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Rithika Merchant

by Gautami Reddy



Courtesy TARQ Mumbai

Rithika Merchant makes maps of places that do not exist. Not yet anyway. Having grown up by the sea in Mumbai, studied art in Athens and New York, and made a home in Barcelona, she has spent much of her life moving between places, collecting stories, real and imagined. In her watercolors, ancient navigational charts meet Mughal miniatures, botanical drawings, and cosmologies of her own invention. Myths are her compass.

This year, her works have traveled to Art Basel and to exhibitions in Stockholm and New York, and in 2025 nine of her paintings grew into something extraordinary. Commissioned for Dior's spring/summer haute-couture show in Paris, an installation titled *The Flowers We Grew* drew on the women of her maternal family in Keralam. In the deft hands of 306 artisans from the Chanakya embroidery atelier, Merchant's small watercolors became vast embroidered wall panels: their landscapes alive with flowers, strange creatures, stars, and seas. And for a brief moment, you could walk into her world.