

# Sunil Gupta & Charan Singh

## DELHI: Communities of Belonging

We are thrilled to present the groundbreaking exhibition **Delhi: Communities of Belonging** by noted photographers **Sunil Gupta** and **Charan Singh** that chronicles contemporary LGBTQ life in Delhi. Gupta and Singh's project masterfully enables us to witness the intimate, ordinary and loving moments of 17 diverse individuals and couples. Gupta and Singh have created a rich and tender mosaic of the ways in which a diverse set of sitters navigate life, work and love in a country where anti-sodomy laws dating back to the British Empire were only recently struck down in 2009 and then were restored after the Supreme Court turned back the ruling in 2013.

Gupta and Singh photographed an array of friendship networks accentuating human warmth through the thoughtful dialogue that departs from a pre-supposed victim narrative of queer lives. Ponni and Indu share an intimate hug, Jatin plays gently with his son on a bed, and Rituparnah enjoys the company of her cat; these are just a few of the moments that capture how each of Gupta and Singh's subjects stakes a place for themselves in the vast city of Delhi, in a country with very few formal spaces for queer communities to meet.

Gupta and Singh have previously created work that address gender and sexuality in India. Gupta's recent series *Mr. Malhotra's Party*, for instance, collects environmental portraits of queer Delhi residents in public places, all gazing directly at the camera. The individuals in Singh's series of studio portraits, *Kothis, Hijras, Giryas and Others* engage the camera in a similar way, by responding to and resisting virile masculine discourse.

This present project originated when Gupta and Singh were approached by The New Press to compile a book about the LGBTQ community in Delhi. The result is a stunning series of more than 150 full-color documentary photographs and companion first-person texts that together offer an unprecedented portrait of queer people's lives in India today. The book was launched to rave reviews in November, 2016. Indian historian and gay studies scholar Saleem Kidwai remarked: "... A visible queer community has emerged in Delhi over the past two decades. What was silent and private has emerged into the public sphere. Gupta's and Singh's work bears testimony to this." Some of the works were featured in January at the Victoria and Albert Museum to highlight the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalization of homosexuality in England and Wales.

Our upcoming show at **sepiaEYE** features photographs from the series which to date have remained unseen and unpublished.

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Sunil Gupta** (b. Delhi, 1953) is an artist, writer, activist and curator. His work has been shown internationally in over 90 solo exhibitions, most recently at Yale University, New Haven, CT (2015). Significant group exhibitions include *Paris - Delhi - Bombay...* at the Pompidou Centre (2011) and *Keywords: Art, Culture and Society in 1980s Britain* at the Tate Liverpool (2013). Gupta's curatorial efforts were paramount in the monumental exhibition, *Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* at The Whitechapel Gallery, London and Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2010). Gupta's published work includes the monographs *Queer: Sunil Gupta* (Prestel/Vadehra Art Gallery, 2011); *Wish You Were Here: Memories of a Gay Life* (Yoda Press, New Delhi, 2008); and *Pictures From Here* (Chris Boot Ltd., New York, 2003).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### EXHIBITION LOCATION

547 West 27th Street, #608  
New York, NY 10001

### EXHIBITION DATES

March 31 – May 6, 2017

### RECEPTION

Thursday, March 30, 2017  
6–8pm

### BOOK SIGNING

Saturday, April 1, 1–2 pm  
Stephen Bulger, AIPAD booth

### PRESS CONTACT

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Sunil Gupta and Charan Singh,  
*Rizwan getting ready to go out, 2016*



He is currently Visiting Professor at UCA, Farnham, and visiting lecturer at the Royal College of Art, London, UK. His work is included in numerous private and public collections including; George Eastman House (Rochester, USA), Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Royal Ontario Museum, Tate Britain, The Philadelphia Museum of Art and Harvard University. The esteemed photography festival, FOTOFEST, has announced that the lead curator for its 2018 Biennial will be SepiaEYE artist Sunil Gupta. Gupta is an excellent choice given the Biennial's theme: INDIAContemporary Photography and New Media Art.

**Charan Singh** (b. Delhi, 1978) lives and works in New Delhi and London. He is currently a PhD candidate in Photography at the Royal College of Art, London. Singh's photographic practice is informed by HIV/AIDS work and community activism in India along with a formal study of the history of art and photography.

He is interested in interrogating and responding to the void that exists in visual representations of desires, identities, gender, sexualities, love and relationships, in contemporary queer culture. He won the Magnum Graduate Photographers Award 2016. His work has been exhibited at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi (2014), The Photographers Gallery, London (2015), FotoFest, Houston (2015), GFEST, London (2015) and SepiaEYE, New York (2016).



Sunil Gupta and Charan Singh,  
*Sonal with a date*, 2016

## ABOUT SEPIAEYE

**sepiaEYE** is dedicated to showing a spectrum of modern and contemporary photography and video work from Asia. Established in September 2009 by Esa Epstein, sepiaEYE will continue to foster artist development through exhibitions, publications, art fairs, and festivals.

sepiaEYE is honored to represent the Estates of Raghubir Singh and Bhupendra Karia. sepiaEYE is interested in the rediscovery of lesser known artists and periods in the history of photography as well as in the support of emerging artists.

During her tenure as the Executive Director and Curator of SEPIA International and The Alkazi Collection (1995-2009), Esa Epstein has published eight titles on modern and contemporary photography including: *Atul Bhalla: Yamuna Walk* (sepiaEYE & UW Press, 2011), *Jungjin Lee: Wind*, essays by Eugenia Parry and Vicki Goldberg (Aperture/SEPIA, 2009); *Ketaki Sheth: Bombay Mix*, preface by Suketu Mehta (Dewi Lewis/SEPIA, 2007); and *Vivan Sundaram: Re-take of Amrita*, essays by Vivan Sundaram and Wu Hung (SEPIA, 2006).

SEPIA exhibitions have been reviewed in numerous publications, most notably, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Sun*, *ARTnews*, and *Art in America*. Gallery artists have gained critical acclaim and international recognition and their works are included in the collections of major European and US museums as well as private collectors.

Esa Epstein has helped build several major collections of Indian photography in North American museums and, along the way, has offered her expertise to both private and public exhibitions. She continues to offer institutional planning and arts management through sepiaEYE.

