



## ダヤニータ・シン 略年譜

### Dayanita Singh, Selected Biography and Bibliography

1961年、ニューデリー生まれ。1980年から86年までアーメダバードの国立デザイン大学に学ぶ。在学中から6年以上にわたって取材した世界的に有名なタブラ奏者のザキール・フセインのプロジェクトは卒業制作でもあり、『ザキール・フセイン (ZAKIR HUSSAIN)』(1987年)が彼女の最初の写真集となった。1987年から88年までニューヨークの国際写真センター (ICP) でドキュメンタリー写真を学ぶ。その後8年間にわたり、ダヤニータはボンベイのセックス・ワーカーや児童労働、貧困などインドの深刻な社会問題を追いかけて、彼女が言うところの「西洋が認識するインド」を写して多くの写真が欧米の雑誌に掲載された。

転機となったのはオールド・デリーの墓地に暮らすユーナック (去勢された男性)のモナ・アハメドを主題にした作品である。『ロンドン・タイムズ』の仕事で撮り始め、その後13年にわたりモナを撮り続け、結果的に『マイセルフ・モナ・アハメド (Myself Mona Ahmed)』(2001年)として出版され、モナとの関係はその後も長く継続し彼女に多大な影響を与えた。1990年代後半にフォトジャーナリストとしての仕事を完全に辞め、その後自身が属するインドの富裕層やミドル・クラスへとテーマを転じ、1997年にチューリヒのスカロ・ギャラリーで家族写真の初個展を開催し、2003年に写真集『ブライバシー』を発表する。以後、『ゴー・アウェー・クローサー』(2007年)、『セント・アレター』(2007年)、『ドリーム・ヴィラ』(2010年)、『ハウス・オブ・ラブ』(2010年)、『ファイル・ルーム』(2013年)、『ミュージアム・オブ・チャンス』(2014年)など、写真のメディアとしての可能性に挑戦する作品を多数発表している。2013年のロンドンのハイワード美術館の個展「ゴー・アウェー・クローサー」展はフランクフルト現代美術館やモスクワのマルチメディア美術館に巡回し、シカゴ美術館(2014年)、イタリア・ボローニャのMAST美術館(2016-17年)、インド・ムンバイのパウ・ダリ・ラド美術館(2016-17年)でも個展が開催された。マニフェスタ7(2008年)、ヴェネツィア・ビエンナーレ(2011年、2013年)やシドニー・ビエンナーレ(2016年)などの数々の国際現代美術フェスティバルや国際展に招聘されている。日本では2011年に資生堂ギャラリーで個展が開催された。また、京都国立近代美術館と東京国立近代美術館の「映画をめぐる美術——マルセル・ブロータースから始める」展(2013-14年)に出品された。

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Born in New Delhi in 1961, she studied at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad from 1980 to 1986. For a period of six years, starting while she was still a student, she photographed the world-famous tabla percussionist, Zakir Hussain, this forming her

both graduation work and being published as her first photo-book under the title, *ZAKIR HUSSAIN* (1987). From 1987 to 1988 she studied documentary photography at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York. Subsequent to this, she spent eight years photographing the sex workers of Mumbai, child laborers, poverty and other severe social problems facing India, producing pictures of what she refers to as ‘Western perceptions of what India is’, to be published in various magazines in Europe and America.

The turning point in her career came with a series of work she produced featuring a eunuch, named Mona Ahmed in Old Delhi. She initially met her while working on a commission from ‘The Times’ of London, but continued to photograph her for the next thirteen years, eventually publishing the work under the title, ‘Myself Mona Ahmed’ (2001). She continued her friendship with Mona after that and was greatly influenced by her. She retired completely from photojournalism during the latter half of the 1990s, turning to the wealthy and middle classes, of which she was a member, for the subject matter of her work, presenting a series of family portraits in her first exhibition at the Scalo Gallery in Zurich in 1997 and publishing the work in a photo-book entitled *Privacy* in 2003. Since then, she has published numerous works: *Go Away Closer* (2007), *Sent a Letter* (2007), *Dream Villa* (2010), *House of Love* (2010), *File Room* (2013), *Museum of Chance* (2014), etc., in which she explores the possibilities of the photographic medium. Her ‘Go Away Closer’ exhibition that was held at London’s Hayward Gallery in 2013, later traveled to the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, and the Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow. She has also held solo exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago (2014), the MAST Gallery in Bologna, Italy (2016–2017) and the Bhau Dali Lad Museum in Mumbai, India (2016–2017). In addition, she has been invited to participate in numerous international contemporary art festivals and exhibitions, including the Manifesta 7 (2008), the Venice Biennale (2011, 2013), the Sydney Biennale (2016), etc. In Japan she held a solo exhibition at the Shiseido Gallery in 2011 and also contributed a work for the ‘Reading Cinema, Finding Words: Art after Marcel Broodthaers’ exhibition (2013–2014) that was held at the National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, and the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

#### 主な個展 | Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 ‘Museum of Chance Book Object’, the Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh
- ‘Suitcase Museum’, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, India
- ‘Museum of Shedding’, Frith Street Gallery, London, U.K.
- ‘Museum of Machines: Photographs, Projections, Volumes’, MAST, Bologna, Italy
- ‘Museum of Chance Book Object’, the Hawa Mahal, Jaipur, India
- 2015-16 ‘Conversation Chambers Museum Bhavan, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India
- 2014 ‘Go Away Closer’, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany

- ‘Dayanita Singh’, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, U.S.A.
- 2013 ‘Go Away Closer’, The Hayward Gallery, London, U.K.
- 2012 ‘File Museum’, Frith Street Gallery, London, U.K.
- ‘Monuments of Knowledge’, King’s India Institute, KCL, London, U.K.
- ‘House of Love’, Nature Morte, New Delhi, India
- 2011 「ダヤニータ・シン展 ある写真家の冒険」、資生堂ギャラリー、東京 (‘Adventures of a Photographer’, Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, Japan)
- 2010 ‘Dayanita Singh’, Huis Marseille Museum voor Fotografie, Amsterdam, the Netherland
- ‘Dayanita Singh’, Mapfre Foundation, Madrid, Spain
- 2008 ‘Dream Villa’, Frith Street Gallery, London, U.K.
- 2005 ‘Chairs’, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, U.S.A.
- 2003 ‘Privacy’, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany

#### 主なグループ展 | Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2016 ‘Suitcase Museum and Kitchen Museum’, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, the 20th Biennale of Sydney, Australia
- 2014 ‘Chance’, Kochi Biennale 2014, India
- 2013-14 「映画をめぐる美術——マルセル・ブロータースから始める」展、京都国立近代美術館、京都/東京国立近代美術館に巡回 (‘Reading Cinema, Finding Words: Art after Marcel Broodthaers’, The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, touring exhibition to The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, Japan)
- 2013 The 55th Venice Biennale, the German Pavilion, Venice, Italy
- 2012 The 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
- ‘The Unseen’, The Fourth Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China
- 2011 ‘ILLUMInations’, the 54th Venice Biennale, Arsenale, Venice, Italy
- 2008-09 ‘Indian Highway’, Serpentine Gallery, London, U.K., touring exhibition to Astrup Museum, Oslo, Norway
- 2007 ‘Global Feminism’, Brooklyn Museum, New York, U.S.A., touring exhibition to Le Rencontres D’Arles Festival, Arles, France
- 2003 ‘Homelessness’, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany

#### 刊行物 | Publications

- Dayanita Singh: *Museum Bhavan*, Steidl, Germany, 2017
- Dayanita Singh: *Museum of Chance*, Steidl, Germany, 2015
- David Trigg, Eliza Williams, and Jonathan Griffin, *The Twenty-First Century Art Book*, Phaidon, London, 2014
- Dayanita Singh: *Go Away Closer*, Hayward Publishing, U.K., 2014
- Antawan I. Byrd, Geeta Kapur, Hyun Jung, Kaelen Wilson-Goldie, Pablo León de la Barra, and Reid Shier, *Art Cities of the Future: 21st Century Avant-Gardes*, Phaidon, London, 2013
- Dayanita Singh: *File Room*, Steidl, Germany, 2013
- Daniel Birnbaum, Cornelia Butler, Suzanne Cotter, Bice Curiger, Okwui Enzwezor, Massimiliano Gioni, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Bob Nickas, *Defining Contemporary Art: 25 years in 200 Pivotal Artworks*, Phaidon, London, U.K., 2011
- Dayanita Singh: *Adventures of a Photographer*, Shiseido Corporate

- Culture Department, Japan, 2011
- Dayanita Singh: *House of Love*, Peabody Museum Press, U.S.A., 2010
- Dayanita Singh: *Dream Villa*, Steidl, Germany, 2010
- Dayanita Singh*, T.F. Editores, S.L.C., Madrid, Spain, 2010
- Dayanita Singh: *Blue Book*, Steidl, Germany, 2009
- Dayanita Singh: *Sent a Letter*, Steidl, Germany, 2008
- Dayanita Singh: *Go Away Closer*, Steidl, Germany, 2007
- Dayanita Singh: *Chairs*, Steidl, Germany, 2005
- Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History Volume 1*, Phaidon, London, U.K., 2004
- Dayanita Singh: *Privacy*, Steidl, Germany, 2003
- Dayanita Singh: *Myself Mona Ahmed*, Scalo Verlag, Zurich, New York, U.S.A., 2001
- Dayanita Singh: *Zakir Hussain*, Himalayan Books, New Delhi, India, 1986

#### パブリック・コレクション | Public Collections

- Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio, U.S.A.
- Deutsche Bank, Germany
- Hermès, Paris, France
- Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland
- Fundacion Mapfre, Madrid, Spain
- Huis Marseille, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland
- Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark
- Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
- Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, U.S.A.
- Mead Gallery, University of Warwick, Coventry, U.K.
- Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, U.S.A.
- The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, India
- The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
- The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, U.S.A.
- Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
- Southampton City Art Gallery, Southampton, U.K.
- The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, U.S.A.
- The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- Tate Gallery, London, U.K.
- Tokyo Photographic Art Museum 東京都写真美術館
- The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto 京都国立近代美術館

#### 受賞 | Awards

- 2014 Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France
- 2008 Prince Claus Award, Amsterdam Robert Gardner Fellowship, Harvard University, U.S.A.
- 1997 Andreas Frank Foundation grant, U.S.A.

## Dayanita Singh, Museum Bhavan

Kasahara Michiko

Chief Curator, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

It can be said that in a certain context Dayanita Singh is a curator's nightmare.

Her work is forever changing, in a variety of meanings of the word. Usually, once an exhibition has opened in a museum the exhibits do not change; sometimes some of the works may have to be replaced partway through for reasons of preservation or due to the exhibition schedule, but in the case of Dayanita Singh's exhibitions, visitors find that works are changed on an irregular basis with different combinations of work creating different meanings. Even the total number of works varies. The selection of works to be shown is generally left to the curator, but not in Dayanita's case. She creates her own 'Museums' that can be moved within the gallery and she arbitrarily changes the works on display in these 'Museums', the curator's efforts all being brought to naught.

Her 'Museums' are in a state of constant flux, forever changing. They are living 'Museums'. In the same way, even individual photographs keep changing. A photograph that she took in 1981 may appear as a new work in a 'Museum' in 2016. Different meaning is applied to the works according to the sequence and combinations in which they are displayed.

Dayanita says that her photographs merely provide the raw material for her work. The vast number of photographs that she has taken during a career as an artist that stretches over more than thirty years, are all raw material for her 'new works'. The same images are used repeatedly, their meanings changing as they appear in different sequences and combinations.

Her photographs result from a close relationship between her and her subjects. Subjects with proper nouns invite her into their private spaces, resulting in photographs that create a relaxed and close atmosphere. However, this being said, her works also possess a high degree of abstraction. They are the product of a particular place and time. The majority of them were taken from the 1980s onwards in a limited area of India. However, despite preserving a sense of locality and distinctiveness, they surpass time and space.

Dayanita's work is difficult. It does not fit into the existing photographic framework, in fact it can be said to deviate entirely from it.

So, what should we do?

Dayanita was born in New Delhi, India, in 1961. Her mother, Nony Singh, had escaped with her family from their hometown of Lahore during Partition in 1947, then later studied at University in Delhi. In 1960 Nony met an agriculturist named Kanwar Mahindra Pal Singh whom she married and had four daughters with. In 1967, Dayanita's father achieved a world record in wheat production.<sup>1)</sup>

Nony Singh, had always been fascinated with photography

and began taking her own pictures from the age of eight. Later she selected the best of the vast number of photographs she had taken of her family and published them in a book entitled, 'Nony Singh: The Archivist'.<sup>2)</sup> Dayanita was the eldest of four daughters and presented Nony with the ideal subject for her photographs. Dayanita was later to speak of this as follows: 'Being photographed was just another family ritual for me, and I had no interest in becoming a photographer. Photography meant that I had to sit still while my mother counted the steps towards me in order to focus her very old Zeiss Ikon camera. Every event had to be recorded in this painful manner, every departure was delayed by her picture making.'<sup>3)</sup>

This being said, her attitude as a photographer and her choice of subjects display the powerful influence her mother had on Dayanita. When Dayanita decided that she wanted to study graphic design at the National Institute of Design, her father was opposed, but her mother talked him around. After graduation she asked if, instead of a dowry, she could study at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York and it was her mother, who was a widow by this time, who supported her in this dream. There is a beautiful photograph that Nony took of Dayanita as she set off to go to university (cat. no. 7, p. 102) and together with this photograph, she wrote the following: 'I knew she was talented and fought with my over-protective husband, to let her go. It was expensive. I had no idea what she would become one day. I just wanted her to be self-sufficient and never depend on any man for money.'<sup>4)</sup>

At the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, Dayanita met the other person who was to become her lifelong mentor, the world-famous tabla musician, Zakir Hussain. She originally only met him to take his portrait for an assignment during her first year at university when she was eighteen, but she went on to accompany him on world tours every winter for six years. She frequently stayed at his home with his parents and it was during this period that she realized that he would become her lifelong advisor and guide. Her first series of work was a photo essay, entitled *Zakir Hussain* (1987),<sup>5)</sup> that transmitted an image of this unique musician. Not only did she photograph him in session with other famous musicians, such as the sitar player, Ravi Shankar, or the jazz guitarist, John McLaughlin, but she also captured the private side of his life, showing him practicing the tabla with his teacher/father, relaxing with his wife and daughter and snapshots of his travels. Combined with this, she added text describing Zakir Hussain as she knew him, transmitting the fascination of this great musician in full. Comprising of photographs and text in this way, the work embodied the essence of photojournalism.

From 1987 to 1988 Dayanita studied at the International

Center of Photography in New York. The ICP is a school and museum that was established in 1974 by Cornell Capa. The younger brother of the famous war photographer, Robert Capa, Cornell was also a photojournalist and strove to promote documentary photography. In 1982 he worked with New York University to create a master's course in photography and today the ICP has become one of the leading photographic museums/universities in the world, carrying out a wide range of activities. Looking back on her time at the ICP, Dayanita writes: 'I was anxious to return to India, to change difficult situations with the power of photography. That was what learning at ICP was all about: make a difference.'<sup>6)</sup> She spent the next eight years documenting the deep social problems facing India: the prostitutes in Bombay who were suffering from AIDS, dowry deaths, child labor and poverty, what she describes as 'Western perceptions of what India is',<sup>7)</sup> her work appearing in numerous Western magazines.

It was during this period that she met another person who was to become a lifelong friend—Mona Ahmed. In 1989, when she was still beginning her career as a photographer, that she was commissioned by The Times of London to cover a story on the eunuchs in India and was introduced to a eunuch named Mona Ahmed. The eunuch are recognized as being a 'third gender' and despite there having been approximately one million of them at that time, they were marginalized by society.<sup>8)</sup> Apart from the fact that Dayanita was commissioned by a foreign newspaper, she and Mona had no other point of contact within Indian society that still remains very caste conscious. Despite living in very different worlds, over the course of this project, they often visited each other's homes, nurturing a relationship that blossomed into true friendship. Dayanita continued to photograph Mona for thirteen years without any thought of publishing the work, but then in 2001 she compiled the work to produce a book entitled *Myself Mona Ahmed*.<sup>9)</sup> Due a history of discrimination and a distrust of the media, which only ever treated them as curiosities, the eunuch community was wary of outsiders but they trusted Dayanita, inviting her to photograph every aspect of their lives. The finished book comprises of Dayanita's photographs combined with emails that Mona sent to Walter Keller, the co-founder of the publisher, Scalo. These were written in answer to questions by Keller and describe her life in remarkably candid manner. She talks of a childhood during which she felt uncomfortable with being a boy, describing her conflict with her father and the bullying and discrimination she met in society. After she was castrated she was rejected by her family and so, at the age of seventeen, she went to live in eunuch community, experiencing love and betrayal until she was driven out at the age of sixty and went to live in her ancestors' tomb. She speaks of her feelings towards her adopted daughter, Ayesha, the pain, she felt when Ayesha was taken from her, her loneliness, the Indian government, society, etc. Of course, Dayanita's attitude towards Mona when taking these photographs is warm, but like Mona's words, also frank. Regardless of Mona's situation, she does not try to romanticize or deceive, rather she presents an honest view of Mona Ahmed. What does it mean to be neither man nor woman but a third gender? It is an outstanding autobiography of a person trying to come to terms

with her identity.

Writing about *Myself Mona Ahmed*, Dayanita said: 'In some way, this made up for some of the guilt I felt when I photographed the less privileged who had no say in the images that were made of them.'<sup>10)</sup> Some years prior to the publication of this book she had decided not to focus on the exotic confusion and poverty that was the image of India favored by Westerners and also to draw a line under the photo-journalism of male-dominated Indian society, instead she shifted her theme to show the transformation that was taking place among India's wealthy and middle class, of which she was a member.

The work that resulted from this transition from photojournalism had the highly suggestive title, 'I Am As I Am' (1999) (cat. no. 3). It featured the girls who lived in an Ashram (temple) in Varanasi that is dedicated to Hindu studies. This temple was established by the holy woman, Anandamayi Ma, whom Dayanita's father and family worshipped, her aunt and cousins having lived in the temple at one time<sup>11)</sup> and it is a place that Dayanita had been familiar with since early childhood. Varanasi is an ancient city sacred to both the Hindu and Buddhist religions, it is one of India's main sightseeing spots with over one million pilgrims and tourists visiting it annually. With the noise, the bathing in the Ganges River, the cremations of the dead and various religious rites taking place, it symbolizes the image of India and large numbers of photographs have been taken there. However, Dayanita's photographs are at odds with this image of Varanasi, and focus on the lofty image of these girls. Until they reach a certain age when they can choose their own path in life as adults, they remain segregated from the secular world, living an honorable life of poverty. This time spent living a quiet life must cause them to confront themselves and probably this is what turns the girls into adults. Floating above a terrace overlooking the Ganges, a girl gazes straight ahead (cat. no. 3, p. 62), her expression still retains a childish air, but in it we can glimpse the will to live an independent existence. Dayanita's camera captures one facet of their lives, but rather than show what they are doing, her aim appears to be to photograph an existence that is permeated with a strong will. This represents a break with photojournalism and the title that is attached to these girls, 'I Am As I Am', also represents an expression of Dayanita's own determination.

In changing the subject of her work to the middle and wealthy classes, to which she belonged, it would seem only natural for her to choose to produce portraits of her family and friends. Apart from anything else, she had been brought up with her mother constantly photographing the family. She had a long career of being the subject of photographs and after she became a photographer she had photographed her family and friends in a private context, so when it came to family photographs, she had been a veteran from the beginning. Dayanita and the society she belonged to presented an image of India that was not stereotyped. She was a popular photographer among Western magazine editors but when it came to this kind of 'hobby photography' she initially had her doubts as to whether other people would be interested. With the encouragement of several sympathetic editors and having received a scholarship, she was able to cease

working for magazines completely and in 1997 she held her first solo exhibition of family portraits at the Scalo Gallery in Zurich. This served as a turning point and she traveled across India, visiting New Delhi, Bhopal, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Goa, Allahabad, Trivandrum, Poona, Madras and Varanasi, moving from friend as she photographed 'Family Portraits'. The resulting work was published in 2003 under the title, *Privacy*, winning her international recognition.<sup>12)</sup> Her friends welcomed her into every corner of their homes, but even as they were relaxing in the living room or bedroom, they sat up straight, and looked directly into the lens of Dayanita's Hasselblad camera. The work is probably best explained as evolving from the so-called 'family photographs' taken by good commercial photographers at their studios. The trust in the friend who watches from behind the lens imbues the subjects' expressions with composure and dignity and in addition to their behavior and clothing, the furnishings, facilities and construction of the rooms, speak eloquently of their temperament. As the title 'privacy' suggests, the photographs are very private and are the result of a close relationship between subject and photographer, but even more personal is the way in which the photographs depict their homes and private lives, providing a detailed view of the lifestyle of the affluent, urban class in millennium India. It shows both large and nuclear families, a mixture of tradition and modernity that Asians, including the Japanese, are all familiar with but which would doubtlessly represent a completely new aspect of India to people in the West.

Like 'I Am As I Am', Dayanita's early family portraits display two marked characteristics that were to symbolize her later work. One is, as cited by Britta Schmitz,<sup>13)</sup> the overpowering presence of women. Whether they are in a modern high-rise apartment, wearing jeans or a mini-skirt or whether they are surrounded by portraits of their ancestors, wearing a sari with a bindi on their foreheads; whether the picture shows three generations, a couple or a woman on her own, even though their husband, son, father or grandfather be present, the central figure, the person who stands out the most, is always the woman. Sometimes with their family, sometimes on their own, they are filled with self-confidence as they smile and project a strong gaze towards the camera.

A characteristic that can also be identified in her later 'museum' pieces is her method of letting 'things' tell the story. Her book *Privacy* includes lots of works from 'Empty Spaces' that may be termed 'portraits of rooms' in which the inhabitant is absent. Beautifully polished floors, orderly bookcases, portraits of the family's successive patriarchs, old furniture, piles of books or a bed; rooms without their owners create a kind of portrait of the owner, sometimes they speak even more eloquently of the inhabitant's life, history, character and philosophy.

For Dayanita, her *Go Away Closer* (2007)<sup>14)</sup> represented a milestone in her career. The book takes the form of a simple, thin notebook, but upon opening it, we are confronted with rich gradations in the beautifully printed photographs, a total of thirty-one works, printed one per page. The titles of Dayanita Singh's works are always thought provoking and 'Go Away Closer' is a good example of this. She says it was 'a phrase I had used before to describe a person I had known and loved'<sup>15)</sup> and

hearing this it makes sense. Although the words are contradictory, I am sure that everybody is familiar with this kind of irrationality in their daily lives. Dayanita went through all the photographs she had taken to date, selecting those that expressed the feeling 'go away closer'. 'I had to focus on the feeling. I didn't talk about it to anybody.'<sup>16)</sup> She repeated this process of selection several times before showing the result as a single series. With this book she abandoned the documentary style, with its overemphasis on subject, using photographs as fiction, combining them, one by one, or juxtaposing one work with another to produce a series that creates a sort of chemical reaction in the viewer, allowing her to arouse a particular thoughts or emotions. There are no page numbers, captions or explanations. In this book she carried out what Geoff Dyer describes as, 'This diminution of aboutness, the evaporation of subject matter in the interest of the intensification of meaning.'<sup>17)</sup> The work does not speak of something, rather the pictures evoke thoughts or stories within the viewer, allowing it to be described as a visual novel. As Aweek Sen says, 'it is interesting to note that the more you drew from literature, the more wordless your work became.'<sup>18)</sup>

She produced one more important work that year, which was *Sent a Letter* (2007) (cat. no. 4). This consists of a beautifully made, small box, measuring 9 x 13.3 cm., that has been carefully covered in fabric and contains seven books. Six of these books bear the name of an Indian city on the spine—'ALLAHABAD', 'BOMBAY', 'CALCUTTA', 'DEVIGARH', 'PADMANABHAPURAM' and 'VARANASI'—but the seventh is slightly different in color and bears the words, 'NONY SINGH', her mother's name. If the book is opened, each page bears a single photograph, 7 x 7 cm. in size that is positioned slightly below the center of the page. Printed in rich, high-quality tones, there are no captions or explanations attached. Each of the books is in a concertina format and once it has been opened out, it is freestanding, creating a small gallery.

Originally, this work was based on the mini albums that she used to make for her friends, cutting out photographs and pasting them onto paper. She always made two copies of each; one to give to the friend and one as an archive copy to be stored in the 'Kitchen Museum'. She started making these books in 2000 and by 2007 she had produced over thirty. One of these came to the attention of the publisher, Gerhard Steidl, who published them with virtually no change to their format.<sup>19)</sup> Thanks to mass production technology, several thousand copies were produced from two handmade books, but when doing this Dayanita employed a new gimmick. That was the box in which the seven books were stored. On the undyed cloth covering the box are the words, 'Dayanita Singh' and the publisher's name, 'Steidl', and in between these, the legend, 'SENT A LETTER', continuing on the other faces of the box as it is rotated with: 'to my friend', 'on the way he dropped it. Someone came and picked it up and', 'put it in his pocket'. The idea is to make it appear that even though it did not arrive at the person it was intended for, it became an irreplaceable 'letter' to the person who happened to receive it. Fitting comfortably onto the palms of two hands, allowing the viewer to gaze intently at each small photograph as they quietly turn the pages, the design of these books has the same feel as a privately printed collection

of poems that the author would not want others to see, or a secret letter from somebody special. As the title, 'SENT a Letter' suggests, the way in which this photo album has been made encourages that sort of behavior. This sort of intimacy is the result that Dayanita aimed for when taking the photographs.

Landscapes, snapshots, samples, clay figures, interior decoration or the library of an old mansion, etc., the contents of each of the books are different and some of them include works from series that have been published previously, but differences in sequence and format make the works appear different. For instance, in the 'ALLAHABAD' series, some of the recipients will only have to glance at the work on the first page to realize that it depicts Anand Bhavan, the home of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the bedroom, closet, study, etc., all having a special significance in Indian history. However, for somebody like 'me', who possesses no such knowledge, a personal relationship is born the moment they pick up this small book, the view of the regular row of stone pillars seen from inside a mosquito net, the enormous bookshelves in perfect array, a closet filled with neatly stacked shirts with mandarin collars, all create an image of the former inhabitant. The works included in 'VARANASI' are from the 'I Am As I Am' series, but the small format imbues them with a more intimate, innocent nuance. The most interesting book is the one inscribed with the name, 'NONY SINGH'. This contains a beautiful record of mother and daughter, it can be simultaneously regarded as a letter and a present from the mother, Nony, to her daughter, Dayanita, while the album itself is a letter and present from Dayanita to her mother Nony.

Her use of photographs to create fiction becomes clearer in *Blue Book* (2009) and *Dream Villa* (2010), followed by *House of Love* (2010). In these, Dayanita makes effective use of color. In photographic history it is said that it was William Eggleston who first sublimated color photography into art. He used color film in order to bring his record of everyday life in Tennessee closer to reality.<sup>20)</sup> Dayanita decided to attempt the opposite. In Eggleston's work, the 'what' and 'where' he photographed was important information but in contrast, Dayanita's *Blue Book* contains no titles or explanations, as if this were quite normal. It starts with a landscape of a vast marsh with a range of mountains in the distance that is followed by the metallic interior of a factory or a distant view of an industrial city and it can be said that these are all just ordinary places that can be found anywhere in the world. Moreover, these abandoned landscapes, devoid of people, all share a blue tone that serves to accentuate the elements of this fiction, creating an experience similar to that of watching a short movie. In contrast, *Dream Villa* uses a small, narrow format and opens to present square photographs, twenty centimeters in size. The seam runs through the center of each photograph forcing the reader to hold the book in both hands and turn each page with care. It purposely uses artificial colors and is printed using glossy ink to create a bold, pretentious impression. It starts with an impressive photograph of moonlight shining through a break in the clouds on a pitch-black night to illuminate the ground. In a similar vein, she uses flash, neon, streetlights or other limited light sources to pick out various subjects against a black background—green grass, a long yellow branch of a tree, a crucifix lit by the moon,

the verandah of an apartment that resembles a living creature devouring the night, and a stream of cars driving through the metropolis, resembling a lava flow. Sometimes people appear, showing that it is an Indian night scene, but they are very different to the image of 'Indian night scenes' we are familiar with, and the buildings certainly have appearance of villas that appear in dreams...or perhaps nightmares. As Aweek Sen pointed out, the way in which the seam runs vertically down the center of the pictures is sometimes 'irritating',<sup>21)</sup> so I have to conclude that this is a contrivance Dayanita employed to invite us into a nightmare.

*House of Love* is a collection of nine short stories and represents a completed example of Dayanita's visual novels. The stories it contains are entitled: 'Continuous Cities', 'The Ambulance', 'Theft in a Cake Shop', 'Fear on the Footpath', 'Portrait of a Marriage', 'Mistaken', 'Return to Sender', 'Departure Lounge' and 'Being of Darkness'. Naturally, the titles are the only written information, providing keywords for the concept of the 'House of Love' that runs through the entire work, allowing the photographs to be read sequentially. Of course, being Dayanita, she has included various devices, for instance, in 'Return to Sender', unusually for her, she has added captions, or in 'Departure Lounge' she used pale turquoise paper. 'Portrait of Marriage' ends with a black-and-white photograph of a horse standing in city street on the left page while the right page has a night view, in color, showing two statues of gentlemen standing as if they are facing the rear of the horse. These works hint at celebration, fantasy, joy, boredom or social rank, but without suggesting shortsighted conclusions. 'Being in Darkness' does not contain anything ominous, but is filled with a sense of perilous unease. They are all short stories filled with the greatest charm. Dayanita's visual short stories are followed by eight essays by Aweek Sen entitled 'A Nocturnal Vacation'. These essays question the meaning of photography while bearing 'House of Love' in mind, but unlike most photo-books, there is no explanation of the works included. The two sections resonate together to form a cohesive whole and *House of Love* is a work that challenges the possibilities of photography.

It is a fact that Dayanita is a success at creating challenging works in rapid succession. The 'File Museum' (cat. no. 6) that she first showed at London's Frith Street Gallery in 2012 marked the beginning of the 'museum' series that she continues to work on to this day, but before discussing the 'File Museum', it is necessary for me to write about the 'File Room' that is stored within this museum. 'File Room' is a series of photographs showing endless piles of files. It starts with a photograph of documents wrapped in cloth, then continues with numerous photographs of files. Sometimes these are fussily tied with string and laid on shelves in an orderly fashion, other times they are roughly tied together and piled up from floor to ceiling, leaving no room to walk. From small rooms that appear to be private offices or backstreet workshops, to vast national archives or courtroom vaults, there are invoices, contracts, official documents, court records, etc., the photographs presenting an astonishing accumulation of documents. Occasionally, they also include the faces of the archives' owners or porters, photographed working closely with documents. Perhaps they are archivists. The documents range

from those that look new to those that possess the unique library smell, where a touch will send up clouds of dust and cause them to fall apart, but no matter how chaotically they may be piled, they possess a kind of order and we can tell just by looking that they are still current. In a conversation with a Swiss curator named Hans Ulrich Obrist, Dayanita revealed that this series was discovered by the historian, Sunil Khilnani.<sup>22)</sup> She said that when she met Khilnani she 'wanted to show him a work that nobody else had ever seen,'<sup>23)</sup> and selected two hundred works on the subject of 'paper' from among those she had produced over a period of more than ten years. Khilnani selected twenty-four of these and named the series 'File Room'. Prior to this, wherever Dayanita worked, she could never resist photographing the study in a house or the document vault in a building. Khilnani made this unconscious obsession with archives visible, giving birth to a new development. Her mother, Nony Singh, pointed out in essay to be included in the book *File Room* that this tendency of Dayanita's may be a result of having been brought up in an environment where she surrounded with documents and books, watching as her mother had struggled with a huge quantity of documents concerning land inheritance. 'File Room' represents the history, memories and records each file connotes. Her latest work, 'Time Measures' (2016, cat. no. 9) is a beautiful series derived from 'File Room' that consists of thirty-five works. It displays full-size close-ups, shot from above, of bundles wrapped in faded red cloth. Although all the photographs resemble each other, if they are studied closely, it can be seen that the way in which each bundle has been tied and the color has faded is different. Regarding the contents of these bundles, the viewer who is familiar with Dayanita's work will recognize them by their shape as having appeared in the 'File Room' series, and realize that they contain documents. With the change from black-and-white to color and a different method of photographing them, they create a completely different impression. What these photographs represent is the passage of time and something that although meaningless to others had been very important to its owner, if they were to be investigated there is no telling what secrets or contexts they may contain.<sup>24)</sup> In addition, both 'File Room' and 'Time Measures' illustrate the powerful Indian tendency that exists towards documentalism, and can be said to symbolize the love of discussion and negotiation that is India itself. It represents the respect and awe of humanity's intellectual activities that have been built up gradually over a vast length of time.<sup>25)</sup> As Dayanita writes, 'after digitalizing all the documents it will not be possible to express the same thing by photographing remaining mountains of files.'<sup>26)</sup>

In a conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist that appears in her book *File Room* that was published in 2013, Dayanita mentions that she had already constructed four 'museums'.<sup>27)</sup> 'File Museum' is a portable, folding structure, handmade of teak, 189 cm. tall, that opens out to become 109 cm. wide. Inside it contains one hundred and forty-two framed works and just like looking at works in a conventional art museum, we can walk around this 'museum' and enjoy a maximum of up to forty works. The works are displayed in five rows vertically and with one, three or seven rows horizontally, depending on which side is being viewed; each

work can be appreciated individually while those before or next to it intervene, facilitating the creation of vertical or horizontal sequences. In an ordinary museum it is common to change the works on display and in this one too, Dayanita doubles as the curator, selecting different works from the one hundred and forty-two stored inside and substituting them at random times. It possesses a collection of works, there is a curator and the exhibits are changed; in other words, it can be said to incorporate all the functions of a regular museum. The 'Museum of Chance' (cat. no. 5) that was 'established' at the same time is a larger museum than the 'File Museum'; consisting of two structures, each 252.5 cm. by 86.5 cm., it contains one hundred and four square works, 46 cm. by 46 cm., and fifty-nine rectangular works, 31 cm. by 46 cm., a total of one hundred and sixty-three works. This museum also contains four-legged table and a chair and is capable of displaying eighty-four works.

By 2016 Dayanita has built more than ten 'museums' and together they form what she named the 'Museum Bhavan' (Hindi for 'large house'). 'File Museum', 'Museum of Chance', 'Little Ladies Museum – 1961 to Present' (cat. no. 7), 'Museum of Photography', 'Museum of Embraces', 'Museum of Machines', 'Museum of Men to Recent', 'Museum of Furniture', 'Museum of Shedding' (cat. no. 8), 'Museum of Vitruvius', which can be displayed on a wall, and 'Museum of Printing Press' are two small museums derived from 'Museum of Furniture'. There are also 'Office Museum', 'Kochi Pillar' and 'Museum of Industrial Kitchen'.

The names, such as 'File' or 'Furniture' museums, may well remind people of the 'typologies' created by Hilla and Bernd Bercher, which featured the water towers, blast furnaces and the buildings that formed the foundations upon which modern German industry thrived. They referred to these as 'anonymous sculptures', photographing them directly from the front using a highly standardized style and presenting them as if they were in a catalogue. However, Dayanita's museums could not be further removed from the 'typologies' and any apparent similarity is false. All the works contained inside the 'museums' are from Dayanita's vast archive of work and, of course, as she continues to work, the archive is being continually renewed. The principle behind the works selected for the museums is not 'what they show', instead the most important factor in choosing work for the collection is what she refers to as 'tone',<sup>28)</sup> and she acts as curator to make careful selections. For instance, in the 'File Museum' the principle is that the documents must be current, while in 'Museum of Photography' she has selected photographs of rooms with photographs displayed on the walls or shelves, portraits of people holding photographs of the deceased or wedding pictures, a total of eighty-four works that can be thought to be based on the theme of photographs that play a role in various aspects of people's lives. On the other hand, the 'Little Ladies Museum – 1961 to Present' displays a towering image of women. If we trace the works that are included in this we see that in addition to pictures of Dayanita herself or Mona, several other women serve as subjects, appearing repeatedly at different periods in time, providing a tasteful glimpse of the history or changing emotions of a particular woman over the passage of years. Her latest work,

'Museum of Shedding' (2016) can be described as representing the architecture. Consisting of an space and structure, this museum contains a bed, a desk, a chair, a stool and storage, it literally has everything required of a museum and of course, its collection comprises of works that feature tranquil space and inner areas. Each individual photograph stored in these museums features a particular place, sometimes it is an intimate scene, but none of them have captions, dates or explanations, their meanings changing according to the way in which they are combined with the works that come before and after, left and right, meaning that what is 'read' into it and what is felt is left up to each individual viewer. They are organic museums.

The 'tone' that Dayanita refers to as being the main feature she looks for when choosing works for her museums is probably most prominent in the 'Museum of Chance'. The word 'chance' has several meanings and can refer to (1) opportunity (2) probability, feasibility (3) coincidence, (4) luck, fate, destiny (5) risk, hazard<sup>29)</sup> Among the works in the 'Museum of Chance' is one that shows an enlargement of Dayanita's representative work of the young girl jumping in the air next to the River Ganges, hanging on the wall behind Mona Ahmed who is lying on a sofa. There are also various familiar subjects from Dayanita's work, such as Zakir Hussain, old machines, museum exhibits, night views, indoor scenery, etc. In addition, unusually for her, she has inserted close-ups of actresses and actors that have been photographed from movies using a 35 mm camera and although at first glance it appears to be a miscellaneous collection, by fine-tuning it according to her 'tone', it creates a marvelously consistent collection of work. The surprising thing is that although we recognize the works and are familiar with them, the fact is that not a single one has previously been published. This offers a clue as to why she enjoys working on this museum. In the introduction to the book, *Museum of Chance* (2014) she writes, 'What happened in this. While I was in London, I dreamt I was in a boat on the Thames that took me to Anandamayee Ma's ashram in Varanasi. I climbed the stairs and found that I had entered the hotel in Devigarh. At a certain time, I tried to leave the fort but could not find a door. Finally, I climbed out through a window and I was in the moss garden in Kyoto.'<sup>30)</sup> This is the basic philosophy of the 'Museum of Chance'. It is not only a single track experience in which one work leads to the next, but also sometimes unexpected timing or a conversation with somebody will lead to the creation of works from a different direction. Grasping opportunities, betting on possibilities and even risking dangers to conjure up chance as it were inevitable; it represents the path that Dayanita has followed as an artist, and results in a miraculous collection.

But what was it that led Dayanita to create these 'museums'? In order to understand this we must consider the current state of photography, the field in which she is active.

Photographers create works to be exhibited in galleries then sold. Having done this numerous times over a period of many years, they come to the attention of critics and curators, resulting in them being invited to participate in group exhibitions at museums or international art festivals. As the reputation and price of their works rises, they are acquired for public collections and after ten or twenty years, solo exhibitions are held in art museums.

This is the path followed by the majority of artists and in recent years there has been a conspicuous tendency for 'contemporary photography' to draw ever closer to 'contemporary art'. Of course, not all 'contemporary photography' is 'contemporary art', but the ratio of the one overlapping the other has become extremely high. Depending on the work, there is virtually no difference between 'contemporary art' and 'contemporary photography'. If we were to look for a difference, it lies in the personal preference of the artist as to whether they refer to his or herself as a photographer, the venue for their activities, whether the work is shown in a contemporary art gallery or a photographic gallery, is only a secondary factor (although of course it has a major impact on the price so it cannot be overlooked). In Dayanita's case, her work is 'contemporary photography' while simultaneously being appraised as 'contemporary art'.

The merging of 'contemporary art' and 'contemporary photography' has brought about various transformations, one being an increase in the size of the works and another, the growth of the market. In the 2001 catalogue for an exhibition of work by Andreas Gursky, curated by Peter Galassi, who was for a long time director of the Department of Photography at Museum of Modern Art, New York, Galassi wrote, 'Meanwhile large photographs were beginning to proliferate in commercial galleries- because their makers, trained as painter, were the habit of producing objects of consequential size (Günther Förg, for example); or because the maker deliberately intended to complete with painting (Wall); or no choice but to join it. A further factor was a circular art-market logic. A big print costs more to produce than a small one, especially since it is more easily produced not by the photographer but under his or her supervision in a commercial lab. But if big picture can compete with painting for cash, as well as for attention on the wall, then they will more than pay for themselves.'<sup>31)</sup> Ten years after this essay was written, on November 8, 2011, Gursky's 'Rhein II' (1999) was sold for US\$ 4,338,500 in auction at Christie's New York. Measuring 185.4 × 363.5 cm. it is an extremely large photograph. In May of the same year, Cindy Sherman's 'Untitled' (1981, 61 × 121.9 cm.) sold for US\$3,890,500 due its historical value in both photography and art, despite not being a particularly large picture.

It was when these tumultuous changes in the contemporary photography/art world were taking place during the second half of the 1990s that Dayanita retired completely from photojournalism to devote herself to art. Dayanita's work was readily accepted in places dealing with the latest art. In 2001 her 'Empty Spaces' exhibition opened in the Frith Street Gallery, one of the leading contemporary art galleries in London that represents star artists, such as Marlene Dumas, Thomas Shütte, Fiona Tan, etc., and ever since, she has held regular solo exhibitions there. She has been invited to participate in numerous international contemporary art festivals and international exhibitions in museums, including: the Arles Photography Festival (2007), the Global Feminisms exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum (2007), the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008), Manifesta 7 (2008), the 54th Venice Biennale ILLUMInations (2011), the German Pavilion of the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in India (2014), the 20th Sydney Biennale (2016), etc. As early as 2010 she held

solo exhibitions at the Mapfre Foundation in Madrid and the Huis Marseille, the Museum for Photography in Holland and a solo exhibition she held in 2013 at London's Hayward Gallery, entitled 'Go Away Closer', which later traveled to the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, and the Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow, and a solo exhibition at Art Institute of Chicago (2014), her activities being too numerous to list in full.

However, a reputation for standing at the forefront of contemporary art, also has its problems. For Dayanita these concerned art museums, international festivals, and the market system, it related directly to the medium of photography and it was something she could not ignore due to her stance as an artist and the direction in which she wished to proceed. She did not try to overcome it by denouncing the system and moving away from it, thereby narrowing her area of activity, rather she expressed the problem clearly in her work through her method of presentation, the use of devices, and refinement creating waves in the museum and market systems, strengthening her stance and direction as an artist, winning praise from the system for questioning it and widening the scope of her activities.

So what is the problem she found with museums and the galleries? It is a chicken or egg problem; as mentioned earlier, the evolution of digital technology has led to an increase in both the size of photographic works and their prices. Moreover, among the contemporary art curators who have not made a special study of photographic history there are those who possess a strong tableau belief leading them to appraise single works. The 2007 the 'Sent a Letter' series represented a message from Dayanita against this situation. The seven accordion books packed inside a small, handmade, fabric-covered box, present the photographs as a sequence, the works to be 'read' through the chemical reaction that occurs between each photograph and those that come before or after, left or right, as they are viewed. It is a mass-produced artist book that is displayed in galleries or museums while simultaneously, the same works can be purchased for a relatively modest price. It has been produced to allow anybody to display these 'works' in a place that they like. In her *House of Love* (2010) she created a cart to display her work for sale and this structure later developed to become her 'museums'. Later, her 'File Museum' (2013) and 'Museum of Chance' (2014) were published in book form with a different photograph on the cover of each copy, the color of the fabric cover changing according to the work selected. Of course, the cover photos are chosen from among those contained within the book and the book itself can be displayed on the wall to become a book object. It is designed so that the viewer not only sees the photograph on the cover, but it also hints at those inside the book as acting as an archive. When Dayanita was selected to participate in the German pavilion at the Venice Biennale with Ai Weiwei, Romuald Karmaker and Santu Mofkeng in 2013, she displayed this 'Book-Object from the File Museum' on the wall, together with slides showing 'File Room' and 'Go Away Closer' on a screen. In addition she presented Mona's photographs, entitled 'Mona and Myself' (2013, cat. no. 10), as a slide show, creating a space in the corner of the German pavilion where it seemed a looking-wistful Mona was living. As the title suggests, 'Suitcase Museum' (2015, cat. no. 11) consists

of two leather suitcases containing forty-four framed copies of the book *Museum of Chance*. It is a humorous work, demonstrating not only Dayanita's stance as an artist but also providing an interesting comment on her life as she transports her works from city to city.

Dayanita's 'museums' are a progressive form of her 'Sent a Letter' series while simultaneously containing a criticism of traditional museums. When questioned by Aveek Sen about her use of the words 'museum', 'curator', 'archive', etc., 'whether that vocabulary is real or metaphorical', she replied, 'I want to claim being a living artist. If I am a contemporary artist, then that means I am not dead. Whenever one works with a museum or gallery structure, at a certain point one feels that one is dead because it is the curator who decides the rhythm of how things are going to go and even if I were to decide, I cannot keep making endless changes, during the exhibition—sometimes though just for geographical reasons.'<sup>32</sup> As an active curator myself, I do not necessarily agree with her, although there is a lot of truth in what she says and I can easily imagine that there are numerous artists who are unhappy with the museum system. The thing that makes Dayanita so outstanding as an artist is that she does not merely indulge in her discontent, making life difficult for kind-hearted curators, instead she creates works on the concept of 'continual change' and forces the curators to accept this. As a result, Dayanita is able to change or add works during the course of an exhibition. Basically, curators believe in the preeminence of the work and so they are unable to do anything about it. Outstanding contemporary photography or contemporary art should contain contemporary comment or critique, therefore works that embody criticism of the museum system should be welcomed and accepted by curators and museums; as contemporary art is exhibited in museums, so the situation regarding contemporary art will develop accordingly.

Dayanita Singh is troublesome—but that is the highest accolade that a contemporary artist can receive. Dayanita confronts photography, representation, society, reality and the world, head on. The world is truly a troublesome place.

#### Notes:

- 1) Nony Singh, *The Archivist*, Dreamvilla Productions, 2013, n.p.
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Dayanita Singh, "A Photographer's Daughter", Dayanita Singh, *Privacy*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2003, n.p.
- 4) Nony Singh, *The Archivist*, Dreamvilla Productions, 2013, p. 91.
- 5) Dayanita Singh, *Zakir Hussain*, Himalaya Books, New Delhi, 1987.
- 6) Dayanita Singh, "A Photographer's Daughter", Dayanita Singh, *Privacy*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2003, n.p.
- 7) Dayanita Singh, "Mother India", *Granta* magazine, #57, Granta Publications Ltd., New York, 1997, p. 221.
- 8) Carlos Gollonet/ Carlos Martin Garcia, "Dayanita Singh: The Poetry of the Invisible", *Dayanita Singh*, Fundacion Mapfre, Instituto de Culture, Madrid, 2009, p. 10.
- 9) Dayanita Singh, *Myself Mona Ahmed*, Scalo Verlag, Zurich, 2001.
- 10) Dayanita Singh, "A Photographer's Daughter", Dayanita Singh, *Privacy*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2003, n.p.
- 11) Nony Singh, *The Archivist*, Dreamvilla Productions, 2013, p. 105
- 12) Ibid., n.p.
- 13) Britta Schmitz, "Home Is A Place", Dayanita Singh, *Privacy*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2003, n.p.
- 14) Dayanita Singh, *Go Away Closer*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2007.
- 15) "Dayanita Singh in conversation with Aveek Sen", *Dayanita Singh, Adventures of a Photographer*, exhibition catalogue, Shiseido Gallery (Shiseido Co., Ltd.), 2011, n.p.
- 16) Ibid., n.p.
- 17) Geoff Dyer, "Dayanita Singh's Negative Capability", *Dayanita Singh, Adventures of a Photographer*, exhibition catalogue, Shiseido Gallery (Shiseido Co., Ltd.), 2011, n.p.
- 18) Ibid., n.p.
- 19) Aveek Sen, "The Eye in Thoughts", *Dayanita Singh*, Fundacion Mapfre, Instituto de Culture, Madrid, 2009, p. 150.
- 20) *Photographs by William Eggleston*, curated by John Szarkowski, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976.
- 21) Aveek Sen, "A nocturnal vacation", Dayanita Singh, *House of Love*, Peabody Museum Press, 2010, p. 184.
- 22) Dayanita Singh, *File Room*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2013, n.p.
- 23) Ibid., n.p.
- 24) Ibid., n.p.
- 25) YAMASHITA Hiroshi, *Indo no 'chikara' [The Power of India]*, Kodansha gendai shinsho, 2016, p. 125.
- 26) Dayanita Singh, *File Room*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2013, n.p.
- 27) Ibid., n.p.
- 28) Ibid., n.p.
- 29) <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/chance/>
- 30) Dayanita Singh, *Museum of Chance*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2014, n.p.
- 31) Peter Galassi, "Gursky's World", *Andreas Gursky*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2001, p. 27.
- 32) Aveek Sen, "Aveek Sen in conversation with Dayanita Singh on Museum Bhavan", Dayanita Singh, *Museum of Chance*, Steidl, Göttingen, 2017, n.p.

## Aveek Sen in conversation with Dayanita Singh on Museum Bhavan

After walking past eight of the nine structures of Museum Bhavan, one enters the Museum of Chance. It is made of two monumental wooden structures whose wings house 126 black-and-white photographs. The opened wings form what appears to be a conversation chamber with its own tables and stools. The lighting is low, and there is a hush in the room in which the structures stand. The visitors move around them slowly looking at the photographs, a little uncertain about whether they should be listening to the conversation going on between the two people seated in the middle of the Museum of Chance.

[AS=Aveek Sen, DS=Dayanita Singh]

**AS** | Is the museum the structures? Or is it the photographs in the structures?

**DS** | I don't know how to answer that question, because the obvious thing is to say that the museum is a house for this collection of photographs, but every time I see the structures without the images I feel it's a form in itself that suggests images. So, at a certain point, I would like to be able to empty the whole museum of its images and just have the bare structures.

**AS** | As an artist, why are you taking on the role of the curator? That is one question that comes out of this exhibition. Linked to this, is the idea of the museum as a form. When you use the idea of the museum as a form, you also start using an associated vocabulary, like curator, storage, display, visitor, architecture...

**DS** | Shop

**AS** | What I am not sure about sometimes is whether that vocabulary is real or metaphorical. If it is metaphorical, then one can say that an artist is *using* the language of making and keeping museums. But if it is real, then what is it that you can't do as an artist that you can do as a museum curator? So, are you parodying or appropriating a language?

**DS** | *Claiming* a language. I want to claim being a living artist. If I am a contemporary artist, then that means I am not dead. Whenever one works within a museum or gallery structure, at a

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certain point one feels that one is dead because it is the curator who decides the rhythm of how things are going to go and even if I were to decide, I cannot keep making endless changes, during the exhibition—sometimes though just for geographical reasons. **But since this exhibition is in Delhi, where I work from, I can keep producing, adding and removing photos as well as structures and new museums.**

**AS** | There is a political dimension to this, then. It is about power.

**DS** | Of course. It is about authorship, continuing authorship. Its like saying, if I am a living artist, of course I will change my mind, of course things will be added, of course things will grow. How can that not be? I am hoping people will come to a realization of this when they see how things are transforming with these museums.

**AS** | It is important that you establish this right at the beginning. Otherwise, there is a risk that people might turn around and say, but you are 'museumizing' yourself, you are killing yourself by building a museum around your work.

**DS** | No, no! In fact, I am giving myself *life*. I am a living artist, therefore I can come and work with my collection even when its installed in another museum. I do feel that when a work goes into a museum setting, it's as though it is being held hostage by the museum, and I can't access it, I can't move things, I can't rearrange things. I think this feeling comes from years of working within that structure, and not being able to pin it down, but always being uncomfortable with it. That's why the preference for my books with Steidl. So, now I have made a structure—knowing that museums will not let me touch my museums and move them around—I have made it in such a way that I have slipped past the museum security/authority thing, and established that I *will* keep changing it, and I've written that into my manifesto for the Museum Bhavan.

**AS** | This also brings us back to some of the content of the museum. If you think of the File Museum, what you see in them are living archives. They are not dead collections of paper. They are about people's lives. There are real people who keep these archives alive.

**DS** | Absolutely. There's also life happening within the museums. For example, you look at the gentleman there, Sunil Dutt, tying the turban around a much younger man, Bunty. This is where the contextual reading of photography comes in. To someone

who understands what that gesture means, certainly to an Indian Hindu person, this means that the young man has lost his father. If you know Hindi cinema, you might recognize who those people are. Then, in Museum of Photography, you might recognize the portrait of Sunil Dutt beside his own ashes. And then, again if you know your film history, you realize that in the Museum of Chance is his wife before she became his wife. So, there are different things, and threads of things, that are going on within and among the museums. Now, the daughters of the young man, Bunty, are in the Little Ladies' Museum – the photograph of the two children you said you were not sure of, and I said, no there are two more of them. There will be more images of them brought in. I am not so able to add images to some of the museums that have been acquired. But I might find a way of dealing with that. I might bring them into Chance, because now Bunty, like me, is older and the children are grown up. In fact, his older daughter just got married. So, the museum is also alive in that sense as well and things are being added because people are still living. Remember that Museum of Chance starts with my earliest images from 1981.

**AS** | With something like the Museum of Chance, which is such an ongoing, endless, open form, how do you keep the particularity of the museum so that it doesn't become a sort of hold-all form?

**DS** | See, that is a very difficult thing to try and define. Why is it that when you look at about a hundred photos one knows immediately which is Chance and which is not? You and I looked at a lot of images that day, and there were a very few that became part of Chance. We looked at almost all of the Kochi work—200 of them?—and there were just five, or three, that got into Chance—that's it. The rest were of a different **temper**.

**AS** | Yes, each of the museums has such a particular quality that is unique to it. Can you describe this quality?

**DS** | I suppose I could try. Perhaps we could talk about editing with tonality – that may be the only way to describe this quality. If you find your pitch, and I am again using musical language, then I know how Museum of Chance has to be tuned, and I think you may know this process too. But someone else may not be able to tune it the same way...

**AS** | Because it is non-verbal—unsayable, but showable.

**DS** | Yes. I think File Museum has a different pitch. So each museum is tuned slightly differently. That brings me to another question. There are many people who come in and say, we've seen these images before. It is only partly true. Because of the *Museum of Chance* book, people have seen all these images, certainly in Delhi and Bombay. But then, people have also seen *File Room* as a book and a work. The rest of the museums—Machines, Furniture, Photography—they haven't seen, and I've been really careful to put in images that have not been seen. Technically, I couldn't put in images that are in editions already. The only

one that is in an edition but is also here is the Girl on the Bed, which, before you leave, I am going to change and bring into the File Museum. Then we'll see what you say. But this thing about sameness that people have been saying has to do with—and I will go back to music—because I feel that I am not an entertainer who must find a new language for every show. Over many many years, I have built a certain voice, I've found my tone. I would photograph you, the table and your bag in the same way because that's my tone, and that's what people then start to read as, Oh I've seen this before. Whether I'm photographing a chair or a machine, I bring to them the set of references that has formed my voice. I don't know how to explain that to people.

**AS** | Maybe you shouldn't.

**DS** | Well, it's a bit annoying when people come and say they've seen these before.

**AS** | They *think* they have.

**DS** | Exactly. That's what I'm trying to get at.

**AS** | There is a certain... *je ne sais quoi*... an indefinable something that you cannot put in words

**DS** | That is the something else. You call it *je ne sais quoi*, I call it the something else. Museum of Chance doesn't have a single image—and if we find one, we should pull it out—that doesn't have that something else, its own something else. And that is also the thing that suggests the sameness to the people. This is also one of the burdens of photography. Every time you present a work it has to have a new subject. It is because of the photojournalism element in the history of photography, which is tied to the ideas of novelty and information. So, when I say that my work is *not* about what is in the image, it becomes a bit of a challenge to the viewer or reader.

Another thing I wanted to say is, each of these images in the museum is very much a stand-alone image. I could not have it any other way. But I will not let you see them as single images. I am not interested in perpetuating that way of viewing images. I no longer subscribe to those art-world ideas of the single image.

**AS** | At a micro level, then, these are museums without labels and captions. Each museum has a name, but if you ask, who is this man or who is this girl or whose house is this, you never get an answer and never get to know. Even if I happen to know who it is, and someone asks me, I don't feel like telling him or her. I find this an interesting tendency in myself: why do I not like to reveal who that man is?

**DS** | Because that's not what the museums or my work is about. And... what if I *change* the labels? What if I call my Museum of Furniture the Museum of Missed Conversations, as somebody did the other day? I would call it, perhaps, just the Museum of Conversations, and leave it at that. Then you would read it completely differently, no? You know, I am going to do that with

some of the museums! The Little Ladies Museum might become Museum of Time. This is my thought this morning.

**AS** | Without changing the museum physically, you will just change the name you give it.

**DS** | Yes. So, the File Museum might become My Father's Museum.

**AS** | That will be really interesting because it would upset any kind of typological thinking that people might bring to the way you put images together in the museums. You don't make the unifying principle of each museum simple and therefore easy to paraphrase. Even with the machines, what unites them is the fact that most of them are machines. But what you foreground with the name you give their museum is a quality or an essence.

**DS** | Exactly. Museum of Strength or Museum of Steel. So, the next question is about the books that I will be making of the Museum Bhavan with Steidl. Should I make them with the new museum titles? We start with Museum of Time, which is Little Ladies, My Father's Museum, which is File Museum, Museum of Steel, which is Machines, then Museum of Conversations, which is Furniture, and Photography could become Museum of Sight, or even Light. And then there are the Men, who could become... Museum of Curiosities or Curiosity Museum...

**AS** | Which would suggest both meanings of 'curiosity', like Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop*.

**DS** | Then, what happens when I take these five images that are on the wall behind you now and I call the sequence... Museum of Touch, or Museum of Caresses? Anyway, Museum of Chance remains Museum of Chance.

**AS** | And you have the Museum of Vitrines and Museum of Printing Presses, that are the smaller museums, on the wall.

**DS** | That I will have to think about.

**AS** | Maybe you change the names when the change suggests itself naturally. That shouldn't become a rule either.

**DS** | Now I'm back to the point I started at. If I am a living artist, I have the possibility of doing this. But there is no museum that is going to allow me, half way through the show, to come and change all the titles, right? There is a major show being planned on the question, when does a work of art end? I would like to say, especially about the Museum of Chance, that it ends when I end.

**AS** | It has to be like Life, and Time.

**DS** | Yes. Actually, I don't want to offer the Museum of Chance to anybody, and if somebody does acquire it, they have to acquire it with the knowledge that it will keep growing. So, its acquisition will have to be based on a very different kind of contract with the

individual or institution. I don't know if this has any precedent, will check.

**AS** | You know that Proust died the day he finished writing *In Search of Lost Time*.

**DS** | [Loud laughter] Really?

**AS** | And he kept revising the proofs, almost until the moment of his death.

**DS** | That's another point I would love to bring into this conversation: the ongoingness of work. I even said that I wanted to change the name of the show to *The Ongoing Museum*. But that involved asking the host museum here, which makes it more difficult.

**AS** | Also, once you install a body of work and start living with it, your consciousness of it keeps changing—as is very apparent in this instant.

**DS** | Precisely, and museum structures don't allow that, gallery structures and art structures don't allow that. So, in a way, I have been forced to make my own structure that allows me to do all of that. It is only when I live inside my work, truly inhabit the work, that it grows organically. Otherwise it becomes a bonsai.

**I am half considering adding a bed to the Museum of Chance and possibly sleeping inside it. Well I can certainly do that when Museum Bhavan comes home.**

**AS** | So, what you are now saying is that by changing the names of the museums, you are shifting from physically moving the museums around to letting them evolve conceptually while the structures and the pictures remain in the same positions.

**DS** | Exactly. I am actually going to change the name of my part of the show tomorrow. It's going to be called *Ongoing Museum*. Then, I think, what I'm trying to do becomes clearer for people, and for anyone who takes it on. Up to now, it has travelled as Museum of Chance or Museum Bhavan when its whole. But I don't think any of the museums or institutions understood how serious I am about this inhabitation, and even I didn't understand, till we sat here that day at the opening. It has just been three days, but so much has changed in my head. It's also because of all the conversations going on since then.

**AS** | And conversations do not also always have to be spoken. Someone just has to be around, and a certain kind of thinking begins happening around and into the work.

**DS** | Exactly. This is what I wanted to say to my wonderful wise friend before she left, that it wasn't just her helping physically with the installation that mattered but it was her being part of the support group around me that helped me completely rearrange the concept around this work during installation.

**AS** | So what is it that sustains the ongoingness of the ongoing? It isn't just 'life' in a vague sense, but conversations, people, arrivals, departures, presences, or even absences. I'm leaving soon to catch my flight, which is why there is a concentrated quality about the way we use the little bit of time we have left to talk.

**DS** | Yes, even though you said at the beginning that you don't have the headspace to talk about all this now, and I just wanted to make very short notes as we talked, because very soon someone will come and we will not be able to continue this conversation.

**AS** | And these are not just conceptual principles. They are also the stuff of your work.

**DS** | I could only do this because I am now sitting inside the museum. On its very own furniture. Something about the size and height of this table, the way you have to sit on these stools, that you can rest your back, that we are slightly shielded from the rest of the world but aware that there might be someone listening... We have to find the right word for it, because I know that there is a performative aspect to all this, but it is not performance. This is not a theatre where I, and others, come and play out pre-determined, semi-fictional actions or exchanges. The spaces created by the museums become chambers in which people move and talk to one another, or to me, in a very real way, out of their engagement with what they are looking at and with what their bodies and minds are being made to do in this space. And this, in turn, activates and animates the work. It is in this sense that I say that I am a living artist actively transforming my work all the time. I don't think I would like to call this activation of my work a 'performance'. It is much more real and spontaneous than that. What we are sitting and doing here now comes directly out of our inhabitation of the work. Isn't it significant that you and I have been unable to have this conversation in my house, among these very museums, which were then in their permanent home. So, what is it about sitting and talking here while the exhibition is going on, and people are coming and going, that produces this specific kind of focused, publicly-private conversation about the work and about its relationship with the world and with life and time? I think it has a great deal to do with the architecture of the furniture, which is integral to the architecture of the museum. Because of the bag on your lap, you are a further away from me across the table. But if you put your bag on the floor, you will find that to be able to relax, you would have to lean on the table, and then we come into quite an intimate conversation space. So, even if we didn't know each other, we would be able to have this kind of conversation. It's a bit like what happens in a train, no? Except in the train, you can look out the window and ignore the people sitting opposite you.

**AS** | Yes, do you remember that beautiful conversation between Sharmila Tagore and Uttam Kumar in Ray's *Nayak*, sitting across each other in the canteen car exactly as we are sitting now, with the train window between them. She was also interviewing him in that scene, and making notes.

**DS** | Yes! Instead of the window, you have this ongoing museum, and I don't know how young people in their twenties would relate to it, for it is full of references—in a way, I could call it a Museum of References—and there could be parts of the world where they may not get the references... However, I think tonality is beyond that, and if people start to *listen* to the photographs, there might still be a possibility of their making a connection with them.

**AS** | And they don't have to put that connection they make into words, which is fine too, for it may be something elusive.

**DS** | That I leave to you to describe.

**AS** | I believe this quality comes into your work because of the doubleness in it of having, on the one hand, lots of images brought carefully together, but each image having a very particular but ineffable quality to it, which you have to somehow work out for yourself, and then...

**DS** | ...you have to forget it...

**AS** | ...you have to let it go. And while you're working this out for yourself, you might see the sequences of images either horizontally or vertically. This panel, for instance, I find myself always reading vertically. In that vertical sequence the fertility goddess with her legs open comes in the middle, but another sequence begins to form horizontally as well, in which the same goddess comes at the end, as the last image. I have even begun to think of this stone goddess as the Goddess of Chance from between whose legs issue the many forms of life that the work might take, the endless possibilities, as different people bring their different interests and preoccupations to it. I also link with her the obstetrical language that you have been using in your Museum Bhavan statements and other communications in order to describe the 'birthings' of your museums.

**DS** | Well, as I have said many times before, the museums are relations. File Museum and Little ladies are sibling museums, and Furniture and Photography are cousins. That's why they have their own image sizes, so that you can mix the siblings but not the siblings and the cousins. Museums also give birth to other museums. Sometimes these are premature, as the Museum of Embraces was at the Hayward when it popped out of the Museum of Chance. But, at the same time, Vitrines was born out of Furniture during the installation, and it is now an independent museum. I cannot rush the process, they have to emerge organically.

The birthing of the museums can also happen through another kind of unfolding of Chance within the architecture of the museums. On the day of the opening, after the museums had been installed, there was a friend who came to visit who has just finished a book on Chandigarh and Le Corbusier, and when he and I were looking at the Museum of Furniture together and what came into view as we looked and talked was a new museum within that museum, which we then called the Chandigarh Chairs. So, there are seeds, or possibilities, of museums hidden

inside the larger museums that come into sudden fruition depending on who I am experiencing the museums with. But the emergence of the new museum from within what already exists, is not just chance but also has to do with the way I edit the larger museum, always leaving room in them, enough breadth of scope, in spite of the particular character of each, for other threads and associations and themes to emerge, depending on who I am looking at them with. But I may not have any control over the accidents of who drops in when and what that person brings along with him, and what he and I might together touch awake and bring to life that was lying dormant in the work.

**AS** | I am also aware of how frequently you use the language of domesticity to talk about this work. In fact, your museums are a very domestic size.

**DS** | Well, they were originally made to be housed in my apartment and they will be stationed in my apartment between their travels. But also I grew up in a meandering sort of house, where rooms were constantly made out of partitions of cupboards as divisions, or with actual brick and mortar that could be pulled down just as easily. The architecture was not sacrosanct but need-based. It was an organic sort of house... I thrive, like most of us, on conversation, and I'm always wondering about the architecture required for the perfect conversations. I find that when I am enclosed by the insides of two museums, they form a conversation chamber, and it is very important that the museums have their own furniture, which fit inside these shifting chambers.

**AS** | To get back to books being your abiding love, how would you translate this work into a book when you sit down to make it with Steidl?

**DS** | That's quite obvious, since the idea of the museums comes from the book-as-exhibition idea of *Sent a Letter*. The Museum Bhavan book would be 10 books, and the same size as *Sent A Letter*. So, with the Steidl box of Museum Bhavan, you can host Museum Bhavan in your bedroom, or send it on its own tour to friends in Madrid, or share it among your students. You can also install it alongside *Sent a Letter*. Just imagine, you would then have seventeen miniature exhibitions of my work.

The challenge would be to make a book for Museum of Chance and File Museum, since they already have books made by Steidl and have been made into limited-edition 'book objects' by me. There is, of course, the possibility of miniaturizing the very books, and that might be quite enough. In fact would make an important comment about size changing the reading. But I also have so many images in the reserve collection of these Museums that I might just try to make a new Museum of Chance book. In fact, I will do exactly that, and File Museum can become a book with just the images of the Godrej cupboards and not have any images that were in the earlier *File Room* book.

**AS** | I find this way of making the museums proliferate endlessly quite fascinatingly Borgesian—museums producing new museums, museums turning into books, books turning into

museums, old books morphing into new books, books that are of the same museum but are different from each other. Perhaps it comes from taking an idea and pushing it to its utmost limits, and wresting from others the freedom to be able to do so...

**DS** | I think it has something to do with being loyal to one's obsessions, being completely focused, not being a butterfly artist, and not letting go. And I am lucky to have a publisher who indulges, and participates in, this obsessiveness.

—20.12.2015 New Delhi

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**AS** | Could we, please, try and clarify some of the basic ideas about your museums, as many of the readers will not have seen them installed. They will just have the Steidl Museum Bhavan box.

**DS** | That's the reason for making the box—so that people can install Museum Bhavan in their own homes..

**AS** | There was a time, especially in a city like Calcutta, where every home was a museum of sorts, or several kinds of museum somehow thrown together. So, I think I know what you are getting at with the museum.

**DS** | Yes, you can say that your bedside table is your museum. Remember I have been photographing museums for almost two decades now, especially house museums, that are much more flexible in their notions of what museums might be like. I also come from a time when people had **display** cabinets built into their drawing rooms, where a Japanese doll was added after a trip to Japan or an Air India maharaja after the first foreign flight. Though it's the memorial museum that I am drawn to and drawing from. Remember the work with the MGR museum in Madras, which housed the car he drove and his pet lion, Raja. Also, the years I spent photographing individually improvised archives. I am still obsessed with them, and will probably continue to be for the rest of my life. The endless archive.

**AS** | So, if I take you back to Square One and ask again, simply, what is Museum Bhavan?

**DS** | Well to put it simply—Museum Bhavan is a collection of my nine museums actually installed in my home, even though they might inhabit other architectures on their travels. But it is when they travel all together that they form the Museum Bhavan; singly, they are separate museums.

**AS** | And in what sense are they museums?

**DS** | They are a collection of objects that are housed in a structure, which have a display section and a reserve collection.

Each will have its own catalogue. So, does that not make it a museum? They will even have a curator, registrar and trustees, not to forget the museum gift shop. I suppose you could have initially called them giant books but now that they have their storage units built into them, they are museums. I am talking about the museum as an artistic form. Of course taking artistic licenses here. The structures open and close in different ways, they can join to form a chamber or labyrinth. I can change the images very easily and dip into the immense reserve collection in a minute. The museums also have smaller museums that can be displayed on the walls, while you store away the larger structures if space or mood demands. But you can never, never put a single image on the wall because the images are not glazed! [smiles with glee] You see, I have always seen my work in contact sheets of 12 or 36 images—contact sheets that I can read horizontally, vertically, diagonally, with the image changing, depending on its context. A contact sheet might start in Kyoto and end in Varanasi. It was an art world thing to present an image as a single image, and I could go along with it while I made silver prints. But now that I make digital prints from scanning my negatives, I am somehow more free with my images and their associations. I know people have a problem reading so many images and might prefer being spoon-fed one image at a time. But I just can't do that. Come visit Museum Bhavan as many times as you like.

**AS** | And what is your vision of the future of Museum Bhavan?

**DS** | The Museums will be housed in my apartment in Delhi. They will be made available to visitors by appointment only. They will possibly be open to the public on the first full moon of each year, or the second. I will be the registrar/curator and give guided tours as and when I am in Delhi. You are very welcome to conduct interviews or classes on poetry in the space of Museum Bhavan. In time, we might have an archivist-in-residence programme, and possibly seminars on the nano museum with Hans Ulrich Obrist.

**AS** | Do you see Museum Bhavan as a family that always stays together? Or will the members disperse?

**DS** | Well they will always be together in Museum Bhavan, but can certainly travel independently. The edits have been made such that the curator can install the images in any grouping. In fact, the longest time is spent on working out the edit of a group of images that can work in any combination. I would, of course, prefer that siblings travel together but it maybe time to let go of that idea too. There might even come a time when I ask other people to send in images, say on Instagram, where I have a Museums of Legs hashtag, and that might become a virtual museum to which people can send in entries. That could be the beginnings of yet another form.

**AS** | What could be the next few museums?

**DS** | It does not happen like that. It's not that I can say, OK now let's make a Museum of Bottles. The museum has to present itself from within my work. So neither I nor you as the 'collector' can

make a museum to order. Meaning, you or I cannot commission the museum. That just does not ring true. The moment I start to make a photo because it will fit in a certain museum, I can immediately hear the off-note in it. I have to sit with my contact sheets, and over time, slowly, the museum presents itself, I build it, but it still may not work... I think I work backwards. I collect images over months and years and then at a certain time I stop and start to look at this raw material and weed out till the bare structure remains. Then I find the form, rather it finds itself in this editing process. I am now working towards a Museum of Quiet and it may have a completely different form from any of these museums. I may house it in a bed form, since sleeping in the Museums is so alluring.

**AS** | I was thinking about you as the museum guide, and it occurred to me that artists install their work in a gallery or museum and leave. So, the absence of the artist is what defines the visitor's experience of the work. But in your case it is essential that you remain with the work for most of the time and guide the visitor through it, and your conversations with them become part of the ongoing life of the work.

**DS** | Well, I think of myself as a living artist and the work ends when I end, as I said to you before. So these two kinds of life have to remain joined together. I think it's too early to be fossilized because the institutions have a certain structure. It's an interesting question, when a work of art ends. I am very pleased that I have made a form that need never end, that I can keep adding chapters to the museums, or produce other museums, and make a large joint family of Museum Bhavan.

—26.12.2015, Calcutta

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## 出品リスト List of Works

1

### マイセルフ・モナ・アハメド Myself Mona Ahmed

1989–2000  
21点組、ゼラチン・シルバー・プリント  
21 gelatin silver prints  
51 × 63.5 cm each  
東京都写真美術館蔵  
Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum  
pp. 34–45

2

### 第3の性(ポートフォリオ) The Third Sex Portfolio

1991–1993  
8点組、ゼラチン・シルバー・プリント  
8 gelatin silver prints  
51 × 63.5 cm each  
東京都写真美術館蔵  
Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum  
pp. 46–53

3

### 私としての私 I am as I am

1999  
12点組、ゼラチン・シルバー・プリント  
12 gelatin silver prints  
100 × 117 cm each  
京都国立近代美術館蔵  
Collection of The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto  
pp. 54–65

4

### セント・ア・レター Sent A Letter

2007  
手製ボックスに入った7冊の蛇腹折りソフトカバーの本  
チーク材で額装  
7 softcover books in handmade box, 7 teak vitrines  
dimension variable  
pp. 66, 67

5

### ミュージアム・オブ・チャンス Museum of Chance

2013  
2つのチーク材構造物、アーカイバル・ピグメント・プリント  
104点の額装された正方形のプリント、59点の額装された長方形のプリント、  
4台のテーブル、4台のstuhl  
Teak and archival pigment prints, dimension variable  
2 teak structures, 252.5 × 86.5 × 63 cm each  
9 teak boxes (15 × 48 × 48 cm each), 6 teak boxes (10.5 × 48.5 × 33 cm each),  
104 unglazed, framed prints (46 × 46 cm each),  
59 unglazed, framed prints (31 × 46 cm each),  
4 tables (76.2 × 46 × 46 cm each), 4 stools (46 × 38 × 38 cm each)  
pp. 68–83

6

### ファイル・ミュージアム File Museum

2012  
チーク材の構造物、アーカイバル・ピグメント・プリント  
142点の額装されたプリント  
Teak and archival pigment prints, dimension variable  
1 teak structure, 189 × 109 × 48 cm,  
5 teak boxes (9.5 × 33 × 33 cm each)  
142 unglazed, framed prints (30 × 30 cm each)  
pp. 84–93

7

### リトル・レディーズ・ミュージアム—1961年から現在まで Little Ladies Museum – 1961 to Present

2013  
(With Nony Singh/ノニー・シン[一部撮影])  
チーク材の構造物、アーカイバル・ピグメント・プリント  
75点の額装された正方形のプリント、19点の額装された長方形のプリント  
Teak and archival pigment prints, dimension variable  
1 teak structure, 189 × 109 × 48 cm  
4 teak boxes (10 × 33 × 22 cm each), 5 teak boxes (10 × 33 × 33 cm each),  
75 unglazed, framed square prints (30 × 30 cm each),  
19 unglazed, framed rectangular prints (30 × 46 cm; 20 × 30 cm)  
Courtesy the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt  
pp. 94–103

8

### ミュージアム・オブ・シェディング Museum of Shedding

2016  
チーク材の構造物、アーカイバル・ピグメント・プリント  
73点の額装されたプリント、  
ベッド、机、ベンチ、テーブル、3台のstuhl、2台のストレージ・キャビン  
Teak and archival pigment prints, dimension variable  
1 teak structure, 230 × 80 × 56 cm  
6 teak boxes (9.5 × 40 × 40 cm each), 3 teak boxes (15 × 40 × 40 cm each),  
73 unglazed, framed prints (30 × 30 cm each),  
1 bed, 1 desk, 1 bench, 1 table, 3 stools, 2 storage units  
pp. 104–113

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### タイム・メジャーズ Time Measures

2016  
35点組、アーカイバル・ピグメント・プリント  
35 archival pigment prints  
44 × 55 cm each  
pp. 114–116

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### モナ・アンド・マイセルフ Mona and Myself

2013  
写真のデジタル・プロジェクション  
3分45秒、ループ  
Digital projection of still images  
3 minutes 45 seconds, looped  
p. 117

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### スーツケース・ミュージアム Suitcase Museum

2015  
2個の革製スーツケース、44冊の作品集「ミュージアム・オブ・チャンス」  
2 leather suitcases  
44 framed *Museum of Chance* books, 33.5 × 30.5 × 2.5 cm each  
pp. 118–120

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総合開館20周年記念

「ダヤニータ・シン インドの大きな家の美術館」展

[展覧会カタログ]

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編集:

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20 Year Anniversary

Dayanita Singh, Museum Bhavan

[Exhibition catalogue]

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