

**LACMA PRESENTS FIRST MAJOR MUSEUM SHOWING OF INDIAN COMICS**

**Exhibition showcases vintage and contemporary Indian comic books and illustrations from Amar Chitra Katha and Liquid Comics.**



Saumin Patel, *Devi Vanquishes Bala*

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Heroes and Villains: The Battle for Good in India's Comics*, an exhibition comprised of fifty-three paintings, works on paper, and vintage comic books, on view from October 17, 2009 through February 7, 2010. The exhibition examines the legacy of India's divine heroes and heroines in contemporary South Asian culture through the comic book genre.

Indian comic book superheroes and their arch enemies are visualized from ancient archetypes that have long been depicted in traditional painting and sculpture, and are deeply ingrained in India's historical imagination. In contemporary comic books, Indian gods and goddesses are modern-day superheroes, manifested on Earth to vanquish evil forces. Demons take the form of modern villains, raising havoc in today's troubled times. *Heroes and Villains*, curated by Julie Romain and Tushara Bindu Gude, mines the history of the comic book in India from the 1960s through the present. It explores the evolution of early Indian comics, which were modeled on American superhero comics, through the *Amar Chitra Katha* (Immortal Picture Stories), a popular series based on traditional Indian epic literature and religious texts recounting the heroic deeds of Indian gods and goddesses.

"This is the first exhibition of Indian comics on view at a major museum," said Romain. "Here at LACMA we have the unique opportunity to consider this contemporary art form in relation to our extensive historical collection of South and Southeast Asian art."

Today, comic book production takes place in a global cultural context and within a multi-media framework that combines traditional hand-drawn illustrations with computer design and animation technology. The exhibition explores this process through a survey of Liquid Comics' *Devi* and *Ramayan* series, which were inspired by heroic characters from the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and other Indian texts. Liquid Comics (formerly Virgin Comics) is an animation studio based in Bangalore.

To illustrate the continuity of the heroic narrative tradition in Indian art, a selection from LACMA's historical collection of Indian paintings will also be on view. These include folios from Mughal illustrated manuscripts, paintings and drawings from the northern Indian princely states, and story-telling paintings from central India.

**Credit:** This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and made possible by the Southern Asian Art Council.

Additional support was provided by Chitra and Sudesh Arora, Catherine Benkaim and Barbara Timmer, Paula Fouce, Ruth Hayward, Ph.D., and Robert W. Hayward, M.D., Dr. and Mrs. Allen Jayne, Kris Kasselmann and Bob Emmett, Ms. Punita Khanna and Mr. John Yates, Donna and Jess Morton, Walter and Nesta Spink, and Ashok and Kay Talwar.

#### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography—and represent Los Angeles' uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**General Information:** LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit [lacma.org](http://lacma.org).

**Museum Hours and Admission:** Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's "Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

#### **Images (page 1)**

Saumin Patel, *Devi Vanquishes Bala*, India, 2006, Pencil and ink on comic book art board, 17 x 11 in., Image courtesy of Liquid Comics, Bangalore

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Press Relations at [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522.