



Among recent MFA graduates in Scandinavia, Indian-Norwegian artist Dev Dhunsi stands out as one to watch. His first institutional solo exhibition, *Unmistakably You*, is currently on view at Nitja senter for samtidskunst in Norway, with another solo show opening on April 9, 2026, at Andréhn-Schiptjenko in Sweden. His new artist book, *Mixed*, has also just been published by SPBH Editions/MACK Books. In this interview, our new contributor Koshik Zaman speaks with Dhunsi about his distinctive practice and rapid ascent.

**Koshik Zaman:** Hi Dev, before we get started—where am I speaking to you from?

**Dev Dhunsi:** I'm currently in Oslo, in the middle of an overlap—between finishing one exhibition, extending another, and preparing what comes next. It feels less like being in one place and more like being inside a transition. That's also where my work usually begins.

**K.Z.:** You first came onto my radar back in 2021, when you were finishing your BFA at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHIO). A lot has happened since. I couldn't be happier for you, though I'm not surprised by your recent success. Even back then, your potential and visionary mindset were already evident.

**D.D.:** I've heard rumors that your radar is quite precise! Thank you—that really means a lot, especially coming from someone who has followed the work from such an early stage.

What's changed is not so much the core of the practice, but the level of precision and commitment around it. Back then, I was already circling many of the same questions, but I didn't yet have the language or structure to hold them fully.

In a way, the work has simply become more honest—and more demanding. I've also just moved into a new studio with my partner, Chris. Hopefully, the next few years will take shape from this new environment as a starting point.



**K.Z.:** Shortly after my studio visit in Oslo, I had the pleasure of working with you on the wrestling-themed group exhibition *Ring Beyond the Mat* at Konsthall 16 / The National Sports Museum of Sweden, co-curated with Ashik Zaman. You presented an interdisciplinary installation involving photography, sculpture, performance, and sound. While your practice isn't confined to a single medium, it often exists within a lens-based realm. What initially drew you to photography?

**D.D.:** Photography seduced me through its authority. It presents itself as evidence—something that has been there, something you can trust. But very early on, I became interested in the instability beneath that surface.

Photography always arrives too late. It captures something that has already shifted, already disappeared. That delay opens a space where fiction—both fortunately and unfortunately—can enter. A kind of magic, or something ghostly.

So, while I began with photography as a way of holding onto something, I stayed because it allowed me to question what is being held, and for whom. Over time, the image stopped being an endpoint and became a starting point—something I could extend into textiles, sound, and spatial constructions.

**K.Z.:** One thing that really resonates with me in your work is the presence of “desi” (editor’s note: a term for people and occurrences originating from the Indian subcontinent) influences and references—something I find largely absent in the local art scene. As someone born to South Asian parents, it’s a visual language I feel a strong kinship with. How would you say that growing up bicultural—namely Norwegian and Indian—has shaped your practice?

**D.D.:** It gave me an early awareness that identity is not something you are, but something constantly negotiated in relation to others. Everyone I meet in Punjab knows I am “gora” (editor’s note: A South Asian term to refer to a fair-skinned person) but if I throw in a few well-timed Punjabi phrases, we skip several steps. Suddenly I become a “gora Punjabi”—more familiar, more legible.

Growing up between Norwegian and Indian contexts, I was always slightly out of sync with expectations—not enough of one thing, too much of another. That friction became formative.

Being queer is very similar to this position. You learn early on how to adapt, to read the room, to shift yourself depending on where you are. At times, it felt like being spun in circles—again and again—before I could return to something that felt like myself.

What I later understood is that this “in-betweenness” is not a lack, but a productive position. It allows you to see how systems of belonging are constructed—how categories like culture, heritage, and even normality are maintained through repetition.

In my work, I’m not trying to represent a bicultural or queer identity. I’m more interested in destabilizing the frameworks that demand such representation in the first place.

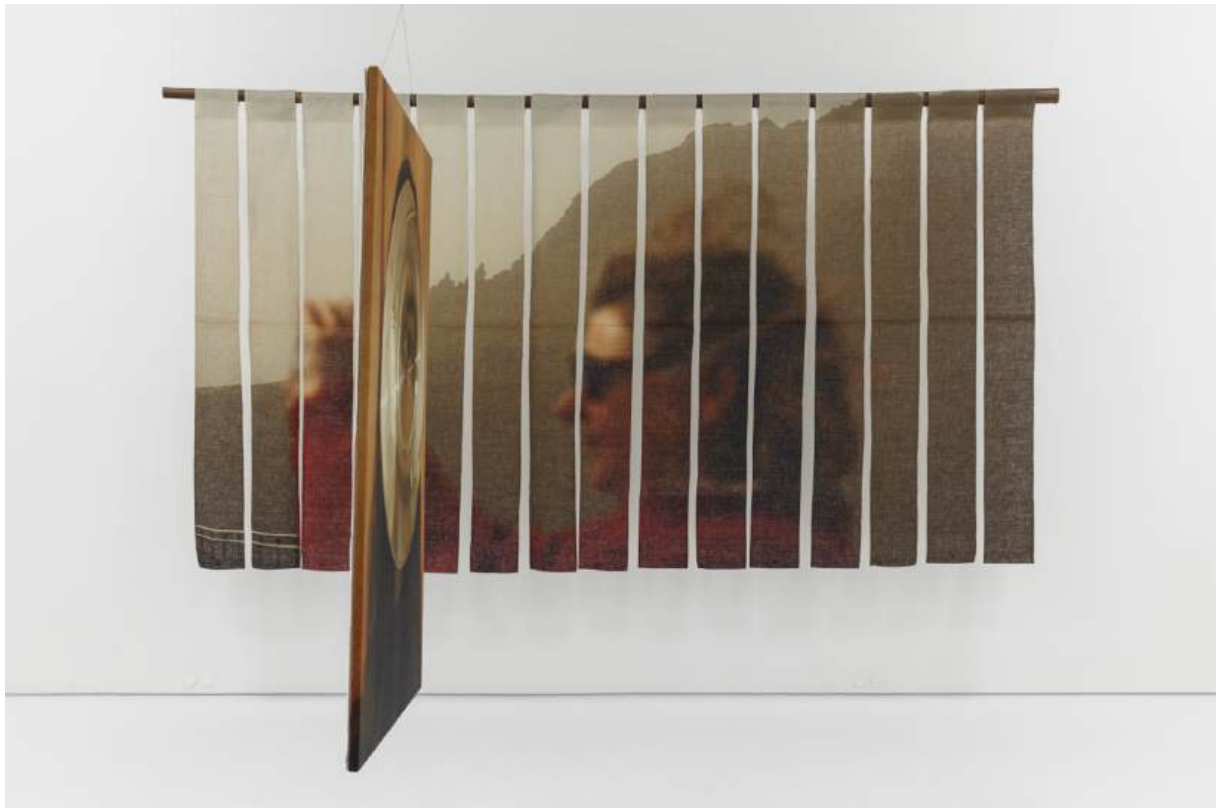
**K.Z.:** After completing your BFA in Oslo, you enrolled in the MFA program at the Royal Institute of Art here in Stockholm. How did you experience your time at the school?

**D.D.:** Stockholm gave me distance—not just geographically from Oslo, but mentally from certain expectations I had internalized.

During those two years, I remained very active with projects in Oslo, so Stockholm almost became a kind of residency mindset. I worked out, ate well, read a lot, and allowed myself to rest outside the intensity of the studio and workshops.

At KKH, I was pushed to articulate my work more rigorously—especially in relation to history, archives, and institutional structures—through lectures and dialogues with Natasha Marie Llorens and Blaise Kirschner. It was also where I became more aware

of my own perspective, and how I could activate that within installations and through vision itself.



**K.Z.:** You are currently exhibiting your first solo institutional exhibition, *Unmistakably You*, at Nitja Senter for Samtidskunst in Lillestrøm, Norway. I've only seen documentation so far, but it looks incredible. What was your thematic and spatial approach to the exhibition?

**D.D.:** The exhibition begins with a simple question: what happens when language fails to name lived experience?

While finalizing the project, a report from the Centre for Equality in Norway was released about people with mixed backgrounds being one of the fastest-growing groups in the country—and the lack of language to describe those experiences. It resonated strongly with what I had already been circling: this gap between lived reality and available vocabulary. I truly did not want to find a word for it, but rather to exist as an artist within that gap.

At the same time, my research into the racial archive at the State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala made me more aware of how violently identities have been categorized, measured, and fixed. That encounter didn't push me toward defining "mixedness," but rather toward celebrating it as something that resists definition.

From there, I approached the space as something that should not offer immediate clarity. Instead of presenting works as neutral objects on walls, I constructed a floating labyrinth of sublimation-printed textiles and jacquard-woven images. The jacquard weavings, based on photographic images, carry an internal tension through

elastic threads. This tension destabilizes the image, causing it to shift, fold, and resist a fixed reading.

I also keep moving across photographic genres—between document, fiction, myth, and performance—as a way of avoiding being pinned down. The image should not settle too quickly into recognition.

So rather than guiding the viewer toward a singular interpretation, the exhibition asks the body to navigate uncertainty. You don't stand outside the work—you move through it, negotiate it, and become part of its unfolding.



A labyrinth unfolds, not stone, but fabric and light. Here, corridors do not end; they bleed into each other. Transparency and opacity shift with each step. You may think you are moving forward, but the path folds back on itself.

**K.Z.:** In connection with the show, you also released your first artist book, *Mixed*, with Mack Books (UK). Congratulations! What has that process been like, and how did the publication come together?

**D.D.:** Thank you. In the beginning, I had to pinch myself, but it quickly turned into a level of focus I have never experienced before.

I was very grateful to work closely with Bruno Ceschel, Brian Paul Lamotte, and Nicholas Muellner—people I deeply admire. The process was highly collaborative. Although I worked on the book over two years, much of the final form came together in the last seven months. We even discarded a full sequence very late in the process.

The final phase happened in India, where I edited the sequence and wrote the text in dialogue with Nicholas. That context—intense, porous, full of sensory input—fed directly into the structure of the book. Nicholas managed to capture something very precise about my rhythm and state of mind at that time. Sound, rhythm, and fragmentation became central.

The book doesn't move linearly—it loops, glitches, contradicts itself. I wanted it to function less as a narrative and more as an environment—or perhaps a labyrinth.



**K.Z.:** As if the Nitja exhibition weren't enough, you are also preparing for your first solo show at Andréhn-Schiptjenko, where you previously participated in the group exhibition *Feel First, Think Later*. The show will run parallel to the one at Nitja and shares the same title—what can we expect from it, and how will it differ?

**D.D.:** The exhibition at A-S shares the same title, but it's not a repetition—it's a parallel version. If Nitja is expansive and immersive, Stockholm is more distilled. A different selection of works—and this time, the images remain still on the walls. Or do they?

It's a shift in scale and tempo. The same questions remain, but they may come across more directly—perhaps even more confrontationally. The work needs to move. Each context reconfigures it. In that sense, it's never fixed—just like myself.

**K.Z.:** In just a few years, you've already accomplished so much. What remains on your bucket list that you'd like to share?

**D.D.:** I try to be careful with the idea of a “bucket list,” as it can easily become about accumulation: more shows, bigger institutions.

What interests me more is depth—to build projects that can hold complexity without simplifying it. That said, I'm increasingly drawn to working across contexts, as I mentioned earlier—both geographically and materially. Moving further into film, sound, and large-scale spatial or public work feels important.

And collaboration. The work sharpens in dialogue. But since you probably want something concrete: I would like to spend a longer working period in India—producing, showing, and activating the project there through conversations and exchanges. Perhaps in collaboration with Khoj in Delhi, or maybe an exhibition at Tarq in Mumbai.

But then I wonder—if a bucket list has the same thing on it more than once, what does that say about it? Maybe it's not really a list at all, but something that keeps returning until it's fully lived.

**Koshik Zaman is a writer and independent curator based in Stockholm, Sweden.**

For more info, please visit: [devdhunsi.com](http://devdhunsi.com)

Dev Dhunsi – *Unmistakably You* runs until April 26, 2026, at [Nitja senter for samtidskunst](#), Lillestrøm, Norway:  
<https://vimeo.com/1178200999>

Dev Dhunsi – *Unmistakably You* opens on April 9 and runs until May 16, 2026, [Andrehn-Schipjtenko](#), Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Mixed* was published (2026) on [SPBH Editions/MACK Books](#) and is available [through their website](#).  
All images courtesy of the artist.

1, 3-5, 10. Dev Dhunsi, *Unmistakably You*, 2026, solo exhibition at Nitja senter for samtidskunst. Photo: Artdok / Tor Simen Ulstein

2. Portrait of Dev Dhunsi, artist's own

6-9. Visual spreads from *Mixed* (2026) published on SPBH Editions/MACK Books.

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