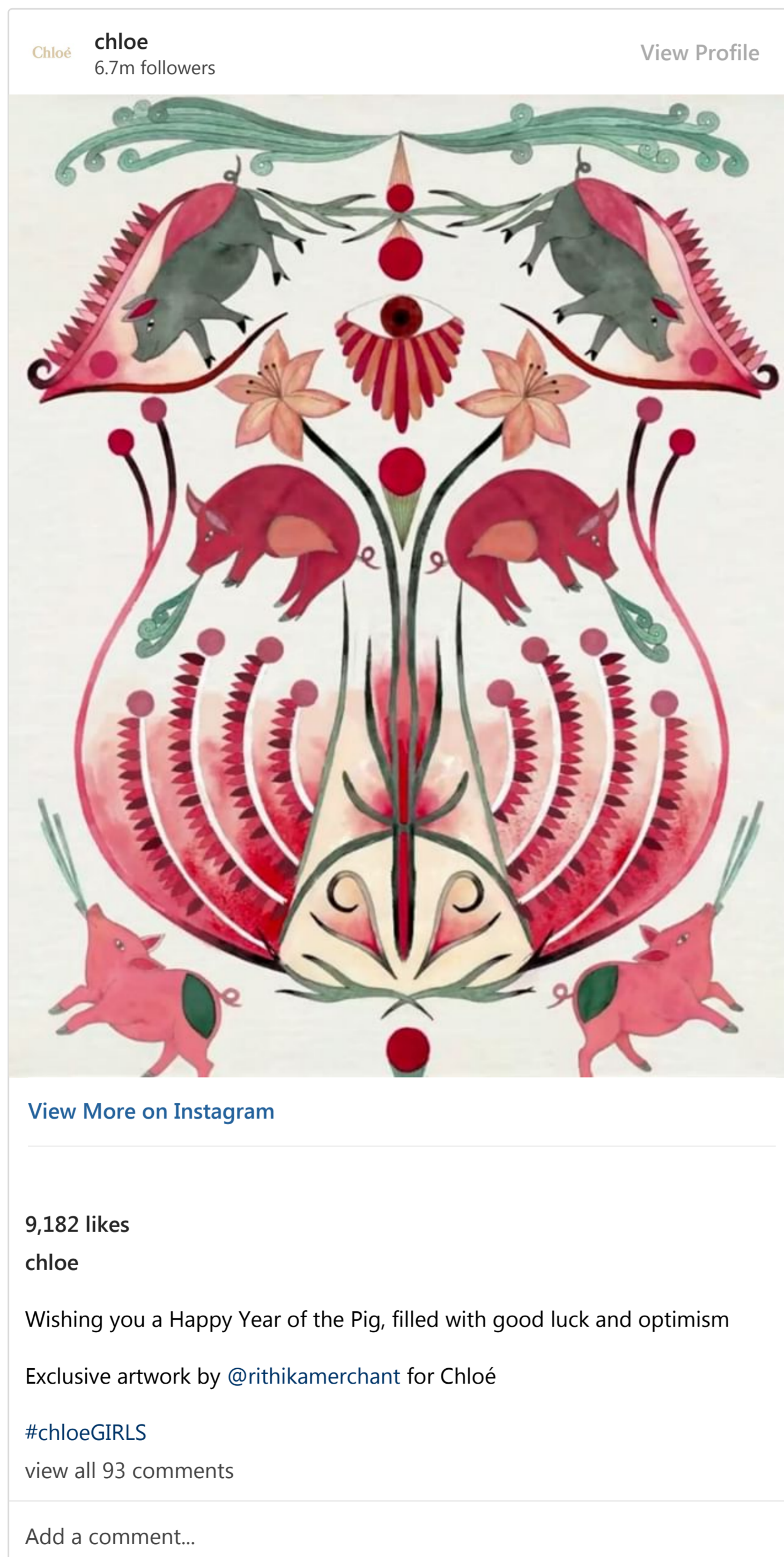
Chloé celebrates the lunar new year with a capsule collection featuring artwork by the artist



Follow [Rithika Merchant](#)'s feed on Instagram and you will be drawn to her haunting, detailed artwork. Does she dream up her illustrations? I ask her earnestly and she laughs it off. Merchant was one of the most talked about artists in 2018 owing to her collaboration with [Natacha Ramsay-Levi](#), creative director at [Chloé](#), who worked with the artist for her debut collection for the French luxury

house. Fashion was never on the map for Merchant, but yet she finds herself working with one of the biggest names in the industry.

It's common among luxury houses to create special lines to meet the needs of the global luxury customer. The Chinese Year of the Pig has sparked off several such capsule collections, and Chloé's in one of the list. Rithika Merchant was again Ramsay-Levi's collaborator of choice for the project, with her rendition of the earth pig printed over accessories and separates from the label. *Vogue* spoke to Merchant about working with the visionary, her creative process and the difference between commissioned and personal work.



What was the thought behind the artwork you created?

I like to have work that is research-oriented, and I try to incorporate certain symbols that tie into the narrative. Pigs are anyway considered lucky, and since

this was the year of the earth pig, I wanted to incorporate elements of that. I also like botanical stuff, so there's that and obviously lots of red since it is about the Chinese New Year.

How would you describe your working process. What is like when you work in the studio?

I just kind of think it up. I research the elements that I have to put in and know their meaning and that it makes sense. Once I start visualising it and drawing, it just comes up. I don't really know how [else] I [would] put it.

How do you treat commissioned work differently than personal work?

For commissioned work you are presented with a brief, then you make work according to that. In my own work, it's my own ideas and the stuff that I would like to explore. As for Chloé, if they have a colour palette in mind, that's something you have got to stick to. That being said, the team at Chloé has been really welcoming about my ideas. They don't give a tonne of projections. They pretty much let me do whatever, and I have quite a lot of freedom on my vision.

Natacha has brought in a different kind of energy at Chloé—it's edgier than it has been previously. What is it like to work with her?

I work a lot with the extended team. When I did work with her, I really enjoyed it. I've always said that she's very open to other people's opinions. She also has a super specific vision to keep you going. For me, I really like working with someone who knows exactly what they want and have a clear vision. They are a lot easier to work with.

Do you feel like women are not well represented in the art community?

In India, I would say that female artists are well recognised, especially the younger generation. I feel that the gallery I work with in Mumbai, [Tarq](#), represents a lot of female artists. Almost 60 per cent of their roster is women. I don't know, I have never felt overlooked in my little realm of work.

Scroll through our gallery below to take a look at some of the pieces from Chloé's new capsule collection, featuring works by Rithika Merchant.





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