

NEUGERRIEMSCHEIDER
BERLIN

shilpa gupta

september 20 - october 15, 2022

LINIENSTRASSE 155
10115 BERLIN

opening reception

☎ 49 30 28877277 ☎ 28877278

saturday, september 17, 11 am - 6 pm

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neugerriemschneider is pleased to present Shilpa Gupta's first exhibition with the gallery. For over two decades, Gupta has conducted a multi-disciplinary practice guided by the exploration of power structures, social stratification and shared histories, and how they dictate individual and collective sociopolitical phenomena. As part of this presentation, Gupta brings to the forefront language and its political implications by continuing her work with the narratives surrounding communities, poets, thinkers and activists who have persisted despite risks to their mobility posed by systems that seek to monitor, permeate and control.

Fusing text and sculpture in a new installation, the centerpiece of Gupta's exhibition comprises five suspended microphones, each counterbalanced by a dimly lit light fixture, that orbit throughout the darkened gallery and between visitors. Subverting their connotations, the microphones-turned-speakers make audible words that have resonated across landscapes from rice fields to forests, streets and universities. The work includes, among others, a piece by Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz that has recently been sung on campuses across India, and an Italian activist song, originally sung by female rice-paddy laborers, that found revival in Kashmir and during the past years' farmers' protests in India. A martyr's song in the central-Indian language Gondi, primarily spoken by large marginalized communities in the region, and a rendition of a text by Nigerian poet and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa voice hope and create a shared space for listening.

Together, they thematize hope, resistance, passion and protest, their mere existence signaling resilience and persistence. The constellation spans dialect, geography and era, interacting with viewers on a physical level and inviting a joint act of listening. Meaning, for Gupta, derives from movement - in a space, between cultures or across nations; either as intention or necessity - which is made literal by the work's confronting motion. The perception of language thus becomes a shared physical experience in which visitors become part of the installation's choreography, experiencing and reacting to the recorded voices over the course of a series of movements - of the work and of its audience - and generating new, layered interpretations in the process.

This installation is complemented by a selection of further works by Gupta that expand on her engagement with social dynamics, language, and the forceful nature of imposed restraint. *StillTheyKnowNotWhatIDream* (2021) consists of two suspended split-flap boards that display poetic phrases centered on loss, power and truth in place of information such as times, dates or locations. The rhythmic clicking of her dispatches appear cryptically as textual fragments that combine or disappear, leaving space for reflection in their wake.

Untitled (Distance Between Two Tears) (2021/2022) draws upon the dueling notions of isolation and human connection: Hundreds of minimalist metal dowel pins, each sized to match the separation of two eyes, and thus two tears, amass on the gallery's floor for viewers to claim in a communal action. The intimate link between body and sculptural form also manifests in *A liquid, the mouth froze* (2018) - a two-part, wall-mounted gunmetal cast of the inside of an open mouth alongside an explanatory plaque that together bring attention to brutality enacted in response to agency. A wooden pedestal serves as the base for *Untitled (From 6, 10.3, 2 series)* (2021). Here, a rapidly rotating, upwards-pointing knife created during the mid-COVID period reflects upon collective experiences of uncertainty, isolation and restricted movement.

Shilpa Gupta (b. 1976) has been the focus of solo exhibitions at international museums and institutions including at M HKA, Antwerp; Dallas Contemporary, Dallas; Barbican Centre, London; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (all 2021); YARAT Contemporary Art Space, Baku (2018); Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld (2017); Kunstnernes

Hus, Oslo (2014); and Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2010). Gupta's work has been featured in 58th Venice Biennale (2019) and the 8th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2014), and she is the recipient of the GQ Cultural Provocateur Award (2019), the Bienal Award at the Bienal De Cuenca, Ecuador (2011) and the Transmediale Award, Berlin (2004). She has recently created a commission for the rooftop of Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover, on view until September 25.

For further press information and imagery, please contact Jonathan Friedrich Stockhorst at neugerriemschneider: +49 30 288 77277 or jonathan@neugerriemschneider.com.