

HOLLIS TAGGART

**Hollis Taggart to Open First Solo Show of Works by Contemporary Artist Suchitra Mattai
in February**

**Exhibition Features New Paintings, Fiber Sculptures, and Installations
Exploring the Psychological Landscape of the “Other”**

***Herself as Another* On View February 10 - March 12, 2022**

New York—January 18, 2022—On February 10, Hollis Taggart will open *Herself as Another*, artist Suchitra Mattai’s first solo exhibition with the gallery. Mattai’s multidisciplinary practice explores, unravels, and re-imagines commonly understood and entrenched histories and cultural perceptions. With her newest work, Mattai brings her incisive critique to an examination of the way society “others” populations that it deems different, placing particular focus on the experiences of immigrants and those dealing with mental illness. Through more than a dozen mix-media paintings, fiber sculptures, and installations, Mattai grapples with the fears and mythologies that drive people to ostracize and the impacts those actions have on the “other.” *Herself as Another* follows Mattai’s breakout New York presentation in Hollis Taggart’s two-person show, *History Reclaimed* in 2020, and the artist formally joining the gallery in January 2021. The exhibition will remain on view through March 12, 2022, at the gallery’s primary location in Chelsea at 521 W. 26th Street.

Hollis Taggart will host an opening reception for *Herself as Another* on February 10, from 5:00 to 8:00 PM. The artist will be in attendance. An RSVP is required. Attendees must wear masks and show proof of vaccination.

Mattai’s vision and work are grounded in her Indo-Caribbean descent and familial migrations, as well as research on colonialism and indentured labor in the 19th century. Her approach is formally articulated in the way that she combines, reconfigures, and layers found, vintage, and seemingly disparate materials, connecting her own hand with those of the original makers and collapsing the boundaries between past and present. Mattai is particularly interested in the labor and contributions of women, and her works often employ materials and techniques associated with the domestic sphere such as embroidery, weaving, and stitching. By bringing to the fore the materials and processes connected with women’s invisible work, she unearths the multitude of voices and experiences that have shaped social, cultural, and political narratives.

Herself as Another develops a new layer in Mattai’s oeuvre as she examines the psychological landscape of “othering”—both the personal biases that drive perpetrators and the various ramifications on target communities. As part of this exploration, Mattai has spent time researching the monsters of folklore, using texts such as *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* as critical source material. The monsters of folklore encapsulate society’s greatest fears and are ubiquitous across continents, countries, and cultures. These folktales provide a lens to understanding how cultural norms are established and can lead to the “monstering” or “othering” of those who do not immediately conform. This reality is particularly true for immigrants, who are often demonized for their physical, religious, and cultural differences to those in their adoptive countries, as well as for the mentally ill, whose behaviors and social needs may be divergent. With *Herself as Another* Mattai offers a space to confront these

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misunderstandings, stereotypes, and taboos, and to reflect on the experience and perspective of the “other” as a means of fostering empathy and connection.

The mixed fiber wall sculpture *The Monster Inside* (2022) reflects the entangled nature of identity and the turmoil often associated with efforts to assimilate. The work features an incredible spectrum of woven, braided, and layered saris, malas, and other ropes and textiles, capturing the intricacy and distinct aesthetic quality of Mattai’s work as well as its metaphoric potency. Mattai’s singular approach to fiber arts finds new expression with *Fitting In* (2022), which features a found wooden side table with a sculptural fiber piece set atop and around it—a kind of magnificent blue tentacle growing around a traditional frame. The artist’s ability to work at monumental scale is visible in the installation, *An Alien Spirit with a Breathtaking View* (2022). The stunning work features an expansive array of colorful vintage saris, garland, cord, ghungroo bells, and other fabrics layered, tucked, folded, and interwoven into a mythical landscape that suggests a place yet unknown—one with beautiful views of a world to be built.

The exhibition title itself serves as a call to action, drawing on the philosophical notion that to know another is also to know oneself. In this way, Mattai captures the idea that we are all “other” and part of a wider communal network and sphere. In the painting of the same name in the exhibition, produced in 2022, Mattai presents a woman joined with a silhouette, suggesting the openness of identity and the possibility of joining with the “other”. The two figures, along with a child, are set against a magnificent floral background into which they all, in instances, meld, offering another suggestion of fluidity and unity. *Herself as Another* is a wondrous meditation on an experience all too resonant—and one that Mattai brings to light through her distinct vision and complex and meticulous approach.

In addition to her presentation at Hollis Taggart, Mattai is the subject of a solo exhibition at Unit London, titled *Monster*, which remains on view through February 12, 2022. Her work is also currently on view as part of the group exhibitions, *Fragments of Epic Memory*, at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) (Toronto), and *Home*, at the Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art and Storytelling (New York City).

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Mattai has exhibited widely across the United States and been included in a range of international presentations. Her work was featured, and received critical acclaim, in the landmark exhibition *State of the Art 2020* at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Momentary. She has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Hollis Taggart (2022), Unit London (2022), Boise Art Museum of Art (2021), K Contemporary (2020), and the Center for Visual Arts, Metropolitan State University of Denver (2018). Her works have been exhibited as part of group presentations at the San Antonio Museum of Art (2021), Kavi Gupta Gallery (2021), Aicon Gallery (2021), Unit London (2021), Hollis Taggart (2020), and Pen and Brush NYC (2019). In 2019, she was commissioned to create a monumental multi-media installation for the Sharjah Biennial. Her work is held in the collections of the Denver Art Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Tampa Museum of Art, and the Kiran Nader Museum of Art (Delhi). Mattai received an MFA in Painting and Drawing and an MA in South Asian art, both from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. She is represented by Hollis Taggart (New York), K Contemporary Gallery (Denver, CO), and Unit London (London, UK). She lives and works in Denver.

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About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities. The gallery's flagship location is in Chelsea, and it also operates a space in Southport, Connecticut.

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