

# Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos

## *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*

macLYON



Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos, *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake* (detail), 2023

Polymer clay, styrofoam, paint, metal powder, synthetic hair, beads, steel, aluminium, florist's foam, paper, plastic, 152,4 x 243,8 x 121,9 cm  
Courtesy of the artists and Patel Brown, Toronto/Montreal – Photo: Mikhail Mishin

**Press day:**  
Thursday 18 September 2025

### Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos

#### *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake\**

An exhibition at macLYON from 19.09.2025 to 4.01.2026 - Level 3 of the museum

The Lyon Museum of Contemporary Art (macLYON) is delighted to present, for the first time in France, an exhibition of works by **Rajni Perera** and **Marigold Santos**, two prolific artists on the Canadian art scene. Perera's origins are Sri Lankan and Santos is of Filipino heritage. Both artists are marked by the experience of immigration at an early age and they have many concerns in common: motherhood and feminism, exile, rebirth, myths, the natural and the spiritual world, to name a few. They met in 2020, and immediately recognised aesthetic and conceptual affinities in each other, a bond between kindred spirits. Not long after they began to collaborate.

Conceived as a duo exhibition, *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake\** speaks to the artists' personal experiences and research into their respective cultural heritages. It showcases recent paintings, drawings and sculptures produced by each artist between 2019 and 2024, as well as a new joint work at macLYON, to further highlight the strength of their artistic connection.

The exhibition is part of macLYON's ongoing artistic programme, which aims to give **greater visibility to women artists**.

**Curators :**  
**Cheryl Sim**,  
Executive Director and  
Curator at PHI,  
together with  
**Marilou Laneuville**,  
Head of exhibitions and  
publications at macLYON

# Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos

## *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*

macLYON

*"There is something amazingly powerful about recognising oneself in another person. That feeling of being noticed and understood, of finding a deep connection with someone else, is both reassuring and inspiring."*

Cheryl Sim, curator of the exhibition

### How they met

In 2020, **PHI** presented a group exhibition entitled *RELATIONS: Diaspora and Painting*, curated by Cheryl Sim, which featured, among other artists, the work of **Rajni Perera** and **Marigold Santos**. When Rajni Perera visited the exhibition and discovered Marigold Santos's paintings, she immediately felt an intensely resonant connection. That encounter sparked the beginning of a relationship that would crystallise in Rajni Perera's invitation to Santos to collaborate on a duo presentation for The Armory Show in New York, in 2023. Considered one of the best offerings at that edition of the thirty-year old art fair, their collaborative work was the inspiration behind the exhibition *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*.

### Collaboration, female identity and experiences of diaspora

The exhibition is on level 3 of macLYON. It presents both solo and collaborative works by the two artists, thus offering visitors an insight into the complementary nature of their practices, as well as a sense of their distinctive styles. The show features over forty recent works (sculptures, drawings, and paintings) that convey a fascinating combination of power and vulnerability. There is also a completely new piece commissioned for their residency at macLYON.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is the sculpture *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*. It consists of a mystical female creature with a larger-than-life body. Fashioned from a wide variety of materials, it is the first work they designed together and acts as an introduction to subjects that hold particular appeal for both artists, such as motherhood, care and protection. The artists' personal narratives are woven into their work through the alchemy of "making", a process whose every technique they have perfectly mastered.

Through many entry points, *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake* invites us into a pantheon of kindred spirits.

●●● This exhibition is organised in collaboration with PHI, with the valued assistance of Patel Brown in this iteration of the show.

### PHI

For 20 years, **PHI** has stood at the forefront of major contemporary debate by dint of its exhibitions, public events, artist-in-residence programmes and educational initiatives, creating a space where artists and visitors can connect and share their ideas and views of the world.

<https://phi.ca/>

\* First presented at **PHI** in Montreal in 2024, the exhibition travelled to Contemporary Calgary (Canada) in 2025.



# Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos

## *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*

macLYON



**Rajni Perera**  
Photo: Dimitri Levano



**Marigold Santos**  
Photo: Jared Sych

**Rajni Perera** was born in 1985 in Sri Lanka, an island country in the Indian Ocean. She lived in Australia and the United States before settling in Canada. Considered one of the most promising artists on the Canadian art scene, she explores notions of hybridity, identity and mythology through a variety of media – painting, sculpture and drawing – to give shape to imagined futures in which monsters and hybrid creatures inhabit dreamlike worlds inspired by science fiction. Her work has been exhibited at PHI (Montreal), the McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Vaughan, Ontario), MOCA (Toronto), the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Temple Contemporary (Philadelphia), Eastside Projects (Birmingham, England), Tramway (Glasgow), Colomboscope (Colombo, Sri Lanka), the Gwangju Biennale (South Korea) and the Toronto Biennial of Art (Canada). Her work attracted widespread attention at the Armory Show (New York) in 2023, where she was awarded the Sauer Artist Prize. She was also a finalist for the prestigious Canadian Sobey Art Award in 2021. Rajni Perera works with galleries Patel Brown, Toronto/Montréal and Hugues Charbonneau, Montréal.

**Marigold Santos** was born in 1981 in Manila, capital of the Philippines. She immigrated with her family to Canada in 1988. That experience of immigration in her early childhood was the starting point for her work. Her art explores the intertwined concepts of 'home' and the complexity of identity. Marigold Santos pursues an interdisciplinary art practice, which includes drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, tattooing, and sound. She has created a personal mythology inspired by Filipino folklore. Hybrid creatures inhabit her supernatural environments and thrive in the precarious world of the 'in-between'. Her work has been exhibited at PHI (Montreal), the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge), the Dunlop Art Gallery (Regina), the Art Gallery of Alberta (Edmonton), MAIA Contemporary (Mexico City), and numerous other venues. She has also been selected twice for the prestigious Canadian Sobey Art Award, in 2023 and 2024. Marigold Santos is represented by Patel Brown, Toronto/Montréal and Norberg Hall, Calgary.

# Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos

## *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*

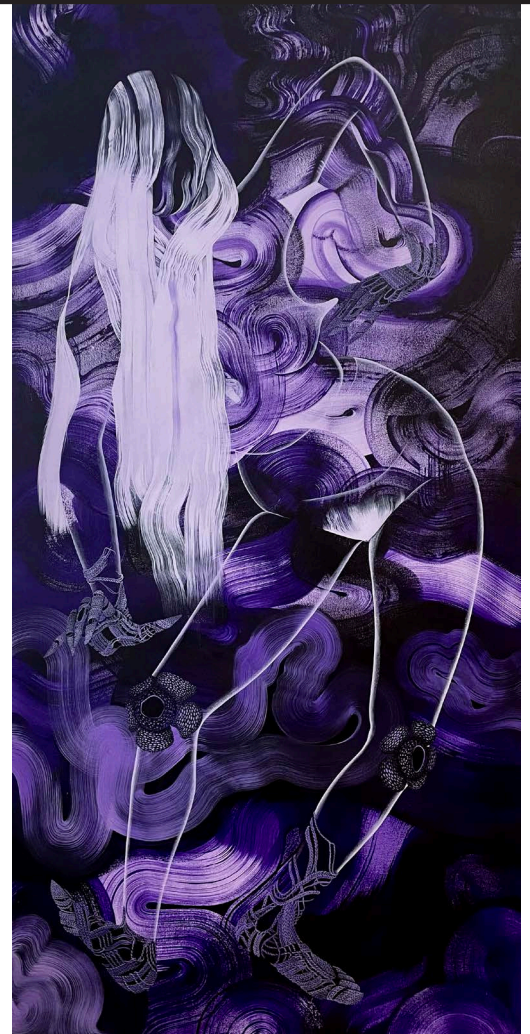
MACLYON



**Rajni Perera, *I Couldn't Wait Longer*, 2023**

Polyester, acrylic gouache, chalk, charcoal, gel pen, gold metallic thread, polymer clay beads, glass beads, wooden beads, aluminium and wooden frame, 243,8 x 365,8 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Patel Brown, Toronto/Montreal – Photo: Mikhail Mishin



**Marigold Santos, *shroud envisioning (side stance in violet)*, 2022**

Acrylic on canvas

203,2 x 101,6 cm

Private collection



**Rajni Perera & Marigold Santos, *Efflorescence/The Way We Wake*, 2023, The Armory Show, New York, 2023**

Courtesy of the artists and Patel Brown, Toronto/Montreal

Photo: Mikhail Mishin