

Dayanita Singh
17 May–29 June 2024

Press Release

Frith Street Gallery is delighted to announce an exhibition of new work by Dayanita Singh.

Over the last 40 years Singh has created pioneering works that cross genres, explore the boundaries of photography and expand our perception of the photographic image. She liberates the medium from its traditional places, creating interconnected bodies of work replete with both poetic and narrative possibilities. To create these, Singh draws on her extensive and ongoing pictorial archive that is constantly in motion and continuously refined. This show explores in part the intersection of photography and architecture, it includes a major series of wall-based pieces as well as a structural installation.

The exhibition opens with a pair of large photographs of flowers. These evocative monochrome works have a decidedly sensuous presence. The delicate, semi-translucent petals of one seem to create an effect akin to a photographic negative, whilst the other appears to be in a somewhat disheveled state, likened by Singh to someone who has just tumbled out of bed.

Occupying the other walls are a new series of ‘contact sheets’ which demonstrate the artist’s singular relationship with architecture. Constructed from rows of framed photographs, each work allows for the arrangement and rearrangement of individual images. This near-limitless possibility for new compositions and constructed histories reveals Singh’s ability to observe and capture what lies beyond the simple geometrical formation of a space. Years of practice have honed her ability to identify an archetypal essence of space, independent of scale, time or style. The images themselves are diverse, ranging from the ancient rock cut caves of 7th century Ellora in Maharashtra State or Le Corbusier’s Ronchamp Chapel to the contemporary Indian architecture of Rahul Mehrotra and the artist’s own architectural structures installed in museum spaces. They communicate Singh’s very subjective view of the history of architecture along with an intuitive feeling for light and how it falls upon surfaces and affects interior spaces. Here light itself is the common space in which all the images exist, allowing them to enter the realm of abstraction. Horizontal and vertical lines become tools through which to merge the real and potential, no longer defining where one ends and another begins.

The gallery floor space is occupied by a large teak structure which references Singh’s freestanding museums that act as both means of display as well as storage for her photographs. But this particular work, which contains no images, is not quite sculpture nor architecture despite alluding to both. The installation has a distinctly domestic aspect, it contains a bed, a desk and seating, as such it proposes another way to live, a highly aesthetic and perhaps ascetic dwelling place.

Dayanita Singh was born in New Delhi, India in 1961 where she lives and works. She studied Visual Communication at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad and Photojournalism and Documentary

Photography at the International Center of Photography in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Dancing with my Camera*, Gropius Bau, Berlin (2022) touring to Museum Villa Stuck, Munich (2022), MUDAM, Luxembourg (2023) and Serralves Museum, Porto (2023); *Sea of Files*, Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg (2022); and *Museum Bhavan*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum (2017). Selected group exhibitions include *Choreographies of the Impossible*, Sao Paulo Biennial (2023); *Icônes*, Punta della Dogana, Pinault Collection, Venice (2023); *Out of the Box*, Schaulager Laurenz Foundation, Basel (2023); and *Off the Wall*, SFMoMA, San Francisco, CA (2021).