

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

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New work by Bharti Kher to go on view in New York City

Hauser & Wirth New York

March 6 – April 14, 2012

Opening: Tuesday, March 6, 6 – 8 pm



New York, NY... Beginning March 6, 2012, Hauser & Wirth New York will present 'The hot winds that blow from the West', its first exhibition devoted to internationally admired artist Bharti Kher.

Through a group of five works, the London-born, Delhi-based artist further plumbs metaphysical questions raised by our relationship to life's quotidian activities and objects. Kher has described her practice as 'the hunt for a chimera,' a search through which she has come to see the self as a multiple open to interpretation, projection and shape-shifting. Her artmaking – including collecting and transforming found objects in a process that might best be described as fabulation – yields an air of magical realism. In 'The hot winds that blow from the West,' the artist plays with mythology, cultural and gender stereotypes, and tropes of domesticity to map a route on which viewers may travel between the familiar and the alien, the mundane and the divine, all while remaining in one place.

'The hot winds that blow from the West' will remain on view through April 14, 2012.

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Responding to the intimate domestic architecture of Hauser & Wirth's East 69th Street townhouse, Bharti Kher has choreographed her works in a sequence that draws visitors through physical and psychological space. Domestic life is a persistent theme in her work, and the home front becomes a landscape where the material, the emotional and the allegorical mix. 'In Asia and India, the house and domestic space constitute a female domain and this is where women are able to truly assert more 'self' within space,' Kher has said. 'But a house is also fraught with social, economic and sexual excesses that can obscure or even threaten to obliterate the spiritual connections that are our greatest resources.' In a house, such everyday objects as the furniture and architectural elements Kher uses to construct her works, carry divine cosmic energies awaiting our engagement.

In 'The hot winds that blow from the West,' Kher introduces her themes – male and female energies in flux, transformation and alternative realities, nature and man – with a large wall-mounted work titled 'A view of the forest.'

Entering the gallery's main ground floor space, visitors will discover a massive 17 foot-long staircase. This defunct architectural fragment from an old house in India occupies the center of the room, reaching the ceiling but leading nowhere; by thwarting its purpose, Kher creates a sense of disorientation. The staircase has been splashed with red paint and covered with a swarm of black, sperm-shaped bindis, the iconic personal affect of Indian women that is one of Kher's signature materials and a loaded symbol. Since first appearing in her work in 1995, the bindi has telegraphed aesthetic and cultural duality, and a means to mix the superficial with the sublime. 'Many people believe it's a traditional symbol of marriage while others, in the West particularly, see it as a fashion accessory,' she has explained. 'But actually the bindi is meant to represent a third eye – one that forges a link between the real and the spiritual-conceptual worlds.'

In the sky lit back room of the gallery's ground floor, visitors will find the work from which the exhibition takes its title. 'The hot winds that blow from the West' is a monolith comprised of old radiators sourced by Kher in the United States over the course of six years and shipped to India. Ultimate symbols of domestic comfort in the West, these displaced appliances have been unmoored both literally and figuratively; the journey eastward has removed their purpose and altered their significance. With its rows of pipes and peeling paint, this stack of defunct tools evokes decaying animal carcasses with ribs exposed. Here, the powerfully familiar is transmuted into something otherworldly, alien and elusive.

The title of this work is a reference to The Loo, a fiercely hot, maddening and occasionally even fatal summer afternoon wind that blows across North India and Pakistan. 'We think of winds as harbingers of change, carrying voices of transformation,' Kher has said. 'From where I sit, the winds blowing nowadays from the West – from the places that were the seats of power and authority throughout the 20th century – are no longer as strong or reliable as they were. Other voices are changing the landscape now and political uncertainties have put the world in flux, feeling precarious. Traveling East, these radiators became defunct. I suppose I am sending them back to the West as messenger and, perhaps, as warnings.'

On the gallery's second floor, the exhibition continues with two works. A life-sized fiberglass figure – part woman and part animal – brandishes a pitchfork and dances on one foot. Powerful and vulnerable with exposed genitals and a monkey tail curling up over her shoulder, this apparition is described by Kher as 'an urban witch, a woman of both mythology and everyday life, a hybrid.' The sculpture is the most recent in a series of figurative works in which Kher has presented hybrid beings that conjoin contradictions of gender, species, race and role. For this work, the artist has drawn upon the attributes of the Hindu goddess Dakini, who is considered the manifestation of energy in female form. Associated with revelations, Dakini (Sanskrit for she who traverses the sky or she who moves in space) is an agent of creation and transformation – a willful instigator, messenger, and even a volatile trickster whose purpose is to push souls further towards enlightenment. Kher's figure is elegant and alien, a simultaneous celebration of and rebuke to conventional female roles.

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The rest of the exhibition envelopes visitors in an installation titled 'Reveal the secrets that you seek,' presented last spring at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. A journey ends here among twenty-seven shattered, salvaged mirrors patterned with bindis that conflate two and three dimensions. Whereas Kher customarily employs dense, swirling patterns of the tiny dots, bindis in this work are fashioned for the first time into strict, structured grids of lines that imply codes of concealed information. In the larger collage of the work's broken reflections and frames, a visitor's own visage becomes part of the artist's composition. 'It is assumed that because I was raised by Indian parents in England and then moved to India myself, I am commenting upon my own displacement or my own journey,' Kher commented. 'But my motivation does not come from the usual issues of diaspora. I am always far more interested in the viewer's journey than my own. I get my ideas from you.'



About the Artist

Based in New Delhi, India, since 1993, Bharti Kher was born in 1969 in London to parents who had migrated from India to the United Kingdom as adults. She studied painting, graduating in 1991 from Newcastle Polytechnic. In 1992 she traveled to India, deciding to live there permanently. Kher's practice is radically heterogeneous, encompassing painting, sculpture and installation. Overarching themes within her work include the notion of the self as a multiple and culture's openness to misinterpretation. She exploits the drama inherent in objects, tapping into mythologies and the numerous diverse associations a thing can bring.

Kher's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and included in scores of group exhibitions at museums and galleries throughout India, Europe and the United States. It was most recently featured in 'Paris-Delhi-Bombay' at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (2011); '21st Century: Art in the First Decade', Queensland Art Gallery, Australia (2010); 'Tokyo Art Meeting. Transformation', Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2010); and 'Bharti Kher – Fred Tomaselli – Susan Hefuna' at the Kunstmuseum Thun in Switzerland (2010).

Bharti Kher's work will be featured in upcoming exhibitions at the Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art in London (September 2012), and the Mystetskyi Arsenal in Kiev, Ukraine, where she will be included in the First International Biennale of Contemporary Art (May 2012).

About Hauser & Wirth

Hauser & Wirth is a global enterprise representing over 50 established and emerging contemporary artists, including Ida Applebroog, Phyllida Barlow, Louise Bourgeois, Christoph Büchel, David Claerbout, Martin Creed, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Martin Eder, Ellen Gallagher, Isa Genzken, Dan Graham, Rodney Graham, Subodh Gupta, Mary Heilmann, Andy Hope 1930, Roni Horn, Thomas Houseago, Matthew Day Jackson, Richard Jackson, Rashid Johnson, Josephson, Rachel Khedoori, Bharti Kher, Guillermo Kuitca, Maria Lassnig, Paul McCarthy, Joan Mitchell, Ron Mueck, Caro Niederer, Christopher Orr, Djordje Ozbolt, Michael Raedecker, Pipilotti Rist, Anri Sala, Wilhelm Sasnal, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Roman Signer, Anj Smith, Monika Sosnowska, Diana Thater, André Thomkins, Ian Wallace, Zhang Enli, David Zink Yi, and Jakub Julian Ziolkowski.

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Hauser & Wirth also represents the estates of Eva Hesse, Allan Kaprow, Lee Lozano, Jason Rhoades and Dieter Roth, as well as the Henry Moore Family Collection.

The gallery was founded in Zürich in 1992 by Iwan and Manuela Wirth and Ursula Hauser. In 1996, Hauser & Wirth opened a space in the former Löwenbräu brewery building, along with other contemporary art galleries, the Kunsthalle Zürich, and migros museum für gegenwartskunst. In 2003, the gallery expanded with the opening of Hauser & Wirth London on Piccadilly in an historic building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, adding a new and energetic dimension to London's growing importance as an international art center. In 2006, Hauser & Wirth at Colnaghi was created on London's Old Bond Street. Hauser & Wirth New York opened to the public on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in September 2009. In October 2010, the gallery opened a new London space on Savile Row.

In September 2010, Hauser & Wirth re-located their Zurich space to a new temporary location at Hubertus Exhibitions while the Löwenbräu building undergoes major renovation. The gallery will return to the Limmatstrasse facility in June 2012 and also will expand its global operations with a second space in New York City at 511 West 18th Street. That facility will open in fall 2012 in conjunction with the gallery's 20th anniversary.

Hauser & Wirth New York is open to visitors Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am until 6 pm. The general public can find additional information about the gallery, its exhibitions and programs online at: www.hauserwirth.com.

For additional press information or to obtain images for publication, please contact hwny@andreaschwan.com.

Forthcoming Exhibitions:

**'Science on the back end. Artists
selected by Matthew Day Jackson'
May 1 – June 16, 2012**

**Caro Niederer
June 27 – 28 July, 2012**

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The hot winds that blow from the West (detail)
2011
131 old radiators
250 x 250 x 300 cm / 98 3/8 x 98 3/8 x 118 1/8 in
© Bharti Kher
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Reveal the secrets that you seek (detail)
2011
27 shattered mirrors, wooden frames, bindis
Various dimensions
Installation view, 'Paris-Delhi-Bombay', Centre Pompidou,
Paris, France, 2011
© Bharti Kher
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Guillaume Zicarelli