

# Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS



DEV DHUNSI

Born 1996, Trondheim, Norway.

Lives and works between Oslo (Norway) and Punjab (India).

## DEV DHUNSI

Working at the intersection of photography, textile, installation and critical myth-making, Dev Dhunsi's practice expands the photographic image into sculptural, sonic and ecological space.

Dhunsi combines photographic and textile techniques to investigate how histories are carried, obscured and reconfigured through material, memory and vision. Images are stretched across fabric, submerged in water or set into motion, transforming photography from a static document into an embodied, multisensory experience. Drawing on personal archives, ancestral narratives and diasporic dislocations shaped by his upbringing between Trondheim and Punjab, his work creates space for overlooked or silenced stories, resisting linear time and singular authorship.

Blending myth, documentary traces and speculative gestures, Dhunsi's installations foreground identity as porous and relational, shaped by cultural, political and historical forces. His work frequently engages queer South Asian mythologies alongside blurred landscapes that interrogate colonial frameworks of land, belonging and visibility.

Dev Dhunsi (b. 1996) is a Norwegian-Indian artist living and working between Oslo and Punjab. He holds an MFA from the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (2024) and a BFA from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include *Unmistakably You* at Nitja Senter for Samtidskunst, Lillestrøm (2026), presented in conjunction with the release of his publication *Mixed* (SPBH Editions / Mack Books); as well as *Encircling Stories* at the Centre for Photography, Stockholm (2024), following its initial presentation at MELK, Oslo. His work has also been shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb during Organ Vida 13th Festival and FUTURES Photography. Dhunsi is a recipient of the Nordic Photobook Award 2024 and was selected for the FUTURES Photography platform in 2023.

### Education

- 2022-24** MFA, The Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2019-22** BFA, Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Oslo, Norway.
- 2018-19** Prosjektskolen Art School, Oslo, Norway.
- 2016-18** Norwegian School of Photography, Trondheim, Norway.

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2026** *Unmistakably You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Unmistakably You*, Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Lillestrøm, Norway.
- 2024** *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Stream of;*, Hvitsten Salong, Hvitsten, Norway.  
*Tales They Don't Tell You*, Galleri Mejan, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2023** *Encircling Stories*, MELK, Oslo, Norway.
- 2021** *MaskinTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway.
- 2020** *Nawanzamania Phases*, P Zero Project Halle, KHIO, Oslo, Norway.
- 2019** Nordic Light International Photography Festival, Norway.

### Recent Group Exhibitions

- 2025** *Water Never Sleeps*, Slátturhúsið Art Center, Egilsstaðir, Iceland.  
Bienal'25 Fotografia do Porto, Porto, Portugal.  
*FEEL FIRST, THINK LATER*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2024** *Open up your eyes*, Høyersten Contemporary, Bergen, Norway.  
*Ties That Bind*, Organ Vida International Photography Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia.  
*Østlandsutstillingen 2024*, Kunstbanken senter for samtidskunst, Hamar & Vestfold Kunstsenter, Tønsberg, Norway.
- 2023** *Vårutstillingen*, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway.  
*Mejan Internationale: Home to Home*, Mint, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Indoctrination: Multivalent Gestures*, curated by Dahir Hussein, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway.

### Publications

- 2026** *Mixed*, published by Mack Books / SPBH-Editions.
- 2023** *Encircling Stories*, published by Heavy Books.
- 2019** *Rakavan*, published by Heavy Books.

***Unmistakably You***  
**Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art**  
**Lillestrøm, Norway, 2026**

Emerging from the photobook *Mixed*, this exhibition unfolds as a spatial fable on language, belonging, and mixed as an artistic method, expanding its concerns into space. If the book built a mythical world across pages, *Unmistakably You* opens that world physically, as a labyrinth of jacquard-woven textiles, bamboo modules, and large-scale photographs.

At its core lies the same question: what happens when language fails to name lived experience? In Norway, there is no word that fully translates “mixed” without reproducing ideas of race. Dhunsi takes this linguistic absence as a starting point, approaching identity not as a fixed category, but as a shifting, porous process: something that slips, reforms, and resists clean definition.

The exhibition uses mixing not only as theme, but as method. Documentary and myth, archive and allegory, body and structure intertwine. Photographic images are woven into textile surfaces; narratives appear in fragments; pathways fold back on themselves.

When entering *Unmistakably You*, visitors will move through a spatial fable where orientation is gently unsettled and the act of looking becomes embodied. Where the photobook *Mixed* proposes an experimental, mythical space for new forms of life, *Unmistakably You* invite audiences to step inside it. The room becomes a rehearsal for complexity, where Identity is not something we possess, but something we perform, something that vibrates between materials, memories, and movement.



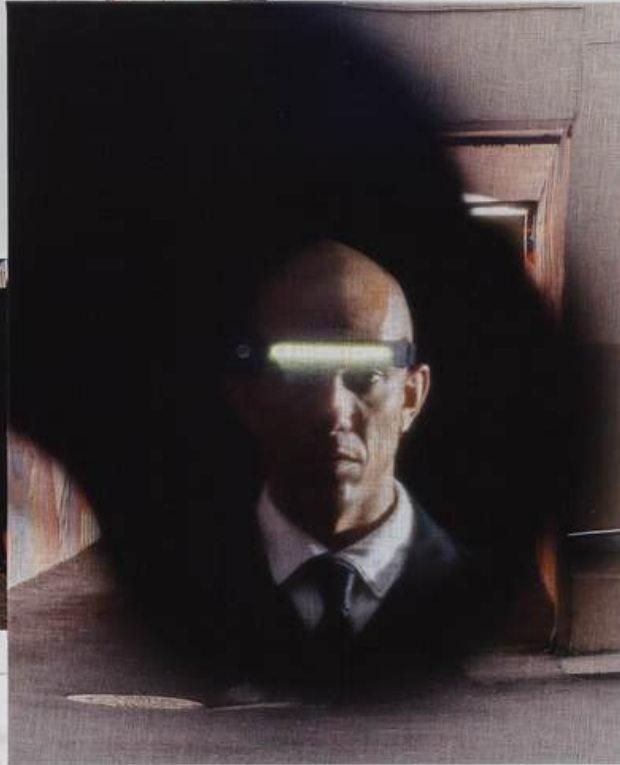
**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *Unmistakably You*, Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Lillestrøm, Norway, 2026



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**FEEL FIRST, THINK LATER**

**Andréhn-Schiptjenko**

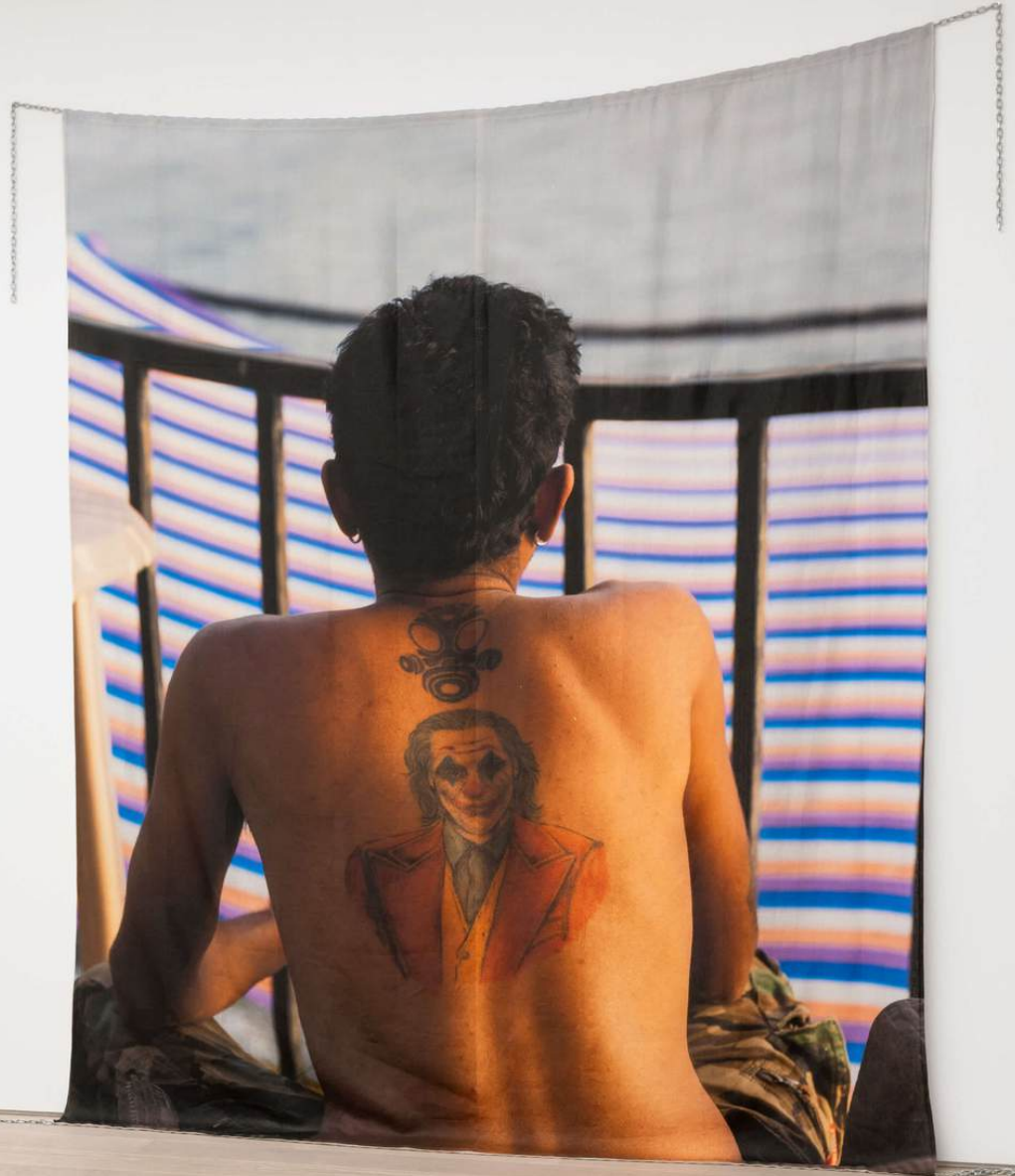
**Stockholm, Sweden 2025**

A body at rest, yet in motion. *Ocean Smile*—a 254 x 330 cm linen print—originates from a journey that began far from the shoreline it depicts. The image captures a lone figure sitting at the edge of the vast ocean, a tattoo of The Joker inked across his back, caught between stillness and the expanse before him. The work traces its origins to a 47-hour train ride from Ludhiana in Punjab to Goa in the south, cutting across shifting landscapes, histories of labor, and cycles of migration. The train—a moving threshold—becomes a site where land, possession, and displacement blur into motion, where the relationship between people and place is never the same twice.

As in *Encircling Stories* (2023), Dhunsi's practice resists the static nature of photography. The landscapes witnessed from the train—fields of Punjab's agricultural heartland, industrial zones, arid stretches of central India—reflect the tensions between rootedness and erasure. Agriculture in Punjab remains under threat, its lands continuously reshaped by monoculture and dispossession. Meanwhile, the ocean, upon arrival, presents another kind of uncertainty—an expanse without fixed boundaries, both inviting and unknowable. The figure in *Ocean Smile* sits at this threshold, back turned, looking towards something that cannot be grasped.

The Joker's grin, etched into the subject's skin, introduces an unsettling duality. It is a mask of defiance, perhaps, or of surrender—a reminder that identity itself is layered, performed, and often at odds with its surroundings. Printed onto linen, the image resists the rigid authority of the photographic frame, allowing the material to shift, fold, and breathe. Like the train moving south, like the tide pulling away, like the histories carried in transit, *Ocean Smile* exists in a space between permanence and dissolution.

Dhunsi's work continues to explore photography's role in shaping and controlling vision. To capture a landscape is, in some ways, to claim it, to define its boundaries. But here, vision remains open-ended. *Ocean Smile* is not an act of possession but of witnessing—of standing at the edge, between land and water, between past and future, between movement and pause.



**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *FEEL FIRST, THINK LATER*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden, 2025

## ***Encircling Stories***

**Centrum För Fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024**

**MELK, Oslo, Norway, 2023**

Dev Dhunsi is a Norwegian artist based in Stockholm, Sweden. In recent years, his works have revolved around journeys to his father's native country, India. His projects, developed in large installations, combine textiles, lens-based works, and experimental printing techniques into mixed media presentations. The images themselves speak to sociopolitical and anthropological questions that exist beyond the picture's frame. Dhunsi's works examine identity, origin, and encounters between cultures, exploring the cultural bridge between his ancestries and upbringing in the physical landscapes of Scandinavia and the techno- and mediascapes of Asia.

Dev Dhunsi's images are usually surrounded by or immersed in water and sound. One can rarely grasp singular photographic images as he searches more complex narrations, filtering the camera's impossibility to catch reality within the frame of the given device fully. One needs to look beyond, outside the picture, to come to terms with its realization. Therefore, the images are spinning, they split, they move, they are unreadable and part of larger installations, assuaging referential feelings.

In *Encircling Stories*, these images, taken in movement over seven years of returning from Punjab to Goa, cutting across several regions of India over several days of train rides, something else emerges, as the relation of peasants to their land differs every time, provoking further deferral. Such relation is indirect and unsearched, equally revealing the complexity of a region where agriculture has been under threat to monoculture and dispossession yet again in recent times. Dhunsi's originating search addressed instead something more grand and exotic, the longest factory in the world, which was the primary purpose of the ride, with complex unconscious references in terms of desire and constructed dependency over centuries of culturally determined impositions from design history but also familiar relations from his paternal legacy and what he could bring with him from Asia to Scandinavia decades prior.

For this exhibition, Dhunsi's images standing still are unusual. The machinic system he usually creates to make them unreadable has disappeared. Their freezing into a frame should make us feel more stable, but something remains floating without such a spinning view. Floating, free falling, is considered dangerous in our times. We are taught we need navigation to know where we are going. We need a function. We need to function within the machinic system we have been given.

Through this exhibition, Dhunsi explores how a site turns into sight, pointing to photography's intrinsic historical function of land grabbing. He speaks about images not only capturing a landscape —as if abstract— momentarily but also serving domination power. The camera grabs the image of a territory, restricts its access, and defines its ownership. Although it seems we are given access through the field of vision to open landscape or the cultural landscape —even nature— we are recirculated as the viewer witnessing and therefore enabling knowledge of sight of the dispossessed. We are non-agential witnesses yet reproducing dispossession.

What may sound like a self-referential and philosophical perspectivization of an artistic practice —going from images that are moving to still images— in reality, is something more tangible. Dhunsi's images from the carriages in motion over the Indian territory —a nation-state like many others determining rights over land, capital, possessions, and jurisdictions—returning to the same carriages and the same landscape periodically capture at a glance the continuous dispossession of peasants from their land through the ongoing capitalization of these grounds and the consequent displacement of its people. When land is taken away from people, they remain floating without a future.

Dhunsi would usually have left his images “laundering” and potentially be consumed by this free fall to the point of cancellation because of mechanical self-destruction.

Dhunsi’s core images of a textile factory producing bed sheets of which, on other occasions, we have heard sound, haunts us. Its sound, now turning into vision, haunts our dreams and our possibility to rest, another form of free-floating into yet another state of induced imbalance, sleeplessness. The unconscious, Modernity’s introjection of the world, is a dream state where humans think through their inner unknown, sitting on their inside instead of collectively forming cognizant forms of dwelling. Accordingly, the world implodes inside a body on a free fall, an internal chaos, the unconscious, which is also constituted by images. If we all float, though, we have the potential of losing the determinism of Western perspectivism, what continues to keep us in place. It means we have the possibility of entering a new world era, no matter how disruptive that may seem. Or we already have. We are driven by chaos, and we are part of a chaotic revolution.

There is a calming quality to this free fall of being on the verge because, instead of image production, we are losing control of visibility. Through Dhunsi’s work, there is no search for an original vision but for origination. We are embedded into a whole other interface of reality, identity, and representation, whose aim is yet to be enclosed in a single definition.

Text by Antonio Cataldo



Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024



**Dev Dhunsi**  
Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024

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Dev Dhunsi

Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024



Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024



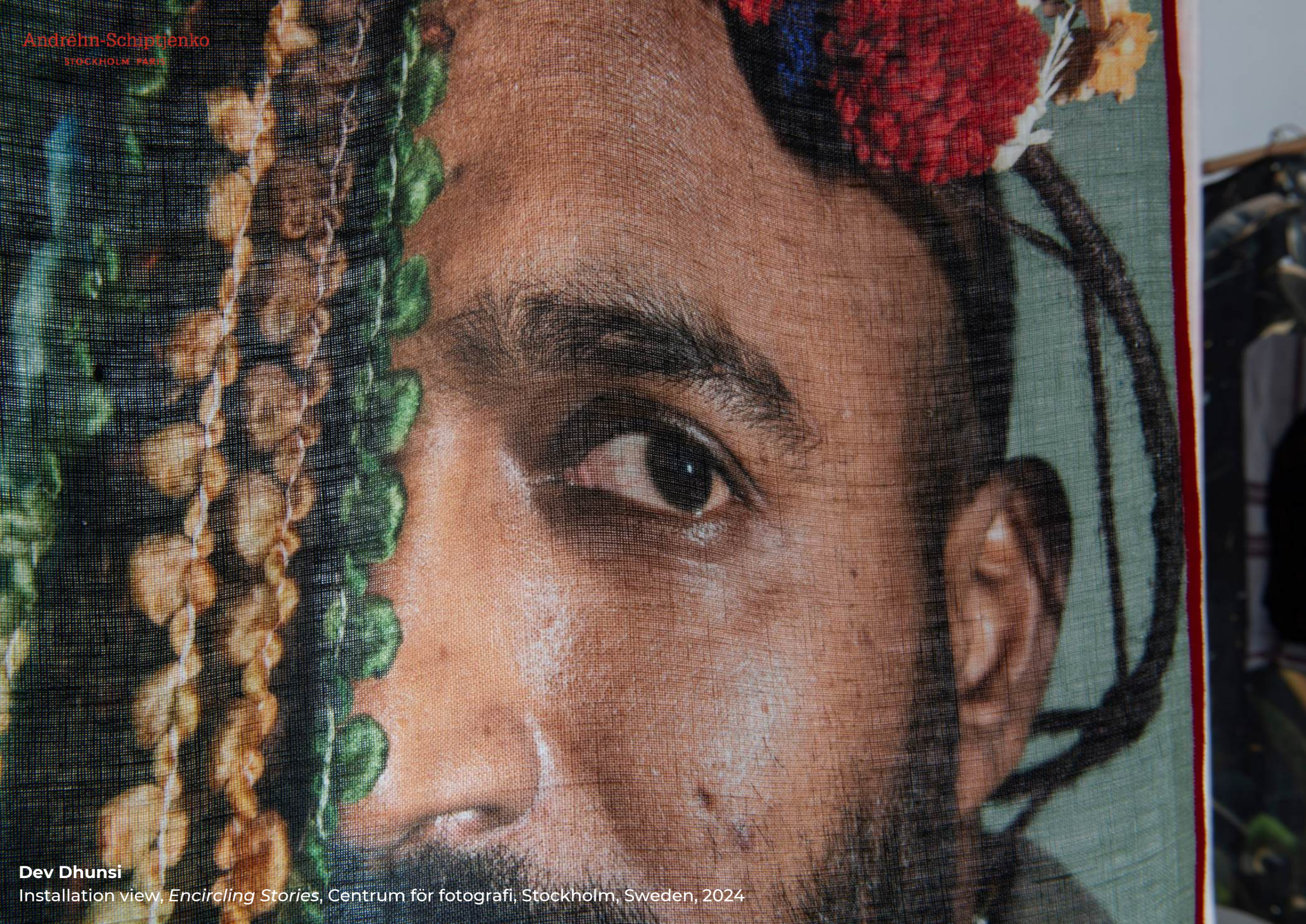
**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024



**Dev Dhunsi**  
Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024

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Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024



## ***Tales They Don't Tell You***

In the Vedic scripture Shatapatha Brahmana, written between the 6th and 8th centuries BCE, we encounter scientific knowledge of geometry, observational astronomy, and many tales, where time is told in a cyclical, nonlinear way. The book recounts how the sweat dripping down the god Shiva's head is the water of Ganges River, where the ashes of generations of deceased people travel along the currents like a miniature collection of the past. I depart from a lens-based practice to explore remains of untold ancient tales, including gay love.

The two male water gods Varuna and Mitra represent the two stages of the moon, waxing and waning. Mitra controls the ocean depths while Varuna rules over the ocean's upper regions and the tides. The two gods meet on new moon nights and Mitra is described to "implant his seed" in Varuna in order to secure the moon's waning.

A close friend of mine went missing a few years ago. During a fourteen-day search for him I longed for our companionship. World geographies interconnect unexpectedly, as water is strongly symbolic for my hometown, Trondheim, where the river divides the two sides of the city, separating its people. The river has also taken many lives, those of drug users and migrant first, but also, mysteriously, youth.

Working with cameras I focus on what is outside the picture frame or on other-than-human beings, such as minerals, spirits, textiles, and ancestors. I try to create site- and time-specific works that can be experienced through multisensory channels. By giving visibility to images that morph, decay, and evolve, my ecosystems highlight the intimate yet expansive coexistences among diverse beings, acknowledging our shared and continuous participation in the processes of living, dying, and decomposing.



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Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *Ties That Bind*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia, 2024

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Installation view, *Ties That Bind*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia, 2024

Dev Dhunsi



**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *Ties That Bind*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia, 2024







**Dev Dhunsi**  
Installation view, MFA solo exhibition at Galleri Mejan, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024

Andréhn-Schiptjenko

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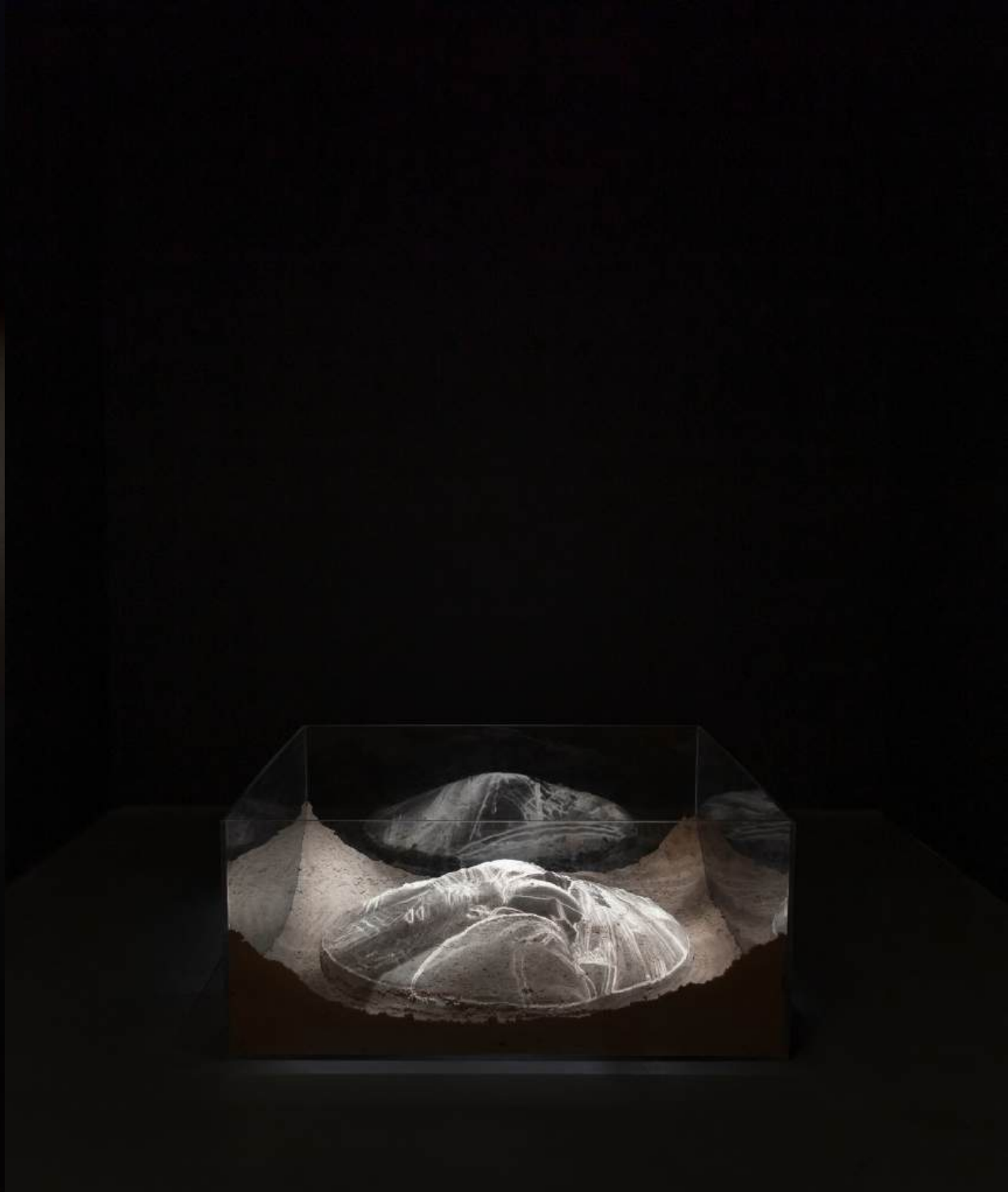


Dev Dhunsi

Installation view, MFA solo exhibition at Galleri Mejan, Stockholm, Sweden, 2024

**Vårutställningen**  
**Fotogalleriet**  
**Oslo, Norway, 2023**

The photo-installation *Ankhon Dekhi* (2022) deals with making the invisible visible, turning the invisible into material evidence. While visiting his relatives in India, Dhunsi was offered to see the world's longest factory building. When his father moved from his home country, he brought with him three carpets made by his mother, symbolically maintaining a cultural connection and an idea of home for his entire life. A textile factory located in the same village where he grew up complicates the encapsulation of the stories. The electricity can go down suddenly on the streets of these towns, yet machines continue to fix vehicles, and the sound is all that remains. As infrastructure always conditions our bodies, *Ankhon Dekhi* also speaks about body liquids one cannot discharge, the reality and representation of the factory and its work (how it is presented to the outside world and the public, as well as the reality of its interior): prolonged exposure to light and different forms of cleansing, dripping, moving, marking, and the worker's bodies being affected by light, water, and other pressure until obsolescence, in the same way a textile is exposed to. *Ankhon Dekhi* consists of images arising, composing, and decomposing themselves into a liquid substance that is always on the verge of renewal or disappearance.



**Dev Dhunsi**  
Installation view, *Vårutstillningen*, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway, 2023



Dev Dhunsi

Installation view, *Indoctrination: Multivalent Gestures*, curated by Dahir Hussein, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway, 2023



**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *Indoctrination: Multivalent Gestures*, curated by Dahir Hussein, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway, 2023



***Ringen bortom mattan, curated by C-print***  
**Konsthall 16, The Sports Museum**  
**Stockholm, Sweden, 2022**

Excerpt from interview in [Daily-Lazy](#).

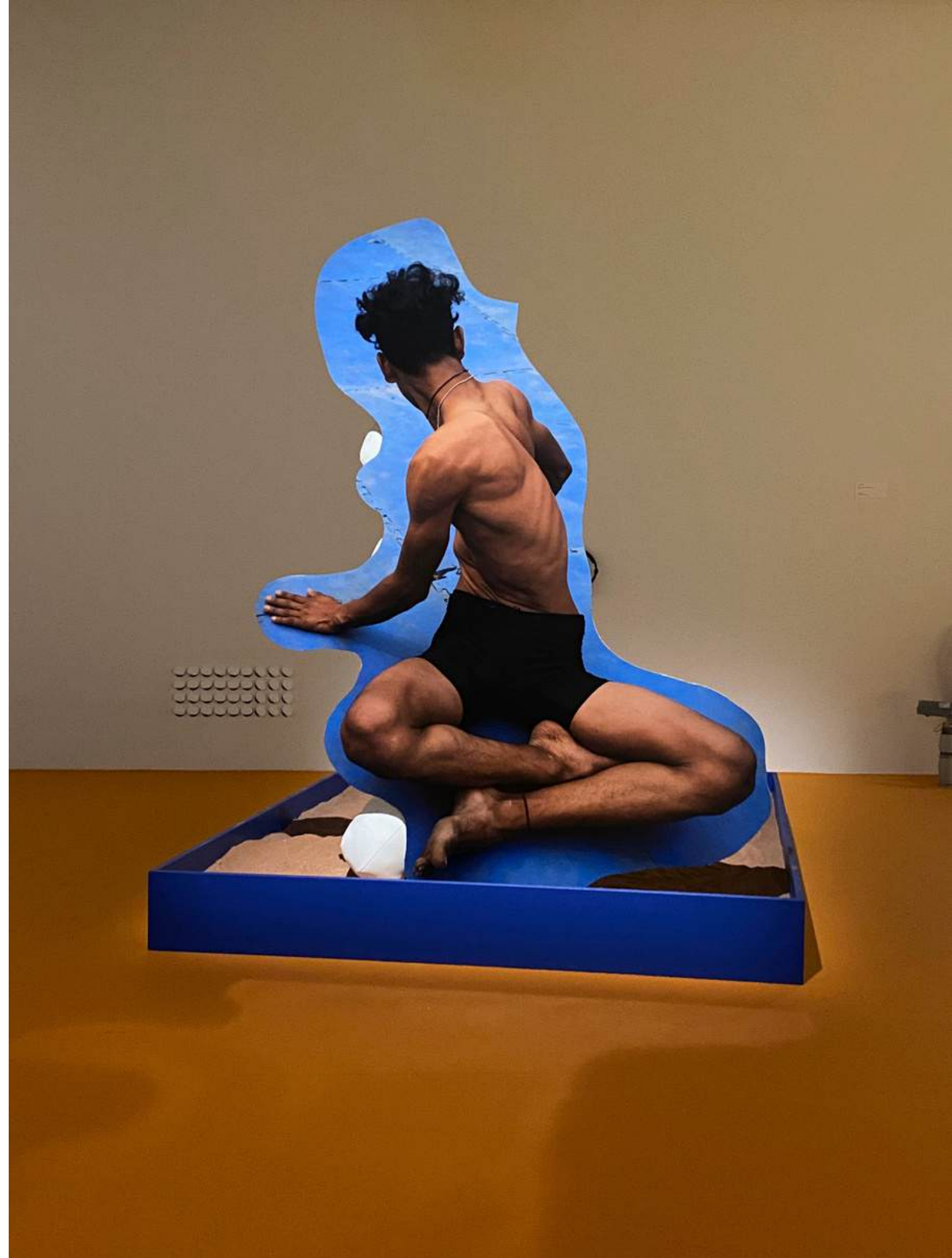
**What can be said about the theme and form of your work *Akhada temporarily closed due to fog (2022)* in the exhibition?**

**Dev Dhunsi:** The theme of the work is directly connected to Kabaddi and the “akhada” which is the name of the arena where most of the practices and performances take place within the sport. It is treated like a temple where you are not allowed to bring in tobacco or other substances and indeed have to follow certain rules. Since it’s a team wrestling sport and based on the connectivity and movement within chaos and order, I felt the desire to translate this “holy playground for wrestling”-sphere to the exhibition, without only bringing direct documentation from my on-site research.

In simple terms, the installation is a sandbox containing elements from an akhada. The sand is red just like a classic akhada, and it can also resemble the north indian sunsets glaring red light because of fog or pollution, often called smog. Four glasses of milk resembling how the wrestlers drink milk directly from the cow kept near the akhada. Speed boxing bags chained together as one big bunch of grapes. With lastly the projection on shaped sand and its soundscape. The film (Temporarily, HD-video 40:00 min) is a birds-eye view of the movements of 8 dancers following and breaking the rules of Kabaddi. One of the rules for instance is when an attacker from the one team tries to touch or tackle the opponent team, they have to hold their breath. For referees to keep track they are forced to repeat the word kabaddi. Creating visual evidence of how the breath is slowly burning out, sometimes one can hear their next moves by the tonalities and rhythm combined with their bodily movements.







**Dev Dhunsi**

Installation view, *Ringen bortom mattan*, curated by C-print,  
Konsthall 16, The Sports Museum, Stockholm, Sweden, 2022

***MaskiniTaal***

**Fotografiens Hus**

**Oslo, Norway, 2021**

*When I grew up in Norway my family weekly received a local broadsheet from India. I remember picking it up from the mailbox, smelling the ink taking its place in the room, and after it was read, watching it burn in the fireplace. Without being able to read the written language I studied and created my own stories around the images. Today I look back and reconnect with the newspaper using it as reference and source of inspiration while revitalising my own photographic archive and at the same time creating new expressions. Together it has become MaskiniTaal, a new word combined with Machine (in Norwegian) and Taal, that means rhythm, or a beat, in Indian classical music*



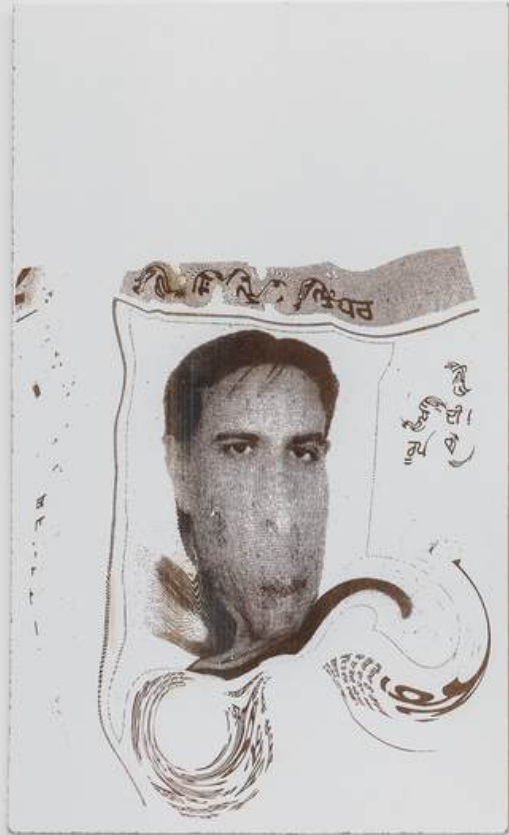


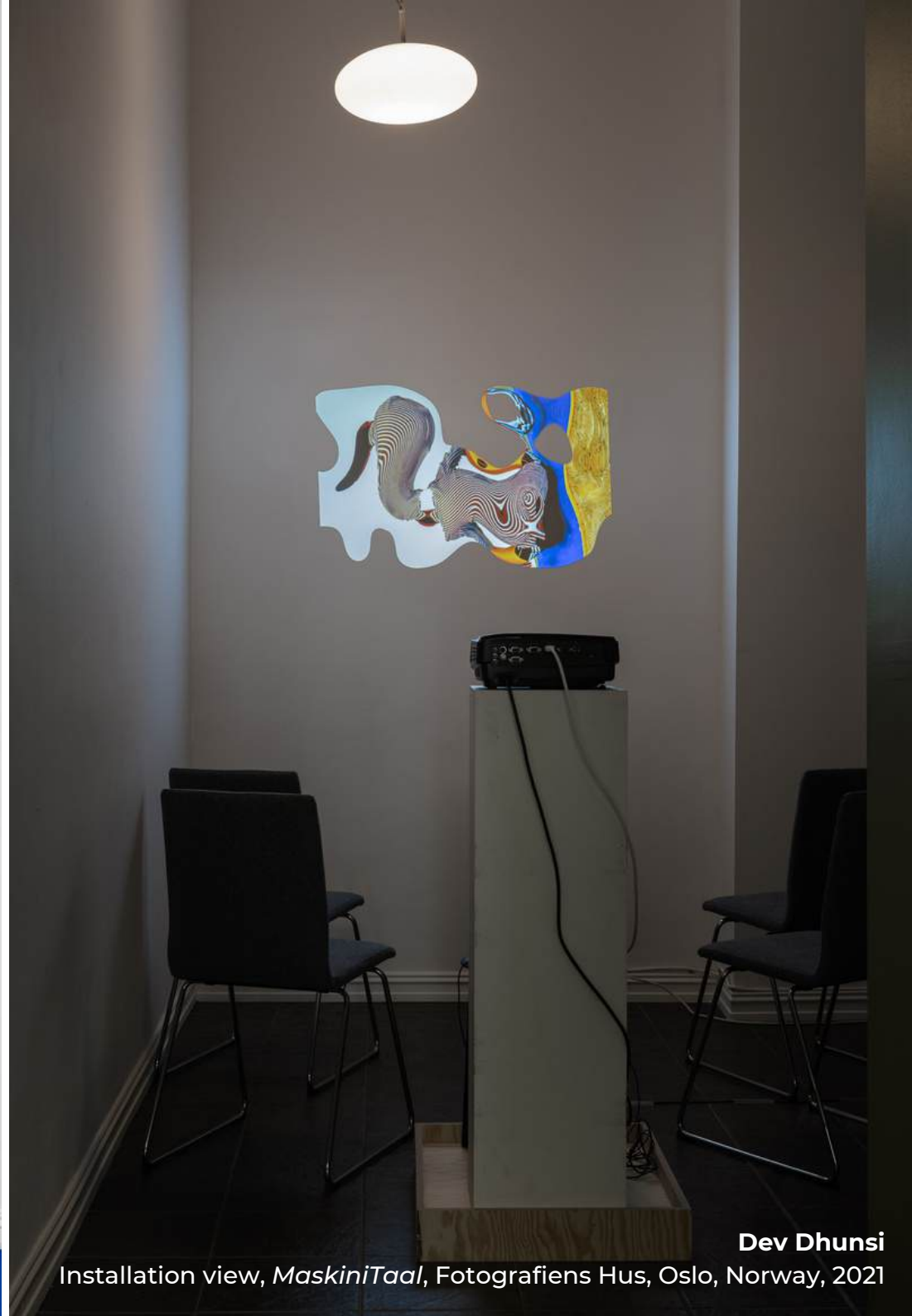
Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *MaskiniTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway, 2021



Dev Dhunsi  
Installation view, *MaskiniTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway, 2021







Installation view, *MaskiniTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway, 2021

Dev Dhunsi



**Dev Dhunsi**  
Installation view, *MaskiniTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway, 2021

Andréhn-Schiptjenko  
STOCKHOLM PARIS



**DEV DHUNSI  
PRESS**

# DAZED

Art & Photography / Lightbox

## **This photo book challenges how we think about 'mixed' identity**

**In a time increasingly concerned with definitive categories, Norwegian-Indian artist Dev Dhunsi delves into the concept of 'mixedness'**



MARCH 19, 2026  
Text Zara Afthab

The concept of fluidity underscores several aspects of the artist and photographer Dev Dhunsi's new photo book, *Mixed*. Published by MACK and Self Publish Be Happy (SPBH), the book is a meditation on what identity could look like when language fails it, materialising as a kaleidoscopic project in colour, photographic genre, and thematic scope. From one page to the next, one can expect to flit from myth to documentary, from archive to text that mimics a screenplay. In one image, a model covered in jewellery poses against a tangerine-hued backdrop; in another, a self-portrait of the artist as the Hindu goddess Kali and a few pages later, a tonally inverted photograph of a bookshelf. "The term mixed isn't just fixed to this idea of racial identity. I wanted to use this concept of 'mixedness' as a method," Dhunsi explains in a conversation over Zoom. "There are all sorts of genres of photography within the book, which might make a critic confused. It has lots of text. It's not just documentary or portraiture photography; it includes archival elements. I wanted the premise of 'mixed' to go beyond the book's thematic aspects."

The book was conceived as a result of the Nordic Photobook Award, which the photographer saw as a means to create something he couldn't fulfil on his own. "I sat down and imagined what I would do with the opportunity, and instead of applying with an established body of work or my portfolio, I proposed a project just with text," Dhunsi explains. "It didn't make sense for me to apply to the award with something that already has a life. I wanted this book to feel completely new."



In the initial stages of the project, Dhunsi was curious to examine his own family and roots in Scandinavia. "My family moved to Norway in the 80s and 90s, which was a significant period of migration into Norway. My cousins are from Algeria, from Morocco, from Argentina. My own heritage is in India, and I guess we are now groups that are supposedly going to have nationalist feelings towards Norway, but struggle with it. I wanted to explore that tension of being from different places." The text he was working with at the time was titled *Fatherland*, a homage to his father's Indian heritage. "I initially wanted to travel to all the countries my family are from with them and work with the geographical differences between those places," Dhunsi explains. "I hoped that I would learn more about them outside the context of Norway through that experience, but the project ended up being way too ambitious."

To fulfil the thematic ambitions of *Mixed*, which are primarily concerned with ideas of identity and visibility in an era obsessed with definitive categories and purity, Dhunsi had to give up some level of artistic control as a photographer, intentionally lean into the lack of direction and allow the images in the book to be visually influenced by the conversations he had with his subjects instead. "It opened up the way I was able to work with people and create images. By talking to me about their own cultural heritage and how they felt like representing themselves, I was able to open up my own references and expand the kind of images I was making," he says, noting how this process allowed him to access spaces and moments he wouldn't have been able to otherwise. "Our hybrid identities function similarly to being queer in how they teach us to adapt to different rooms and spaces. You can cross a lot of borders and access moments that are unique and exciting. I think that sense of excitement really comes through in the book."

In the book, Dhunsi's staged and documentary photographs of his subjects and the physical world around them sit alongside material from The State Institute for Racial Biology in Sweden, which shuttered in 1959 and housed documents and photographic material relating to racial biology and eugenics. "I wanted to include this archival material as a backstory for

the project, but I also wanted to emphasise that this racial archive is totally different to my way of working. They were violently capturing their subjects, stripping them naked, and measuring them. They didn't include any names to identify any of the people in the archive, which is why it was so important for me to truthfully represent everyone in *Mixed* and include a thank you page where all their names are listed.”



Dhunsi's photo book is accompanied by a show at the Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art in Norway titled *Unmistakably You*, which extends the book's themes into the material world. "I decided none of my photos would touch or hang freely on the wall. I didn't want to neutralise these portraits or treat them as objects, as something one can theoretically buy and bring home. Instead, I printed one selection of photographs on textiles and stretched them out on canvas stretchers, and another series of works is on tapestry. The archive images on display are embedded into the wall so it looks like someone has ripped up the wall to expose the images," Dhunsi tells Dazed. For him, the physical space becomes another site of inquiry – much like the photo book itself – one that resists the urge to neutralise, label or neatly contain, an examination through medium and method of how limiting traditional modes of presenting and categorising photographs are.

*Mixed* (SPBH Editions, 2026) by Dev Dhunsi is published by MACK. *Unmistakably You* is now open at Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Norway, until 26 April 2026.

Published 2026-03-19

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/69941/1/dev-dhunsi-mixed-mack-spbh-artist-norwegian-indian-photo-book-exhibition-nordic>



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.

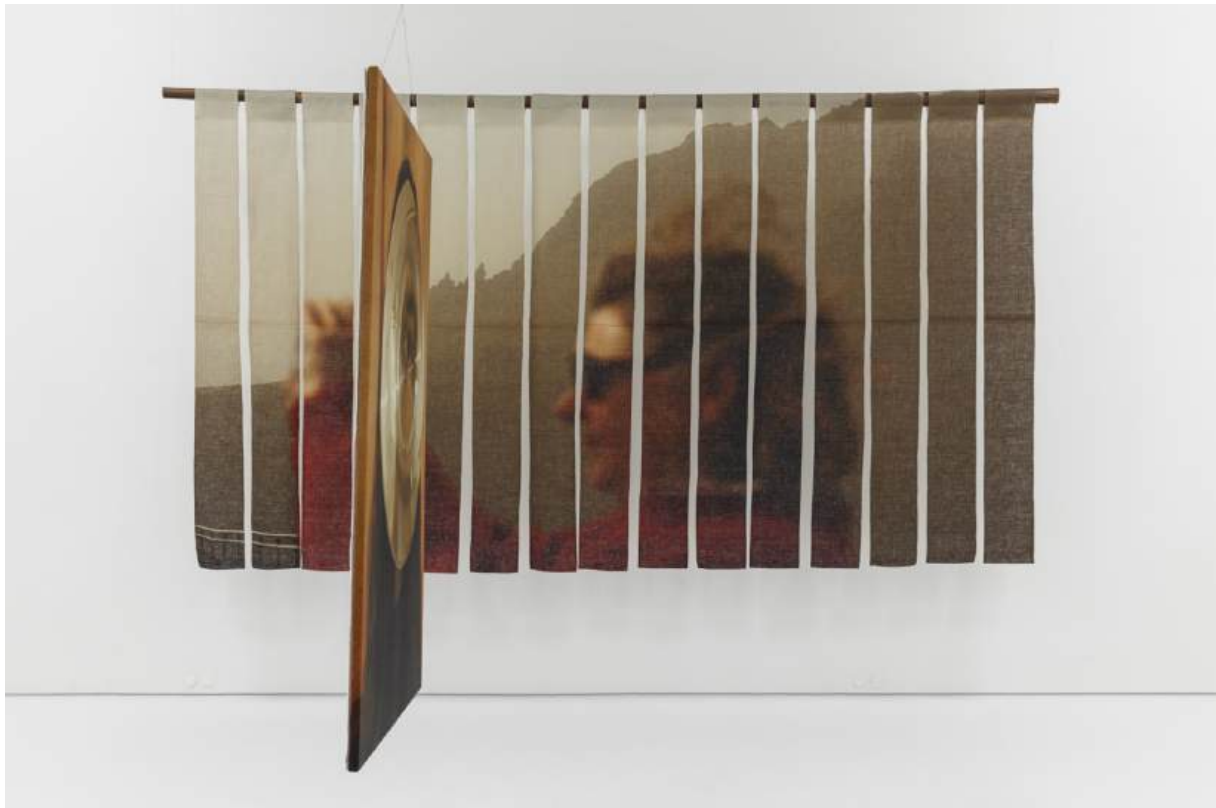
**K.Z.:** After completing your BFA in Oslo, you enrolled in the MFA program at the Royal Institute of Art here in Stockholm. How did you experience your time at the school?

**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.



**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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<https://daily-lazy.com/2026/04/unmistakably-you-dev-dhunsi.html>

## Columns &amp; Commentary

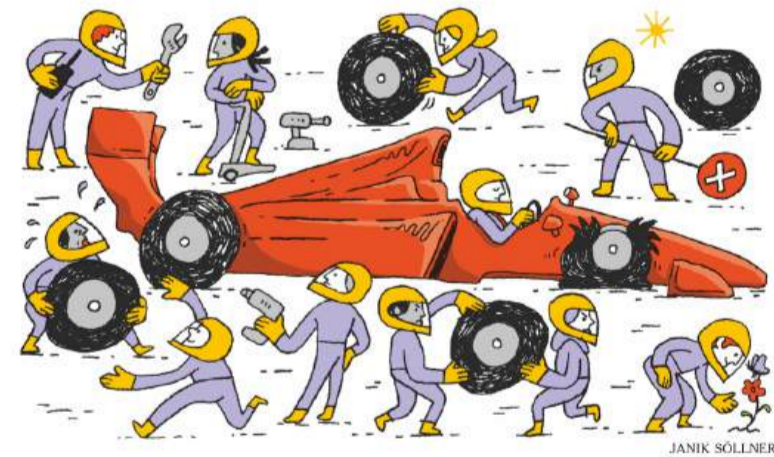
**In Development:** New works at the intersection of art, news and life.



FROM "MIXED" BY DEV DHUNSI, VIA SPBH EDITIONS AND MACK

Norway lacks a neutral term for mixed race, and when the artist Dev Dhunsi was growing up, he says, his Indian Norwegian heritage often confounded people. In his book "Mixed," Mr. Dhunsi uses photographs and family belongings to question how identity is constructed. In the image here, he added flags representing his diverse lineage to a traditional Norwegian ring cake. "You're constantly being read," he says, with "people trying to analyze who you are."

**Footnotes:** Off to the Races



JANIK SÖLLNER

Last month at the Japanese Grand Prix, the Formula 1 driver Oliver Bearman had to swerve his car and crash it off-track to avoid hitting another driver. This accident prompted calls for FIA, Formula 1's governing body, to reassess its safety regulations. Those vehicles racing at 200 miles per hour are custom-built to F1 specifications, and they can cost over \$100 million. The fan base is growing: F1's total audience is now 1.8 billion, according to Nielsen Sports, and the league is increasingly popular among women and younger people. Here are some things to read, watch and listen to about Formula 1.

**LISTEN**  
**'TG1F: An F1 Podcast'**

The hosts of this podcast series explore the intersection of pop culture and F1, discussing topics like Keanu Reeves's work on a new documentary about Cadillac's F1 entry, the "F1" feature film at the Oscars and the F1 driver Lewis Hamilton's appearance at the Met Gala.

**LISTEN**  
**'Formula 1'**

A 2026 episode of the podcast "Acquired" tracks how the British business mogul Bernie Ecclestone, in his 40-year reign at Formula 1, turned the sport from a niche, struggling enterprise into the global business he sold to Liberty Media in 2017 for \$8 billion.

**WATCH**  
**'Formula 1: Drive to Survive'**

This Netflix docuseries has introduced F1 to new American fans who have flocked to the show for its drama and big personalities. The latest season covers the firing of a manager of Red Bull's team and rookie drivers aspiring to win their first races.

**READ**  
**'The Formula'**

Once largely a European spectacle, F1 now includes teams from American car-makers and leagues of U.S. fans. In this 2024 book, the authors Joshua Robinson and Jonathan Clegg track how the league went global and has, as they write, "begun to resemble a post-sport sport."

ROSS DOUTHAT

## Trump Needs Smarter Sycophants

Kristi Noem is gone. Pam Bondi is out. If there's going to be a fall guy for our ill-starred regime-change operation in Iran, it's likely to be Pete Hegseth, whose prewar overconfidence is being highlighted in hostile leaks from inside the administration, emphasizing how he was "caught off guard" (never a good look!) by the scale and boldness of the Iranian response.

The former secretary of homeland security, the jettisoned attorney general and the embattled secretary of defense have often seemed like President Trump's ideal cabinet officials: selected for television looks and energy, lacking any political constituency apart from Trump himself, serving without qualm as pure conduits of his will. So their struggles offer a lesson for Republicans contemplating service in this administration's 33 (but who's counting?) remaining months: What Trump appears to want and what he actually wants are not exactly the same thing.

The seeming desire of the president is for loyalty, sycophancy and TV-ready swagger. He wants to turn on Fox News and see his top officials performing like reality-show characters in the drama of his administration. He wants to sit in a cabinet meeting and listen to a litany of his accomplishments. He wants the decisions made in the West Wing or at Mar-a-Lago to be simply rubber-stamped in his departmental fiefs.

He wants all that, but at the same time he also wants victory rather than defeat, and he definitely doesn't want embarrassment. His metrics for success are unusual by normal presidential standards: He has a high tolerance for unpopularity, to put it mildly, and a remarkable shamelessness around

### Loyalty means nothing to this president if there's blame to be handed out.

corruption. But there is a point at which, even inside his cocoon, Trump senses that things aren't going well for him. And then sycophancy doesn't work, and it doesn't matter if you were acting on his orders; you will be punished for that unsuccessful service just as surely as if you'd tried to thwart his aims.

That's the position Noem found herself in after the immigration enforcement debacle in Minneapolis. The fact that the sweeping crackdown in Tim Walz's state and Ilhan Omar's city was almost certainly what the president wanted earned the former South Dakota governor no political protection after it all went wrong.

It's also the position Bondi found herself in after doing the president's bidding with the Epstein files and various politicized prosecutions. The unpopularity of the former and the courtroom losses of the latter transformed her from sycophant to scapegoat, even though at every step she was expressing Trump's own wishes.

Likewise, when Hegseth reportedly told the president "let's do it" in the run-up to the war, he was merely being an enthusiastic yes man for a bellicose boss. But there's no reward for being a loyalist if Trump's grand plans don't actually work out: In that case, you own the failure, not him.

Contrast this pattern with that of the cabinet officials whose jobs seem reasonably safe, like Scott Bessent and Marco Rubio. They, too, go along with the president in public without complaint or cavil. But then they find ways to manage his preferences, whether in trade policy or Russia-Ukraine diplomacy, such that the results are Trumpy enough to satisfy the boss but aren't a blind expression of his whims. The fact that they have political capital while the pure sycophants flail implies that Trump's revealed preference is for a version of that balance, not the more slavish alternative.

What might a more successful balancing act have looked like for an attorney general, defense secretary or homeland security chief? For all the talk about how Bondi tried to do everything Trump asked, it might be that she didn't need to prosecute a string of the boss's perceived enemies to stay in his good graces; she just needed a clear lawfare victory *somewhere*.

Likewise, Hegseth, if he had the sense God gave a goose, could have tried to steer Trump to a purely military campaign against Iran — bombs and missiles without the strikes that targeted its leaders — satisfying the president's hawkish impulse without putting the Iranian regime's back against the wall.

As for Noem, well, maybe her own self-dealing and limelight thirst would have doomed her anyway, but in a timeline where the Minneapolis operation was condensed to a few theatrical raids rather than a near-occupation of an American city, she might still be starring in homeland security infomercials.

These alternate scenarios are implausible, of course, because they envision hacks and yes women suddenly discovering a different set of capabilities. But if there is to be any improvement at all across the (did I mention this number yet?) 33 months of Trumpism ahead of us, it can only come from officials able to learn something from their failures and give the president a taste of what he wants, at a dose the country and the world find easier to take.

# Nylig lukkede faner

Dev Dhunsi's snurrende fotografier på Nitja simulerer en verden der ingenting står i ro.

Av Victoria Durnak 24.03.26 Kritikk



Jeg har egentlig sett ferdig norsk-indiske Dev Dhunsi's virvlende separatutstilling *Unmistakably You* (alle arbeider 2026) på Nitja i Lillestrøm, men snur i døra da jeg møter en skoleklasse på vei inn. Da jeg lusker rundt i den delen av rommet de oppholder seg, stopper omviseren et av fotografiene som snurrer etter vaiere i taket, og spør hva elevene ser. «Smurf», sier én. «Avatar», sier én annen.

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*Unmistakably You*

Dev Dhunsi

Nitja senter for samtidskunst, Oslo

14. mars 2026 — 26. april 2026

 Nyhetsbrev

 Del

 Skriv ut

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De snakker om selvportrettet [*water and night meet the body*], der en blåhudet Dhunsi med rødmalte lepper og gule øyne ser rett på betrakteren. Kunstneren framstiller seg selv som den – både voldsomme og omsorgsfulle – hinduistiske gudinnen Kali, med et hodeskallekjede i metall rundt halsen. Det er et av flere nikk til mytologiske skikkelser i utstillingen, der også en alv med harpe og en elefanthodet menneskeskapning figurerer. Og som kommentarene til de unge besøkere viser, er alternative universer noe de fleste er fortrolige med i dag, mye takket være kommersiell kultur som spill og filmer.

Tjuetre av bildene som henger fra taket er fotografier sublimasjonstrykket på lin. Metoden går ut på at varme og trykk får fargen til å synke inn i tekstilet, noe som gir de ferdige bildene et maltpreg, med en litt blass framtoning. De framstår flate, selv om mange av dem består av flere lag: Noen bilder er dobbelteksponerte, andre motiver ses *gjennom* noe, som prismer, glass og såpebobler.

Gallerigulvet er for tilfellet dekket av en hvit, tykk filt, og besøkende må sette skoene på utsiden. Det er et forsøk, antar jeg, på å gjøre rommet mer intimt, kanskje knytte det opp mot noe hellig? Det er også festet filt til baksiden av fotografiene med borrelås, og når denne siden er snudd mot meg, får jeg følelsen av at det finnes flere potensielle bilder som kunne vært inkludert i utstillingen, som om de blanke rektanglene er nyåpnede Photoshop-dokumenter.

Fem av de snurrende bildene er rundt 180 cm høye og 140 cm brede jacquardvevde tekstiler. Disse er montert til bambusstokker, og minner om Damien Ajavons *Protection of Relics (Black Craft Matter)* som ble vist på Høstutstillingen i 2023 – et jacquardvevd bilde spent opp mellom fire trepåler, der kunstneren iscenesetter seg selv, arbeidende på en vest-afrikansk, tradisjonell vevstol i et snøkledd landskap. Da jeg søker opp verket igjen, ser jeg at bildet veven til Ajavon er basert på et tatt av Dhunsi. Men der Ajavons arbeid har et fotorealistisk uttrykk, oppfatter jeg at Dhunsis på Nitja – med sine eteriske silhuetter og fargeinverterte motiver – søker mot noe mer spiritielt.

De ligner egentlig på såkalte aurafotografier, som new age-tilhengere mener viser energiene inni deg («sjelens farger», som de ville sagt), og forteller noe om din emosjonelle, mentale og åndelige tilstand. I presseskrevet knytter Dhunsi selv arbeidene i utstillingen opp mot en påstand om at identitet er en uavklart størrelse i konstant endring, og de astrale vevene kan sånn sett tolkes som ulike forsøk på å skildre denne formendringen.

Hvordan de ulike strukturene skaper bevegelse i bildene trekker meg inn. Som i det blå og hvite [*form reassembly*], der folder og ujevnheter i stoffet får veven til å

framstå flytende, eller i [*signal refracted through plastic, tail number five activated*], der et bølgemønster i underkant av tekstilet er dannet ved at den hvite tråden partivis har hengt løs, og ikke er blitt vevd sammen med resten. Moduleringen av stoffet gjør det tredimensjonale rommet inni bildene håndfast, og jeg fengsles av hvordan Dhunsi, i sin oversettelsen av foto til tekstil, også gjenoppliver bildenes fryste bevegelser

På fire steder i rommet er gipsplatene flerret opp, og fotografier kan skimtes inni veggen. I serien [*bodies translated into data*] ser tre svart-hvite portretter ut til fortsatt å ligge i framkallingsvæske, det er i hvert fall et vått lag oppå ansiktene som liksom skyller over dem. Bak det fjerde hullet i veggen henger et uskarpt bilde av en kropp i et anatomisk teater. Presseskrevet forklarer at bildene er fra Statens institut för rasbiologi i Uppsala, som da det ble opprettet i 1922 forsøkte bevise, gjennom blant annet skallemåling, at raseblanding ville degenerere den nordiske rasen. Bokstavelig lest, virker det at kunstneren bygger inn studieobjekter fra dette rasistiske instituttet som en kommentar om at tankegodset derifra også «sitter i veggene» i den hvite kuben, men det er ikke dette meningsnivået i verket jeg synes er mest ansporende.

Mer eggende er hvordan det rystende bakteppet spiller en rolle i Dhunsis foranderlige fotolabyrint, der veien er kort fra historier om urett til nikk mot identitetslek og barnlig underholdning, og så derifra igjen til religiøse tegn og esoterisk livsanskuelse. Å stå midt i rommet på Nitja og forsøke å feste blikket, speiler den søkende måten vi ofte erfarer verden på i dag, der vi stadig er nødt til å reorientere oss og et bilde sjeldent kommer alene. Dhunsis modifiserte, fordreide og tilslørte portretter er også talende for hvordan vi ser på *hverandre*: sjeldent rett på og fra topp til tå.

Miki Gebrelul

*Fabler—en analytisk lesning av fotoboken 'Mixed' av Dev Dhunsi*



Fra perspektiver formet av det skeive miljøet, klubbkultur og et postkoloniale blikk på kunst, skriver Miki Gebrelul en analytisk lesning av fotoboken *Mixed* av Dev Dhunsi, i anledning av separatutstillingen *Unmistakably You* på Nitja senter for samtidskunst.

Miki Gebrelul er en uavhengig kurator, som arbeider i skjæringspunktene mellom queerness og postkolonialisme, der de utforsker hvordan kunst kan åpne for muligheter som vanligvis begrenses av sosiale ulikheter. Noen av deres nåværende verv inkluderer også Arrangørutvalget for visuell kunst, Kulturrådet og kurator for et prosjekt med KORO – Kunst i offentlige rom. Gebrelul har også jobbet som kurator og utstillingsleder ved Fotogalleriet. Ved siden av sin kuratoriske praksis, er Gebrelul aktiv i samarbeidende, aktivistiske miljøer i Oslo som tilbyr trygge plattformer og bygger fellesskap for skeive og transpersoner. Arbeidet deres spenner fra undervisningsworkshops i skeiv seksuell helse, via abolisjonistiske workshops, til innsamlingsarrangementer. Miki Gebrelul har en mastergrad i kjønnsstudier fra Universitetet i Oslo.

**Miki Gebrelul**

*Fabler—en analytisk lesning av fotoboken 'Mixed' av Dev Dhunsi*

Det er en underlig oppgave å prøve å forklare noe som per definisjon ikke har et begrep innenfor det norske språket. Enda mer utfordrende er det når opphavet til dette-uten-et-begrep er forankret i systemiske kategorier for å definere forskjeller mellom mennesker. Det er denne utfordringen Dev Dhunsi tar for seg i fotoboken *Mixed*.

Tittelen *Mixed* betegner det engelske ordet *mixed* som brukes til å forklare personer av forskjellig *racial ancestry*. I Norge bruker vi ikke rase som kategori, noe som gjør bruken av det engelske begrepet «mixed» innviklet. Ved å ikke ha rase som en kategori, benekter vi eksistensen av noe som materielt fortsatt har innvirkning på måten vi lever på. Dermed mangler vi også et begrep som beskriver personer født i en familie av ulik etnisitet, kultur og geografisk bakgrunn. Allerede her møter undertegnede en utfordring i å forklare problemstillingen som *Mixed* tar for seg. Problemet er ikke bare at det mangler et begrep, men hvorfor det i det hele tatt eksisterer et behov for å ha et ord som beskriver personer som besitter en slik erfaring.

Ifølge rapporten «Mellom linjene», gjennomført av Likestillingscenteret i 2026, er personer med en bakgrunn som kan beskrives som «mikset» en av de raskest voksende gruppene i Norge.<sup>1</sup> Rapporten undersøker de tilgjengelige begrepsverktøyene for personer som passer inn i beskrivelsen, og peker på at behovet kommer fra mangelen på språk som oppleves relevant i en norsk kontekst. Mangelen på språk til å beskrive spesifikke erfaringer, spesielt med tanke på problematikk knyttet til forskjellsbehandling, fremmedgjøring og diskriminering basert på ens bakgrunn, kan føre til usynlighet eller feilaktige antakelser om identitet og tilhørighet (Likestillingscenteret).

Mennesker har et helt essensielt behov for å bli forstått og anerkjent av andre, noe som gjør behovet for dette identitetsbegrepet relevant (Ahmed; Butler). Samtidig er denne språklig kronglete posisjonaliteten til personer med mikset bakgrunn et symptom på et utdatert og deterministisk system for kategorisering av mennesker. Den er nemlig forankret i antagelsen om at det er en sammenheng mellom kroppslig uttrykk og iboende egenskaper. Dhunsi's fotobok står som en eksemplarisk forestilling av denne til tider selvmotsigende og paradoksale posisjonaliteten. For hvordan kan man uttrykke seg når språkets ikke-eksistens benekter tilstedeværelsen av de materielle forholdene?

### **Spøkelsesfanger**

Styrken i å bruke fotografi som uttrykksform ligger i apparatets evne til å fange det som oppleves utilstrekkelig språklig. Idet man setter ord på identiteter, kan språket oppleves reduserende og begrensende på grunn av de historiske assosiasjonene til kategorisering av mennesker. Dhunsi nærmer seg denne utfordringen med optiske manipulasjoner av bilder, der motivene i boken nærmest oppleves som illustrasjoner som flyter mellom det virkelige og uvirkelige. Bildene leses gjennom det sanselige og fungerer som deler i en fabel.

Bokens underlige og overnaturlige undertoner møter betrakteren allerede på forsiden. Her er et selvportrett av Dhunsi hvor huden, utenom leppene, er malt blå, som en personifikasjon av hindugudinnen Kali, før boken utfolder seg i tekstmateriale på de første sidene. Teksten er skrevet i undertekstformat, med blant annet soniske beskrivelser av høytempo bass som planter fantomlyder

1. Jeg bruker her begrepet «personer med mikset bakgrunn» og følger Likestillingscenterets egne formuleringer der problematisering av ordene «bakgrunn», «opprinnelse», «mikset», «blandet» og «halvt» er utgreid på side 7-8 i rapporten.

av teknomusikk i hodet hos undertegnede. Jeg får følelsen av å være på vei inn til en klubb. Teksten leier deg gjennom de svarte sidene, drar deg inn i klubben hvor du møter bilder i neonfarger som minner om klubblys. Bildenes erotiske natur nærmer seg det skeive. Undertekstformatet fortsetter i hele boken, og fungerer både veiledende og desorienterende. Samspillet mellom elementene gir en opplevelse av at det man ser er en fiktiv fortelling.

Forvrengningen av menneskekroppen og menneskeliggjøringen av de hinduistiske gudene gjør uttrykket mytisk. Dette poengterer et av de sentrale temaene i fotoboken, der det overnaturlige får en sentral plass gjennom en utvidelse av dokumentarisk fotografi. Dhunsi befinner seg i en historisk strømning hvor fotografiet er mer enn kun det du ser. Jeg leser det som Dhunsi forsøker på å distansere seg fra den dokumentariske formen, som i større grad etterlater leseren med en avbildning av mennesker, gjerne portretter, for slik å kunne synliggjøre (og kanskje til og med normalisere) mennesker av ulike demografier. *Mixed* er isteden, som tittelen beskriver, en sjangerblanding av landskapsfotografi, poesi, eksperimentering og iscenesettelse. Bildene, i deres overnaturlige og mangefasettede natur, er på den måten med på å fylle et tomrom som språket ikke har fylt enda. Det skjer en tydelig intern konflikt når identiteten man besitter ikke er mulig å beskrive med ord, spesielt i et samfunn som konstant er opptatt av å plassere mennesker i kategorier.

Utgangspunktene for bildene i boken er enten positive eller negative, som i det analoge fotografiets prosess. I de fargenegative bildene vrenses opplevelsen av forgrunn og bakgrunn, der det lyse blir mørkt og det mørke blir lyst. Disse inverterte bildene er portrettene av de vi møter i den delen av boken jeg mener tilhører det fantome og det mytiske. Ved å frata bildene deres «naturlige farger», løsriver Dhunsi seg ikke bare fra å synliggjøre personenes hudfarge. Gjennom fargegraderingen av bildene – med neonlys og med høy eksponering (til den grad at avbildede persontrekk er ugjenkjennelige, mens komposisjon, posering og omriss forblir tydelig) – klarer han også å skape en mytisk tilværelse i bokas verden.

Spillet mellom det transparente og det usynlige oppnår Dhunsi ved å benytte et plastdekke hengende i rommet, som en vegg som gjør at motivene veksler mellom å være skarpe og uskarpe avhengig av avstanden mellom dem, plastdekket og lyset. Uttrykket minner meg om varmekameraer som fanger opp infrarødstråling, som brukes til å fange paranormale aktiviteter. Jeg leser dette som et forsøk på å styre unna risikoen i å plassere personene han har avbildet i en posisjon der de blir lest i de etablerte kategoriene, som tidligere i teksten er beskrevet å være årsak til feilrepresentasjon av personer med mikset bakgrunn. Eliminering av kroppsspesifikke uttrykk brukt til å vurdere forskjeller mellom mennesker (for eksempel utydelig ansikt eller usynlig hudfarge), fremhever de elementene som heller gjør oss like, i våre følelser, som jo er grunnlaget for hver vår individuelle identitet.

Dhunsi blikk er uten tvil forankret i det skeive, der fargenes intensitet, assosiasjoner til klubblys og erotikk er styrende. I tillegg fungerer skeivhet inspirerende. Opp gjennom historien har skeiv seksualitet blitt usynliggjort og fremmedgjort, noe som i boken er gitt en slags spøkende tilstedeværelse. I boken møter vi skikkelser som ligner spøkelser, fabeldyr og andre overnaturlige skapninger som forenes med moderne konstruksjoner av Den Andre og ikke-subjekter. Dette virkemiddelet understreker ytterligere at om du står uten et fastsatt begrep, så tilhører du det mystiske og ukjente. En ambivalent posisjonering som på den ene siden bringer med seg uønskede erfaringer av å mangle tilhørighet, men som på samme tid er med på å tilgjengeliggjøre en mulighet til å eksistere utenfor det definerte og etablerte. Bildene som passer innenfor dette uttrykket i boken oppleves feirende, på samme måte som skeiv rettighetskamp har omfavnet forestillingene om skeivhet som avvikende og funnet tilhørighet innenfor utenforskapet.

### **Blod kan ikke blandes med vann**

Stemningen endrer seg halvveis i boken. Spesielt skiller det seg i møtet med et utsnitt av et bilde av ryggen til en person som løper bort fra der tilskueren (kameraet) er posisjonert. Utsnittet er innrammet av sandkorn, og bildets forvrenging i kantene gir en følelse av å se på noe som er et tilbakeblikk eller en visjon. Sand forekommer igjen i bildet på neste side, men her skjuler den deler av et nærbilde av et ansikt, trolig samme person som vi så løpe bort i forrige bilde, med elementer av en visjon eller et minne fortsatt til stede.

Inverterte avbildninger av skap og hyller som rommer religiøse symboler og kulturelle objekter i et hjem og en fargegradering av gul/blå/grønn gir en følelse av flashback. Det er som om verden Dhunsi først introduserte oss for i første del av boken brister. Isteden konfronteres vi her med realiteten. Disse bildene gir inntrykk av å se på en glitch.

Vi møter igjen personen fra sandbildene på de kommende sidene, nå i klare svart-hvitt-nærportretter. Gjennom seks bilder forteller mannen noe til tilskueren. Han beveger på leppene, men det er stille. Senere forklarer teksten at han leser opp fra Yahya Hassan, en dansk-palestinsk poet som brukte mesteparten av sin karriere på først å beskrive Danmarks rasisme, og deretter bli et tokenisert symbol på den uttrykksfulle marginaliserte stemmen.

Yahya Hassan blir en inngang for Dhunsi der han kan knytte utfordringene som personer med mikset bakgrunn opplever, med de underliggende systemene for undertrykkelse av rasialiserte personer – systemer som er avhengige av hierarkiske kategorier som organiserer det moderne samfunnet.

For den jamaikanske forfatteren, filosofen og kritikeren Sylvia Wynter er fordelingen av samfunnet i hierarkiske kategorier forankret i den europeiske moderne forståelsen av hva et menneske er. Wynters teori kan bidra til å forklare hvorfor vitenskapen og enhver disiplin som har med mennesket å gjøre, ikke unngår å strukturere sine funn i kategorier basert på forskjeller. Hun trekker denne tradisjonen for forskjellskategorisering så langt tilbake som opplysningstiden. Opplysningstidens tilsynelatende løsrivelse fra religiøse forpliktelser, deriblant arvesynden, ga rom til nye ideer basert på de samme religiøse strukturene. Teknologiske nyvinninger la grunnlag for en rask utvikling av samfunnet med styrking av vitenskap, humanistiske idealer og en ny tro på «mennesket» ikke underlagt Gud, men styrt av det rasjonelle. Det er viktig å se dette i lys av de hierarkiske systemene vi har nå fordi disse tilsynelatende endringene ikke skapte omveltninger i maktstrukturen. Det som tidligere var et «naturlig onde», det vil si mennesket i relasjon til Gud innenfor det kristne paradigmet, ble byttet ut med konseptet om undermennesker. Disse nye undermenneskene er urfolk og personer med svart afrikansk fysiognymi.

Dermed ser ikke Wynter kun en sammenheng mellom biovitenskapen og vår forståelse av rase og de sosiale implikasjonene som har kommet ut av det. Hun utfordrer også vår moderne forståelse av mennesket, som har sitt grunnlag i opplysningstidens tankegang og er forankret i denne forskjellen mellom menneskegrupper.

Vitenskapen har spilt en stor rolle i legitimeringen av forskjellskategorier. I Dhunsi bok ser han dette via raseforskningen ved Statens institutt for rasbiologi i Uppsala, Sverige. På en forskningstur til instituttet hentet han arkivmateriale fra raseforskningen og inkluderte det i boken. Det er lite vi vet om bildene fra arkivet til SIFR, annet enn at de var en del av forskningen på raseblanding. Selv om direktøren for instituttet, Herman Lundborg, mest forsket på de negative effektene ved raseblandingen av nordiske individer og samiske minoriteter, samlet han også fotografisk materiale og forskning fra internasjonale rasebiologiske institutter (Ericsson). Men hvorfor var disse menneskene subjekter for forskning?

Statens institutt for rasbiologi ble opprettet av den svenske regjeringen i 1922, med Herman Lundborg som direktør. Lundborg var nasjonalsosialist, og uttrykte i 1933 støtte til den nazistiske regjeringen i Tyskland (Ericsson). Han tilhørte en gruppe vitenskapsmenn som var tilhengere av oppblomstringen av eugenikk- og raseforskning, som en løsning på medisinske og sosiale problemer. Deres vitenskapelige utgangspunkt var de sosialdarwinistiske tolkningene som styrte europeisk ekspansjon og imperialisme på slutten av 1800-tallet.

Frykten for raseblanding oppsto ikke før rasehierarkiet ble truet. Frem til 1880 var nesten halvparten av den europeiske mannlige befolkningen i Sørøst- og Østindia i konkubinathold med lokale kvinner på grunn av reguleringene som la til rette for slike samliv. Slike ordninger ga økonomiske og strukturelle fordeler som styrket langvarigheten og stabiliteten i kolonilandene (Stoler). Selv om disse ordningene ikke var konfliktfrie, var det først da barn født innenfor disse rammene utgjorde en fare for å viske ut maktfordelingen mellom kolonier og kolonisert, at konkubinathold ble fordømt og senere forbudt. Man kan se det i relasjon til andre lovgivninger som ser en sammenheng mellom kroppslig uttrykk og rolle i samfunnet.

Et eksempel har vi fra Dansk Vestindia, som i 1733 introduserte en slavelov som knyttet hudfarge til slaveri (Kyllingstad). Dermed er det interessant å se tilbake på hvordan vitenskapelige funn, blant annet Lundborgs raseforskning, underbygde lovgivning som hadde økonomisk kraft.

Disse arkivmaterialene er ikke kun inkludert for å vise til historiske former for undertrykkelse av menneskegrupper basert på deres bakgrunn. I større grad står disse bildene som vitneerklæringer for organiseringen av samfunnet i dag, basert på de samme mekanismene for kategorisering som personene i bildene er utsatt for. Og på samme måte som raseforskningen fikk en revitalisering under nasjonalsosialismen på 1920-tallet med en klar idé om å øke den «nordiske» arvemassen i befolkningen (Kyllingstad), kan nåtidens offentlige debatt og enkelte politikeres besettelse av å «bevare» norsk kultur og verdier så lite påvirket som mulig av andre mindre foretrukne kulturer, sees i lys av dette.

Så det er kanskje ikke så rart i dag å se de reaksjonære og fascistiske motbølgene mot den politikken som krever bredere inkludering av mennesker. Det er egentlig ikke overraskende, når forskjellene som den nyfascistiske bølgen kjemper for å beholde, ble konstruert for å opprettholde ideen om hvitt overherredømme. Den frykten og angsten som (sikkert) kommer med et samfunn som skal være mer likeverdig, er berettiget, for det innebærer en omveltning av de maktstrukturene som har definert den moderne verdenen siden opplysningstiden. For min del er det for eksempel ingen vits å diskutere med mennesker som hevder at det foreligger en form for naturlig sammenheng mellom «bedre utvikling» og den nasjonalistiske norske identiteten. For jeg ser det som det er: en eldgammel kolonial angst for å miste sitt maktherredømme i samfunnet.

Behovet for å definere personer med mikset bakgrunn er også en del av den samme koloniale arven. Vi lever fortsatt under en samfunnsorden som er avhengig av å ha klare skiller mellom disse kategoriene, for å kunne vite hvem som fortjener å være undertrykt.

## DNA – Do Not Ask

Til tross for sin omfattende bredde i tematikk og kritikk som kan tolkes på mange måter, er *Mixed* også en personlig fortelling. Dhunsi kjernefamilie har norsk og indisk bakgrunn, mens storfamilien i tillegg inkluderer argentinsk, marokkansk og algerisk. Fragmenter av familiealbum, kransekake med alle familieflaggene og smalahove servert på indisk servise (thali) formidler hvordan spørsmål om identitet er til stede i de mest alminnelige, men også absurde øyeblikkene. Scenesetningen er nedtonet. Portrettet av faren med en marinelue i de norske flaggene og med Dhunsi som hybridpersonifisering av guddommene Kali, Varuna og Mitra tydeliggjør den kulturelle og arvelige utvekslingen: Dhunsi som har tilgang til indisk kultur, og faren, som gjennom Dhunsi får tilhørighet til den norske. Familie, det som står for den enkleste tolkningen av bokens tematikk, er igjen synlig i portretter av andre familier med foreldre som har mikset opphav og som får barn med mikset opphav, i kjærlighetsrelasjoner og i portretter av andre søskenforhold. De spøkefulle og lekne undertonene i noen av bildene fanger de gledesfylte erfaringene som kommer av å ha privilegiet å vokse opp i et så kulturrikt miljø. Disse øyeblikkene av intimitet følger narrativet gjennom hele boken.

Disse bildene skiller seg fra det jeg tidligere beskrev som en tilnærming til det mytiske. Ulikheten i uttrykkene får meg til å tenke på dette grepet kanskje viser at det er i møte med storsamfunnets forestillinger og holdninger at man først møter på konflikt, når man besitter et mangfold av kulturer innenfor sin identitet.

Samtidig leser jeg ikke disse ulike perspektivene som motsetninger til hverandre, men heller som en presentasjon av varianter av utgangspunkter for å forstå de innviklede systemene i samspill med hverandre. *Mixed* presenterer ikke ett bestemt narrativ som leseren skal oppfatte. Selv om Dhunsi engasjerer sin kultur, bakgrunn og tilhørighet, unngår han romantisering av dette narrativet. Disse blir isteden presentert på lik linje med de mange andre perspektivene som boken viser frem, uten å tillegge hverken positive eller negative egenskaper, som en erstatning for den hegemoniske oppfattelsen. På den måten unnslipper Dhunsi en vanlig fallgrube når man arbeider med representasjon av historisk utestengte narrativer. Ofte kan slikt arbeid romantisere prekoloniale tider og minimere de stigmatiseringene som fortsatt var gjeldende, til fordel for å ville ta eierskap over sin egen historie (Rao).

Dette forblir et bevisst verktøy for Dev Dhunsi, som gjennom sin kunst ønsker å presentere ulike narrativer. Jeg leser dette i tråd med bokens grunnleggende formål om å gjennom foto forsøke å benevne noe som, i sin benevnelse, forneker egen eksistens. Det underbygger den paradoksale tilstanden som kommer med hans levde erfaringer. Spørsmålet om identitet er motstridende fordi det synliggjør det eksisterende behovet for å finne en måte å uttrykke de spesifikke erfaringene han har. Samtidig vil en slik fremgangsmåte stå i fare for å forsterke de kategoriserende mekanismene. Dhunsi's fabelaktige og mytiske tilnærming gjør at denne umulige oppgaven blir mulig, og motstridende realiteter kan eksistere.

Boken er mangfoldig og tematiserer ikke kun identitet. Et tilbakevendende tema er klima, natur og vann. Bilder av forurensningen forårsaket av Kárahnjúkar-demningen, Islands største vannkraftverk, er for eksempel sentrale i dette narrative. Gjennom ulike fotografiske prosesser kan vi se forurensningen (hvitt støv) som eksisterer i vannet og i luften, og som ved første øyekast ser ut som tåke eller skyer som omgir fjellene på Island. Dhunsi har tidligere kommentert det komiske ved det hvite støvet som legger seg på kameralinsen og gjør disse bildene utydelige. Det samme gjelder det støvdekkede landskapet som spolerer utsikten.

For på samme måte har jo faktisk den moderne vitenskapens avhengighet av den hvite rasens tilsynelatende biologiske særegenhet lagt seg som en tåke over vår realitetsorientering og tilslørt vårt syn. Den har fratatt oss språket ved å definere oss i falske kategorier. Dhunsi klarer i sin bok å sette søkelyset på de strukturene som prøver å splitte oss. De strukturene som undertrykker mennesker, så vel som naturen, er presentert i boken slik de forekommer: De er intrikate, tildels kaotiske og frustrerende å forstå. Bokens innviklede fortellinger forlanger deltagelse av betrakteren i en tid dominert av passiv mottagelse av informasjon. I utstillingen på Nitja senter for samtidskunst blir dette realisert i en totalinstallasjon der orienteringen forskyves forsiktig, og der det å se blir en fysisk erfaring hvor betrakteren kan navigere seg gjennom bildene, og i forlengelse av det Dhunsi's perspektiver.

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**Skrevet for Dev Dhunsis separatutstilling**  
*Unmistakably You*  
**på Nitja senter for samtidskunst**  
**14. mars — 26. april 2026**  
**Kuratert av Kathrine Wilson**

# Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS

## DEV DHUNSI

Born 1996 in Trondheim, Norway  
Lives and works in Oslo, Norway

## Education

- 2022 – 24** MFA, The Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2019 – 22** BFA, Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Oslo, Norway.
- 2018 – 19** Prosjektskolen Art School, Oslo, Norway.
- 2016 – 18** Norwegian School of Photography, Trondheim, Norway.

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2026** *Unmistakably You*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Unmistakably You*, Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Lillestrøm, Norway.
- 2024** *Encircling Stories*, Centrum för fotografi, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Stream of*, Hvitsten Salong, Hvitsten, Norway.  
*Tales They Don't Tell You*, Galleri Mejan, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2023** *Encircling Stories*, MELK, Oslo, Norway.
- 2021** *MaskiniTaal*, Fotografiens Hus, Oslo, Norway.
- 2020** *Nawanzamania Phases*, P Zero Project Halle, KHIO, Oslo, Norway.
- 2019** Nordic Light International Photography Festival, Norway.

## Group Exhibitions

- 2025** *Water Never Sleeps*, Sláturhúsið Art Center, Egilsstaðir, Iceland.  
Bienal'25 Fotografia do Porto, Porto, Portugal.  
*FEEL FIRST, THINK LATER*, Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2024** *Open up your eyes*, Høyersten Contemporary, Bergen, Norway.  
*Ties That Bind*, Organ Vida International Photography Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia.  
*Østlandsutstillingen 2024*, Kunstbanken senter for samtidskunst, Hamar & Vestfold Kunstsenter, Tønsberg, Norway.
- 2023** *Vårutstillingen*, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway.  
*Mejan Internationale: Home to Home*, Mint, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*Indoctrination: Multivalent Gestures*, curated by Dahir Hussein, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, Norway.
- 2022** *Ringen bortom mattan*, curated by C-print, Konsthall 16, The Sports Museum, Stockholm, Sweden.  
*In progress*, curated by Atla Platform, Landskrona Photo Festival, Landskrona, Sweden.  
*Illusive Illusions*, curated by Christian Tunge, MELK, Oslo, Norway.  
*BA-degree show*, KHIO & Kunstnerenes hus, Oslo, Norway.
- 2021** *Dette året*, curated by Sofie Amalie Klougart and Christian Belgaux, Fotografihuset or Preus Museum, Oslo, Norway.

# Andréhn-Schiptjenko

STOCKHOLM PARIS

- Light of my life*, curated by Noah Hunter Love, DOPSGATE4 gallery, Oslo, Norway.
- 2020** *Blue Chip Baby – Duckert* Detroit collaboration, Babel visningsrom for Kunst, Trondheim, Norway.
- 2019** *Trondheim Dokumentarfestival*, Trondheim, Norway.  
*Portrait Now!*, Nationalhistoriske Museum Fredriksborg Castle, Hillerød, Denmark.  
*Palettes, Visitors Travel*, curated by Ellinor Aurora Aasgaard and Sam Lubicz, FeldFünf, Berlin, Germany.
- 2018** *Rakavan*, Encontros da Imagem - International Photo and Visual Art Festival, Braga, Portugal.  
*Rakavan*, Helsinki Photo Festival, Helsinki, Finland.  
*Graduation exhibition*, Norwegian School of Photography, Trondheim, Norway.

## Grants / Awards

- 2025** Kulturdirektoratet – three-year work stipend for newly established artists
- 2024** The Fritt Ord Foundation, project funding.  
Nordic PhotoBook Award.  
Kulturdirektoratet, stipend for young artists.
- 2022** Art council Norway, project funding for young artists.  
Art council Norway, project funding for artistic publications.  
Art council Norway, project funding for young artists.
- 2021** Norsk Fotografisk fond, project funding.
- 2020** The Fritt Ord Foundation, project funding.  
Fresh Eye Talent 2021, powered by GUP – Guide to Unique Photography.  
Artist Residency Support for curation of Ung Nordic Light 2020, Art council Norway (cancelled due to Covid)
- 2019** Young talent prize 2019, Nationalhistoriske Museum Denmark  
1:st place of Fotografis' portfolio prize 2018

## Publications

- 2026** *Mixed*, published by Mack Books / SPBH-Editions.
- 2023** *Encircling Stories*, published by Heavy Books.
- 2019** *Rakavan*, published by Heavy Books.

## Public Collections

Kunst på Arbeidsplassen, Norway.