



Dayanita Singh : 'PHOTO LIES' (extracts from 'Dancing with my Camera')

Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, CSMVS, Mumbai

Curated by Puja Vaish

22 November 2024 - 23 February 2025

Preview: 21 November 2024, 5pm

DAYANITA SINGH

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Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, 2nd Floor, CSMVS, Mumbai



The Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation & The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya are delighted to present '**PHOTO LIES,**' an exhibition of works by renowned artist, **Dayanita Singh.**

Dayanita Singh (b. 1961) continues to redefine what photography can be today. Singh has pioneered a genre-defying approach to photography, one that pushes the limits of the medium and the boundaries of how we experience images. For Singh, the labour of photography lies not in the making of images but in conceptualising the forms within which they can grow. Singh liberates the photo from the wall, and the book from the bookshelf, to create unique forms of display and dissemination. She challenges us to envision new, more mobile, accessible and fluid forms of books, exhibitions and museums. Her works traverse genres, forms and spaces – from mobile museums to book-objects, to books that become exhibitions themselves.

“My medium is photography – I twist it and turn it, I wrestle with it – until the form reveals itself to me. That is my work as an artist. To excavate the potentials photography is pregnant with.”

- Dayanita Singh

PHOTO LIES features Dayanita Singh's works from 2019-2024, presented for the first time in India at the JNAF gallery. The exhibition expands into the CSMVS Museum, with interventions in the Textile and Natural History galleries.

The works include selections from Singh's international survey exhibition 'Dancing with my Camera' (2022), alongside new pieces created specifically for 'Photo Lies.'

'Photography is fiction in the guise of non-fiction' -Dayanita Singh

Singh reminds us that all photographs are mediated, whether fiction or documentary. In **PHOTO LIES**, Singh turns up the inherent 'deception' in photography into a tool of image-making through montage, multiplicity and scale.

Singh's earlier creations reappear in different guises, akin to spectral presences from the past. Her *Museum of Chance* and *Museum of Dance* emerge as empty, sculptural shells that may be expanded or constricted, dynamically altering the space and vantages for visitors to move through the exhibition.

Sari Museum 1 (2024) and *Wildlife of India* (2024) are presented as site-specific works in dialogue with the existing displays in the Textile and Natural History galleries of the CSMVS Museum.

"Through the exhibition 'Photo Lies,' Dayanita Singh distils decades of contemplation on photography's elusive relationship with reality. Her investigations reveal the medium's dual power to both document and deceive. Singh transforms photography's inherent ambiguity into a provocative artistic language. Her practice offers multiple ways of seeing, stressing on an archive rather than a singularity of image, thought or meaning. This finds deep resonance within the museum as a repository of configurations- of stories, ideas and histories. Like a visual composer, she orchestrates illusory spaces in black and white, where divergent architectures converge in unexpected harmony. Between these blurred temporal and geographical boundaries, delicate tensions emerge between truth and fiction, memory and imagination. In 'Photo Lies', especially in the montages, Singh plants anomalies, seamlessly, playfully, thoughtfully that only reveal themselves on closer inspection, prompting viewers to look, and then look again, carefully. " - Puja Vaish, Director, JNAF and curator of the exhibition

Photo Lies will be accompanied by an extensive outreach programme and the release of a catalogue with a seminal essay by Dr. Jyotindra Jain commissioned and published by the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation.

Dancing with my Camera (2022) was first presented at Gropius Bau, curated by Stephanie Rosenthal and featured Singh's vast repertoire from 1999-2022.

Artist biography

Dayanita Singh was born 1961 in New Delhi, India. 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: *Dayanita Singh: Dancing with my Camera* (2022-24) an international survey exhibition that opened at Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany (2022) touring to Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany (2022), MUDAM, Luxembourg (2023) and Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2024); *Dayanita Singh: Book Building*, THE BOX, The Photobook Museum, Cologne, Germany (2023); *Sea of Files*, Hasselblad Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden (2022); *Dayanita Singh: Pothi Khana*, Minneapolis Institute of Art, USA (2021); *Museum Bhavan*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Japan (2017); *Collection Display: Go Away Closer*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2017); *Suitcase Museum*, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, India (2016); *Museum of Machines: Photographs, Projections, Volumes*, Fondazione MAST, Bologna, Italy (2016); *Conversation Chambers Museum Bhavan*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi, India (2015); *Dayanita Singh*, Art Institute of Chicago, IL, USA (2014); and *Go Away Closer*, Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, UK (2013) touring to Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main (MMK), Germany (2014).

Selected group exhibitions include *Choreographies of the Impossible*, Sao Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2023); *Icônes*, Punta della Dogana, Pinault Collection, Venice, Italy (2023); *Out of the Box*, Schaulager Laurenz Foundation, Basel, Switzerland (2023); *Off the Wall*, SFMoMA, San Francisco, CA, USA (2021); *Surrounds: 11 Installations*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (2019); *In the Company of Artists: 25 Years of Artists-in-Residence*, Hostetter Gallery, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, USA (2019); German Pavilion, The 55th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (2013); and *ILLUMInations*, 54th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, Italy (2011). Singh has authored 14 books, primarily with Steidl Verlag and was awarded the Hasselblad Award in 2022.

About the collaborators

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) is one of the premier art and history museums in India. The Museum came about as an initiative of prominent citizens of Mumbai, having completed in 2022 a centenary in service of society. Situated on the southern tip of Mumbai on the 'Crescent Site', it is the heart of the Kala Ghoda art district in Mumbai, the building itself done in an interesting architectural style called the Indo-Saracenic, an amalgamation of several artistic styles that is unique to India. The Museum opened to the public in January 1922 and has since built a diverse collection of more than 70,000 objects. Today, its building is listed as a Grade I Heritage Building, is a Platinum certified Green Building, and has been awarded the highest Award of Excellence 2022 UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award for “the heroic restoration of the CSMVS Museum Building”, and the 2010 UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation. It has also been awarded first place for Heritage Building Maintenance by the Indian Heritage Society. CSMVS is part of the splendid Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2018.

The Museum is today a dynamic space located within the heritage city of Mumbai, widely visited by a diverse range of audiences, offering curated exhibitions, academic and cultural programmes, publications, and unique in-person and online experiences in multiple Indian languages. The Museum also houses an eco-cultural hub for children — the CSMVS Children’s Museum nestled in a grove of trees, enabling a non-competitive environment for children to engage with the Museum's collections and the arts. It also houses an advanced Conservation and Research Centre that undertakes the preservation of its iconic art objects. Its Museum on Wheels buses travel to several states offering museum exhibitions to students and communities in rural India. The CSMVS Museum is run on the principle that it is by the people, for the people, operating entirely autonomously through the support of a legacy of sensitive donors, patrons, and institutions.

Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation

The Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation is a non-profit art organisation, which functions as the modern and contemporary art wing of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya(CSMVS Museum),

Mumbai. The JNAF entered into a collaboration with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly known as the Prince of Wales Museum) in 2008, where the collection is now housed.

With over 800 artworks, procured by Jehangir Nicholson across 5 decades till 2001 & by the Foundation since then, the collection reflects the crucial phases in Indian art history, presenting a diversity of post-independence art practices in the country.

The JNAF has established itself as a leading platform for exhibitions and cultural discourse, amplifying diverse perspectives on modern and contemporary Indian art through its extensive programming and publications.

For Listings:

Exhibition Venue:

Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, Second Floor, East Wing, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, 159/161, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Mumbai 400023

Timings:

10:15 am - 6 pm

Open on all days

Museum ticket applicable:

150 INR for Indian adults

35 INR for children (5 - 15 yrs)

For further details, please contact

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