

**MAYA VARADARAJ | ACCIDENT OF BIRTH**

March 17 - April 23, 2022

“This exhibition is a love letter to myself, my life, my family, and the moments that have led me here.

My work is analytical, though in this case, I’ve turned my focus inward. Experiencing all the aspects of womanhood, its glory, and its upset, has me analyzing the characteristic pain and tribulations tied so critically to being female. As women, our intense ordeals could, perhaps, be explained by our biologies, societies, histories, and families. In my particular case as a South Asian woman brought up in a Hindu family, a lot of my experiences can be made reasonable through philosophies from Eastern thought. Karma, for example, the belief that actions from the past or ancestral baggage lead to present experiences.

An unexpected event last year shrouded my life in loss. This event was not the hardest loss I’ve ever felt, but it was certainly the most unique. Looking for solace, I recalled moments of joy, comedy, and memories that might give meaning to this inexplicable loss. These intangible moments became intertwined and indistinguishable from my reality - this occurrence of loss then, as a consequence, was not unimaginable. It became a sequential part of my life, my family history, and the culmination of this series of work.

I mined my family photographs, selecting moments that could have been catalysts for my present life - a visualization of my karma if you will. Images of my parents as children, a survey of female family members, my grandfather active and alive. I pull these characters out of their setting and reposition them to serve me in my search for meaning. I use text to communicate with versions of these characters that no longer exist, but still play a vital role in shaping my identity. In these images, histories emerge in clothes, hairstyles, gestures, and habits. To determine the reasons and circumstances that have come to be. So here it is, an analysis of my Accident of Birth...”

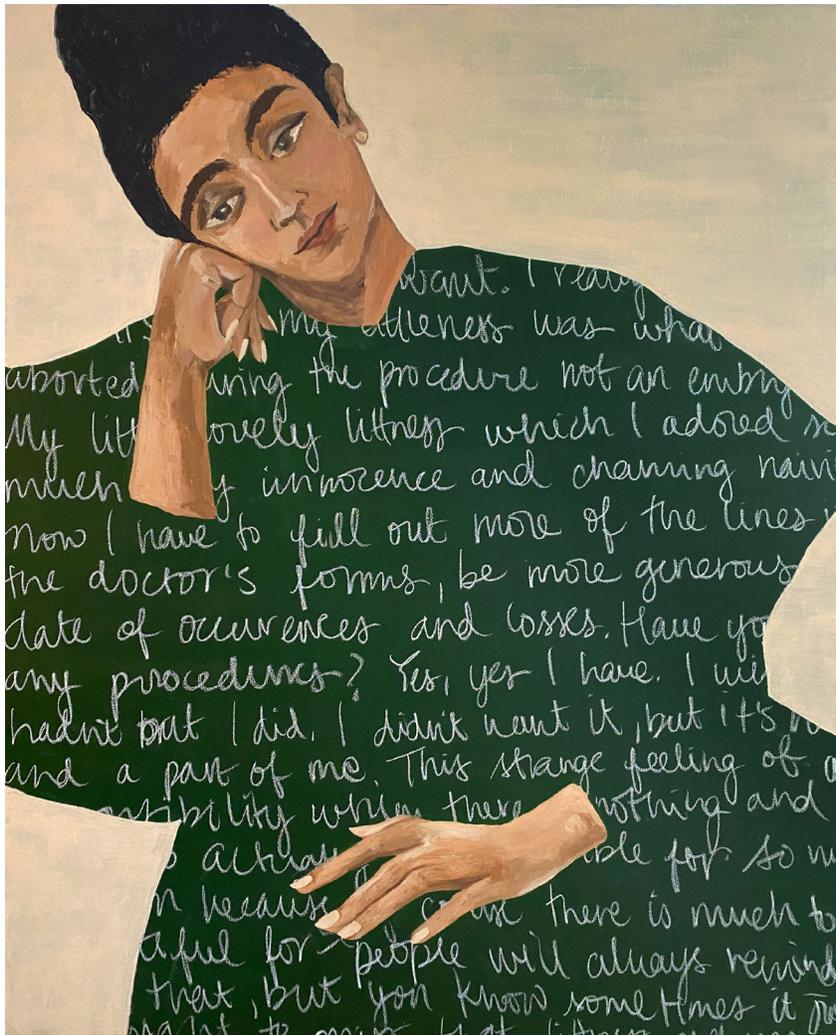
- Maya Varadaraj



Maya Varadaraj, *When You're Ready* (detail), 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 in

# aicon CONTEMPORARY

Maya Varadaraj (b. United States, 1989) is an interdisciplinary artist, she received her Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design before completing a Master's Degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Varadaraj's work has been exhibited internationally at Vitra Design Museum, Museo Del Disseny Barcelona, Nature Morte, Sagar Contemporary, Salone De Mobile, Mana Contemporary, and Medium Tings among others. She has been featured in publications such as Juxtapoz, Platform Magazine, and We Make Money Not Art.



Maya Jay Varadaraj  
*In Green and Naivete, 2022*  
Acrylic on canvas  
60 x 48 in