

# YOKKE

MAGAZINE

consciousness and creativity for change

ISSUE 01

LOVE-LOSS

ISSUE 01  
Jan 2014  
AUS: \$25.00 INC GST  
NZ: \$26.00 INC GST  
US: \$23.00

694-2203-1472

9



9 772203147004

# VISION OF THE GODS

## Darshan

BY ARTIST MANJARI SHARMA

Hindu deities have been depicted endlessly through painting and sculpture. Therefore it's surprisingly sweet to see Mumbai-born, Brooklyn-based artist Manjari Sharma bringing to life these gods and goddesses through the production of photographic film, each perfected within the camera.

To make these 6ft images from scratch required exhaustive research, gathering a team of more than 30 Indian craftsmen, including set and prop makers, prosthetics, make-up and costume designers, carpenters, art directors and jewellery makers. Rivalling a Bollywood film in complexity and budget, each elaborate installation reproduces the experience of a Hindu temple, to accurately recreate classical images pivotal to Hindu mythology.

*Darshan*, a Sanskrit word meaning "vision" or "view", is most commonly used in the context of Hindu worship. It can also be translated as "an apparition or a glimpse". One may seek and receive the Darshan of a deity and, upon sight, that may invoke an immediate connection between that deity and the devotee. A Darshan can be described as an experience purposed on helping to focus and call out to your sense of spirituality.

**Saraswati** is the Hindu goddess of music, education and the arts; representing intelligence, consciousness, creativity, education, enlightenment and eloquence, strongly associated with flowing water in her role as a goddess of knowledge. She is depicted as a beautiful woman to embody the concept of knowledge as supremely alluring. She possesses four arms, and is usually shown wearing a spotless white sari. The white colour of the goddess signifies spotless character and an immaculate mind. The goddess is playing an instrument called the veena, signifying harmony of all mental strings.

Consort – Brahma Mount – Swan or Peacock



**“Whether it’s spirituality or creating a complex photograph, they both require practice, faith and devotion.”**



**Brahma** is the creation of the cosmos, the creator of the world and the Vedas. He is self-born in the lotus flower and, unlike most other Hindu gods, he holds no weapons. In one hand he holds a Veda and in another he holds a string of prayer beads called the **akṣamala**, which he uses to

keep track of the universe's time. He presides over *Brahmaloka*: a universe that contains all the splendours of the Earth and all other worlds.

**Consort - Saraswati**    **Mount - Swan or Goose**



**Vishnu** is one who supports, preserves, sustains and governs the universe; usually described as having the divine blue colour of water-filled clouds and as having four arms. In almost all Hindu denominations, Vishnu is worshipped directly or in the form of his 10 avatars, the most famous of whom are Rama and Krishna.

He is also known as the granter of *mukti* or *moksha* to his devotees, who deserve salvation from the material world.

**Consort - Lakshmi**    **Mount - Garuda**



**Kali**, also known as **Kālīka**, is the goddess associated with empowerment, as in *Shakti*. Kali is represented with perhaps the fiercest features among all the world's deities. She is multi-armed, with a sword in one hand and the head of a demon in another. One hand blesses

her worshippers, while a string of skulls act as a necklace and a girdle made of human hands becomes her clothing. These hands and heads signify liberation from the cycle of karma.

**Consort - Shiva** **Mount - Tiger**



**Lakshmi** is the giver of fortune and prosperity. She bestows riches and is known to bless the world for a well-endowed and abundant life. Lakshmi is believed to protect her devotees from a life of misery. *Lakshmi* in Sanskrit is derived from its elemental form *laks*, meaning "to perceive or observe".

**Consort - Vishnu** **Mount - Elephant or Owl**