



Shilpa Gupta

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

October 27 - December 16, 2023

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to announce Shilpa Gupta's first solo exhibition with the gallery, on view in New York from October 27th to December 16th, 2023. The exhibition includes a new sound installation, along with sculptural objects and drawings addressing her continued concerns around language, censorship, mobility, risks, and the power of resilience.

The central work in the exhibition is a new sound installation titled *Listening Air*. This in-motion installation includes suspended microphones, each counterbalanced by a dimly lit light fixture, orbiting throughout the darkened gallery and between visitors. Subverting their connotations, the microphones-turned-speakers make audible words that have traversed landscapes of fields, forests, streets, and universities.

Interested in the potential of language, the artist brings together voices that have been passed on and persisted through generations. Throughout history, songs and poetry have been used as powerful critique against systems of control or as uplifting carriers of hope in times of struggle. Transcending borders, the variation of voices and languages in *Listening Air* create a collective sense of resilience. A song sung by the women rice weeders of the Po Valley in Italy in the 1940's, to the farmers sit down protest in New Delhi in 2020; a folk and labor song which journeyed through the tobacco farm workers in Charleston, South Carolina, onto the streets during the civil rights movement, further onto North Korea, Beirut, Tiananmen Square in Beijing, and beyond echo throughout the space. The deliberate and constant movement of the microphones mirrors the energy and formation of individual voices. Different forms of speech challenge the structures of recognized languages and intertwine against systems of erasure, creating a disparate yet harmonious experience.

In the upstairs gallery, a cabinet with 100 glass bottles stands as a reimagined library. Into each, the artist has spoken a poem by a poet who has been imprisoned for their words. The work expresses an adamant belief in individual voice through the perseverance of poetry. Challenging the hegemony of language wielded by those in authority, ultimately returning it to the individual, the work fosters reflections on the scope of imagination, the possibility of dreams, and the privacy of the body. A collection of drawings installed throughout the gallery echo the journey of a few of these poets. By removing the outline of their body, Gupta represents their censored voices and missing bodies.

Emitting a slow but rhythmic beat, *Song of the Ground* is composed of borderland stones gathered by the artist around where the Teesta River flows between India and Bangladesh, a fenced, volatile yet adamantly porous borderland. Reverberating throughout the space, the stones can be heard clapping against each other. The piece can be seen as an observation of the fragility of the artificial forms of cartography, the violence they endure, and calls forth the vitality of nature.

StillTheyKnowNotWhatIDream consists of two flapboards, mechanical devices commonly found in transit stations used to display precise information, such as schedules or destinations. These flapboards have undergone a transformation and instead display poetic phrases that deliberate ideas of loss, power, and truth. This work fosters a dialogue between the two boards, creating a conversation that

delves into connections and detachments. It serves as a reflection on our relationships with and understanding of others.

Shilpa Gupta's practice poetically explores our perception of the 'other' and how constructed ideas about the world are taken as knowledge. She subverts these notions by inviting the viewer to understand our shared thoughts, dreams, fears, and desires.

Concurrently, Shilpa Gupta will have a major solo exhibition at Amant in Brooklyn, *I did not tell you what I saw, but only what I dreamt*, on view October 21, 2023 – April 28, 2024.

Born in 1976 in Mumbai, Shilpa Gupta currently lives and works in Mumbai, India. The artist graduated with a BFA in sculpture from Sir J. J. School of Fine Art at the University of Mumbai in 1997.

Shilpa Gupta has been the subject of solo presentations at international institutions including a two person exhibition with Marisa Merz at MAXXI L'Aquila, Italy (2023); Barbican, London (2021); Dallas Contemporary (2021); M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2021); Contemporary Art Center, Baku, Azerbaijan (2018); Kiosk, Ghent, Belgium, which travelled to Bielefelder Kunstverein and La synagogue de Delme Contemporary Art Center (2017); a two-person joint India-Pakistan exhibition, commissioned by the Gujral Foundation at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015); Kunsternes Hus, Oslo (2014); MAAP Space, Brisbane (2013); Mücsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest (2013); Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2010); Arnolfini, Bristol (2012); Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Netherlands (2012) and Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2009). A 10-year survey of her work, was presented at the OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria (2010).

In 2019, Gupta was included in the 58th Venice Biennale curated by Ralph Rugoff (2019). She also participated in Kochi Muziris Biennale (2018), NGV Triennale (2017), Gothenburg Biennial (2017), Berlin Biennale (2014), New Museum Triennale (2009), Sharjah Biennial (2013), Lyon Biennale (2009), Gwangju Biennale (2008), Yokohama (2008) and Liverpool Biennial (2006), among others.

Gupta's work is represented in the permanent collections of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; Louisiana Museum, Denmark; Bristol Art Museum, United Kingdom; Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris; Asia Society, New York; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, South Brisbane; Fonds régional d'art contemporain, France; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati; Jameel Art Foundation Dubai; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; and Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, among others.

For press inquiries, please contact Thomas Brown, thomas@thomas-brown.info
For additional information on the exhibition, please contact mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com