

MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 PRESENTS THE US PREMIERE OF PHOTOGRAPHER GAURI GILL'S ACTS OF APPEARANCE

LONG ISLAND CITY, NY, April 4, 2018 – MoMA PS1 presents the US premiere of photographer Gauri Gill's (Indian, born 1970) most recent body of work, *Acts of Appearance*. Working closely with members of an Adivasi community in Jawhar district, Maharashtra, India, Gill created a series of vivid color photographs that foreground the community's renowned production of papier-mâché objects, including traditional sacred masks. **Projects 108: Gauri Gill** is on view from April 15 through September 3, 2018, featuring *Acts of Appearance* alongside work from Gill's series *Notes from the Desert*.

While traveling in Maharashtra, Gill heard about the Bahoda festival, a ritual celebration of performance and dance observed by members of the Kokna tribe. Over several nights, members of the community enact well-known Hindu epics intermingled with tribal myths, performed with the aid of papier-mâché masks that depict Hindu gods, local tribal gods and demons, and other characters. After seeing the masks, and reflecting upon the possible distance between these traditions and the everyday realities of the Jawhar community, Gill commissioned community members to create a new set of masks that, instead of depicting gods and deities, would take the form of familiar people and animals or valued objects. Many of the masks incorporate common aspects of human existence such as various life stages, states of health, and emotions (or *rasas*).

Gill and her collaborators composed scenes featuring the papier-mâché artists and other actor-volunteers wearing the masks while engaging in routine activities, often improvising as they went. A range of scenarios and narratives, situated in both "reality" and dreamlike states, come together in the photographs. Most images simultaneously portray symbolic or playful representations alongside the familiar experiences of community members set amongst the backdrop of their homes and culture. The openness of Gill's initial prompt, and the diverse interpretive masks made by the community in response, speak to an understanding of the self as layered rather than one-dimensional. The series suggests a number of formative influences including custom and religion, as well as metaphor and imagination, everyday experiences, relations to other living beings and inanimate things, and the local landscape.

Acts of Appearance is presented in this exhibition alongside a selection of photographs from *Notes from the Desert*—a multi-series body of work photographed in rural Rajasthan that Gill began in 1999. This pairing draws parallels between works made over several years in different locations across India, and emphasizes Gill's sustained engagement with rural communities and local artists.

Gauri Gill has consistently advocated for and supported other artists, both those trained in art colleges and those who received informal training outside of institutions, and embraced collaboration in her work. In addition to working closely with the subjects of her photographs, Gill has also expanded her practice by incorporating materials made by others, as with the masks in *Acts of Appearance*.

Trained as a painter and applied artist, Gill (b. 1970, Chandigarh, India) received a BFA from the Delhi College of Art, and then turned to photography as her primary medium, earning a second BFA from Parsons School of Design in New York and an MFA from Stanford University. In 2011, Gill received the Grange Prize (now known as the Aimia/AGO Photography prize). Her work has been presented internationally and in India, including at *documenta 14* in Athens and Kassel, the 7th Moscow Biennale, Prospect 4 in New Orleans, and Kochi Biennale, as well as at institutions including the Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Yale University Art Gallery; the Art Gallery of Ontario; the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi; and the Whitechapel Gallery, London; among others. She lives in New Delhi.

Initiated by MoMA in 1971 as a platform for new and experimental art, the Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series, presented at both The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1, provides a forum for the most urgent international voices in contemporary art.

Projects 108: Gauri Gill is organized by Lucy Gallun, Assistant Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art.

Acts of Appearance was created with the participation of Bhagvan Dharma Kadu, Subhas Dharma Kadu, Yuvraj Bhagvan Kadu, Rahul Arvind Kakad, Rahul Bhagvan Kadu, Makhaval Bhagvan Kadu, Madhuri Subhas Kadu, Rangeeta Arvind Kakad, Darshana Devram Kakad, Ganesh Ganpat Lokhande, Sangeeta Ganesh Lokhande, Sangeeta Navnath Kadu, Kusum Bhagvan Kadu, Harishchandra Rama Kadu, Suvrna Harishchandra Vad, and Anjana Sachin Kurbude; along with Sachin Sankar Kurbude, Sanjay Sakharam Vatas, Ganpat Ganga Lokhande, Rupesh Arvind Kakad, Nalini Pradip Valvi, Jyoti Sanjay Vatas, Shravan Budhya Tumbda, Saraswati Subhas Kadu, Sapna Bhagvan Kadu, Bhawna Bhagvan Kadu, Pooja Arvind Kakad, Tushar Prakash Vatas, Tushar Dinkar Vatas, Vijaya Navnath Kadu, Suraj Tukaram Vad, Nishant Tulshiram Thalkar, and Nilam Sunil Marad.

The Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series is made possible in part by the Elaine Dannheisser Foundation and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 is devoted to today's most experimental, thought-provoking contemporary art. Founded in 1976 as the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, it was the first nonprofit arts center in the United States devoted solely to contemporary art and is recognized as a defining force in the alternative space movement. In 2000 The Museum of Modern Art and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center merged, creating the largest platform for contemporary art in the country and one of the largest in the world. Functioning as a living, active meeting place for the general public, MoMA PS1 is a catalyst for ideas, discourses, and new trends in contemporary art.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday through Monday. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$10 suggested donation; \$5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York City residents, MoMA members, and MoMA admission ticket holders within 14 days of visit. Free admission as a Gift to New Yorkers made possible by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation.

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St-Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit momaps1.org.

Press Contact: Molly Kurzius, (718) 392-6447 or molly_kurzius@moma.org

General Press Inquiries: press_momaps1@moma.org
For downloadable high-resolution images, register at moma.org/press.