HOME AND AWAY
Curated by Sunil Gupta

ADIRA THEKKUVEETTIL | ANNA FOX | ANUSHA YADAV
CHARAN SINGH | DEBRA-LORRAINE GRANT | DINESH ABIRAM
PEDRO MAÇÃS | RISHI SINGHAL | SUNIL GUPTA

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“How far we all come. How far we all come away from ourselves. So far, so much between, you can never go home again. You can go home, it's good to go home, but you never really get all the way home again in your life. And what's it all for? All I tried to be, all I ever wanted and went away for, what's it all for?”


Photography as a medium is intrinsically tied to the past. It is most inextricably linked to its role as documentary evidence, as stand-in for that which was once before the camera lens. This holds true from its earliest beginnings when it captured the view outside the photographer’s window in Paris to the present where the ubiquitous presence of a digital camera-phone has turned everyone into photographers. That image lingers in our mind, reminding us of something. A something that over time turns familiar and reassuring. Sometimes it is not even the event or place in front of the lens but merely the hint in the image of an earlier memory. A remembered image. And even as one's capacity to remember text based factual information fades, one can still recall the image and the gaze.

The family, and particularly the photo album reconstruction of it, has played a large part in our memories of home. However, for most of us the yearning to get away to experience other things and perhaps the act of growing up means a break from those mythical comforts. Having left, we often feel like reversing the journey, to return home. But as Agee has pointed out “you never really get all the way home again in your life.” In this exhibition we take a look at what eight photographers think about home and away from home. Without a deliberate bias, it's interesting that the women are looking inwards to a domestic environment and the men are on the outside; either away or strangers in their own homes.

Sunil Gupta
When I was growing up, I was always asked the same question again and again. “Where are you actually from?”, “Where is your native place?”. And throughout my life, I have always been at a loss to answer it in a simple word or sentence like everybody I knew. I would wonder for a second, then depending on who was asking, I would answer, “I am from Calcutta”, or “I am from Kerala”.

I always wondered what it would be like to be only from one place. To have a family where everyone spoke the same language and everybody looked similar. I used to think it was a bad thing that I was mixed, because growing up in Kerala in the 90’s, I was always the odd person and treated so.

Constantly wondering about identity and my own story, I would bombard my parents and grandparents with constant questions about their own stories. I wanted to know who they were, all these strange people from two ends of the country who I was somehow related to.

As a child, pouring through my grandfather’s photo albums I imagined myself in them, but then again a question would arise, and even if I wanted to imagine myself only as a Bengali or Malayali, I couldn’t allow myself to do so.

Over the years I resolved only a few of these questions. I decided to be from both and also from everywhere else. I wanted to know about other places, explore and understand other cultures, languages and stories.

My parents never enforced any kind of culture on me. Home was an even more mixed up place with an artist and a scientist as parents, but perhaps that is why I grew curious about their stories, how they became who they became. Every family has their own story, a story which is always more interesting than the most exiting book, and this project is a journey of understanding the story of my own family, my own past, and look back at how I came to be who I am today.
Anna Fox is Professor of Photography at The University for the Creative Arts in Farnham, she has co-written, with Dr Deepak John Mathews, the post-graduate course in Photography at the National Institute of Design in India (UKIERI funded) and is now photography consultant at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore. Fox is an internationally acclaimed photographer exhibiting and publishing her work; in 2010 she was shortlisted for the Deutsche Borse Photography Prize and in 2012 for the Pilar Citoler Prize. Her work has been in numerous group shows including: Warworks at The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography; Centre of the Universe; Liverpool and the Avant-Garde at Tate Liverpool, How We Are: Photographing Britain at Tate Britain and Documentary Dilemmas a British Council touring exhibition. A retrospective monograph Anna Fox Photographs 1983 – 2007 was published by Photoworks in 2007 and her solo exhibition Cockroach Diary and Other Stories is currently touring Europe. Fox co-edits Langfords Basic Photography and Behind the Image and her latest monograph, Resort 1 is published by Schilt in Amsterdam.

ANUSHA YADAV

Home, an irrevocable condition

The one thing that has mattered to me since I began earning a living was to have a lovely and clean home to return to. It was more than a mere idea of looking good; it had to feel reassuring, secure, and comforting. Because everything was going to be okay once I was home. As Indian women are exploring and discovering their potentials, the outside world of the new century is now full of incredible possibilities & adventures, albeit it is also a bit dangerous; unpredictable even. And so when in familiar spaces, more so at one’s own home, its comfort & security imparts the unconditional freedom, acceptance & thus the greatest self-confidence. The home is probably where the real freedom lies.

Inspired with that conjecture, I photographed a few of the hundreds of empowered urban Indian women I know (across age groups) and whom I also consider to be independent and radical in thought, and in action. With rising economic strengths and the confidence to take decisions on their own, (or if with companion, to have the final say) a home has become the biggest priority for women to invest in. Interestingly, the women who weren’t economically strong, hesitated to open their homes. As one said, “It is not the home I aspire to yet, it is not up to the mark”; (or they required a family member’s permission first) making the ‘home’ a matter of equality, pride and presentation.

In my conversations with so many, the home means several things to a woman versus just four walls and a roof. The economically stronger invest their resources, celebrating their instinctual sense of aesthetics, beautifying their homes, making it their own, ensuring that it looks and is managed to their satisfaction. Each home I have visited over the years has reinforced the observation, that to a woman, a home is an extension and expression of emotional and personal discovery and freedom. The living room, bedroom or even the kitchen, as is in these images, become the presentation to the world and a revelation of who they really are, and to some extent, what they desire. Perhaps, there might be some truth to the aphorism that ‘to know a woman all one has to do is visit her home’. Articulated any which way, the home is to women where all that emotional and monetary investment is returned with soothing comfort, security and mutual interest.

Whatever the level of ‘empowered-ness’ we women might be in quest for, a relationship with the space, the home, is a non-negotiable, irrevocable and an intimate one; romantic even. This is the space, women unquestionably belong to; the home, that is not a mere four walled entity, It is in-fact their pride, comfort, desires, love and personality on display. I reckon (and I say this with great hope), that sooner or later women will all be as empowered and enjoy all the fruits of great freedom we desire. Our relationships with others will also be constantly renegotiated, but the intimacy women desire to share with their homes is the real quest for happily ever.
Anushav Yadav is a Photographer, publication designer and founder of the world renowned, online archive Indian Memory Project and The Memory Company. After graduating from NID Ahmedabad in 1997 and with 18 years of a career in Graphic Design & Advertising in tow, she also began working as a photographer in 2006. Her photography works present varying aspects in urban cultures and have been featured in international & national media, publications and exhibitions at several well-known galleries across India, Austria, USA and South Africa. In 2010, Anusha created/designed and founded Indian Memory Project – the World’s first online visual and narrative based archive. The project traces a personal history of the Indian subcontinent via photographs found in personal archives Honours: India today Woman entrepreneur of the year 2013-2014, INK fellow -2011, TEDxGateway Speaker of 2013, L’Oreal Paris Femina Women Achiever’s award winner of 2013, Prix Ars Electronica 2013, (an international award for Excellence in Cyber Arts.)

CHARAN SINGH
Not at Home, 2013-2014

“There is no place like home” or “our home is more beautiful then the heaven”, phrases like this always make me think about the old fundamental question of a happy home. It seems necessary to have a happy home or at least one is supposed to have one in the general scheme of things. A place of intimate relations, a sense of security and a place to nurture oneself, a place you don’t have to pretend or put on a persona for others to see. Nevertheless, so many of us are still struggling with the dislocation of “home”, together with its blindness of rituals, religion, conditioning, and its web of claustrophobic relationships, that some of us still think we are not at home.

Historically, male bodies and identities have always occupied spaces in the world outside their homes. It is unusual if not at odds with the popular portrayals of masculinities, to show the male body in a domestic environment. Perhaps the logic behind it, is that men own the house, therefore there is no need for them to claim the domestic landscapes. However, depicting males in theatrical domesticity, makes these men seem weak and vulnerable. These self portraits reconstruct a past that is being seen through the selective prism of memory and remembrance. The photographs are considering the roles played by gender and sexuality, the formal means for the (re)telling of familial narratives.

Charan Singh (b. India, 1978) lives and works in the UK and India. His photographic practice is informed by his thirteen years of HIV/AIDS work and community activism in India, along with a formal study of the history of art and photography. He is interested in the representation of gender and sexualities, relationships, recovery, loss and desire. Simultaneously, he questions some notions of the genre of self portraiture, however the principal common thread in all of his works are memory, story telling, and masculinity. His work was featured in Uncertain States # 14, a lens-based, artist led project in London and Take on Photography a special edition by Take on Art, New Delhi, India for Delhi Photo Festival, September 2013. His work has been exhibited at the Nigah Queer Fest, Goethe-Institute, Max Mueller Bhawan, New Delhi October 2010 and November 2011.

DEBRA-LORRAINE GRANT
28 Days 28 Dinners, 2014

This project records the meals cooked by Grant for her husband over twenty eight days. She cooks for him almost every night and they both work and have two children. For the past three years Grant has been living with chronic pain.

Grant’s interest in photography is the domestic, everyday environment. The work she has made is autobiographical and documents aspects of women’s ordinary lives. Photography is used to represent objects with the assistance of text to produce narrative.
This work looks at the evening meal. These types of everyday activities, that could be considered as mundane, are a fundamental part of daily life, and although this meal may greatly differ in content and form from home to home, it remains the case that we all eat. This body of work will consist of twenty-eight evening meals that might occur in any home and at the same time record Grant's own experiences of pain, on a daily basis. The work explores both her own personal circumstances as well as a more general perspective on contemporary women's domestic lives.

This work ties in with a previous domestic project, 28 Days, 28 Lists, as Grant decided to photograph the dinner plates of her husband, for a period of twenty-eight days. This defined a period of time. The experience of working to a time limit proved to be invaluable as it not only defined the workspace in time, but also helped to enhance the concept of a point in time, a snapshot of life. As each image of a meal showed a mere moment, the twenty-eight days showed a greater period of time but equally a small point in Grant's own personal history. This slice of time, with its associated habits has now passed and may never repeat in the same way because, even as this project drew to a close, its influence on her husband changed his behaviour. The constant takeaway or pasta and burgers when she did not cook has changed, and he is now cooking other things and offering to cook. This work has made quite a fundamental change in the attitudes in her home.

Debra-Lorraine Grant (b.1972) lives in Aldershot, UK. Her interest in photography is the domestic, everyday environment. The works she has made is autobiographical and documents aspects of women's ordinary lives. Although Grant's interest in photography started from an early age, and she has been photographing and collecting objects for photographs whenever an opportunity presented itself for the majority her life, at the age of sixteen her personal circumstances dictated her career choices, and she became an Electrical and Electronic (Communications biased) Apprentice in the Portsmouth dockyard. From this apprenticeship she went on to become an Electrical Fitter and then Electrical Surveyor. She finished these roles after 22 years as a Project Group Officer when she took voluntary redundancy so that she could continue her studies in photography. She attended the University of the Creative Arts to study and continued to an MFA (Photography) 2014.

Dinesh Abiram
Querencias, 2014
noun: querencia;
plural noun: querencias; a place where one’s strength is at.
literally: lair, home ground,
from querer: desire, love,
from Latin quaerere: seek

This work querencias deals with a decade of my story, comprising my relationships, my home, family and the events that played out in the cities I chose to live in. It has taken me many years to become comfortable with the idea of sharing my experiences. Living through some of these events of my life has made me who I am, and have in many ways made me sensitive to my surroundings & people.

Dinesh Abiram (b.1985) is a photographer based out of Bangalore, India. With a bachelor’s degree in Visual Communication, he worked with various advertising agencies, and magazines, before becoming a full time photographer. His interests lie in long-term architectural projects, and documenting typologies. He is especially interested in understanding how changing communities affect the spaces they live in. He is currently pursuing his masters in Photography from the National Institute of Design.
PEDRO MAÇÃS (Portugal)
The Storm that Bends the Birch Trees, 2014

My photographic practice is concerned with understanding the role of photography in documenting and analysing broader questions as a whole. I have been working with images and exploring its intelligibility: trying to reduce the text inscribed in the photographic image; and trying to develop a photographic discourse over the vernacular, the banal as documentary or social commentary.

My photographic work, is primarily an involvement with people and things in some way close to me. In the end I’m trying to grasp the nature of the world today and until now, I had the understanding of this process as an addition of parts. A whole based on a selection motifs and significant themes that I find in facets of private and public life, taken from the world. Basically to study the light effect of a public lamp on a public under passage, the atmosphere it creates for the people passing by and why it’s already to find a part of the whole.

Formally I’m looking a visual imagery originated under a personal sensibility regarding to the picture itself. I’m looking for images part of a body of work able to incorporate metaphorical and symbolic ideas connected with literature and film - content or chain of events and characters, that are able to create a separate and autonomous layer of significance; a photographic narrative that as the ability to stay outside of the real world, creating an intimacy between the audience and the images without the recognizing of the photographer’s point of view.

“The storm that bends the birch trees” (a verse from a poem by Bertolt Brecht on violence) is a metaphor for and the title of a series of photographs. This project is concerned with understanding and exploring the new topographies arising as a consequence of the abrupt stoppage of construction sites under the hail of the crashed real estate market.

In areas close to my hometown in Portugal the financial crises generated a series of unfinished building sites, ghostly neighborhoods, disorienting and fragmented surroundings. The Storm That Bends The Birch trees is an abstract narrative that aims to capture and convey the nature of these new topographies and to psychologically frame these decaying environments. My photographic practice is concerned with understanding the role of photography in documenting and analyzing broader questions as a whole, exploring its intelligibility on the printed page and narrative structure.

Pedro Maçãs (b. 1981, Portugal) studied photography at the PG Fotografia, Projecto e Arte Contemporânea - Atelier de Lisboa (Lisbon) in 2010 and has a Masters in Fine Arts and Photography from the University For The Creative Arts, Farnham UK, former Surrey Institute of Art Design. He as a previous BA in Law. He is living in between London and Lisbon and working on subjects related with the sense of place and contemporary urban life. Pedro is currently developing several artist books while implementing his own publishing house - Wellesley Close Editions. Pedro’s work has been shown in several places in Portugal and in the UK. In 2013 the British Council granted Pedro with a residency at the National Institute of Design in India from which an on-going project about India is being made.

RISHI SINGAL
Catskills, 2005-2006

Our world today is changing at a pace unparalleled in human history and the human condition throughout the world is getting re-defined by the constantly shifting social, political and economic forces. My work investigates this continuously evolving world-order through explorations of natural and built environments and their interrelationship. I am particularly drawn towards certain transient zones within urban environments, where the dualities of chaos and order, death and revitalization, and spectacular and banal constantly refer to our transforming world, both physically and metaphorically. I started working on this series during an artist residency at the Center for Photography at Woodstock, NY in 2005, and
then followed it up in 2006. The Central & Western New York’s industrial townships flourished during the manufacturing based economic boom of the 60s, but by the mid 90s the bubble had burst. Now the region was increasingly challenged by the closure of industry, outsourcing of jobs, and out-flux of younger population. The nature began subverting the man-made, and a new landscape of loss and sadness emerged. These fringes of civilization were soon re-appropriated by some marginalized communities to play paintball, ride all terrain vehicles, and smoke-up at times. They would call it home; come in the morning and spend all day there till Sun-down, unless cops would chase them away on certain days.

Rishi Singhal (b.1975) is a photographer and academic based out of Gandhinagar, Gujarat. He has lived in diverse geographies and societies across the world and is interested in observing constantly oscillating human ecologies. Currently he is heading the photography programme at National Institute of Design.

SUNIL GUPTA
Stockwell, 2014

He worries sometimes, that he may have to move far out from the city centre in his old age. Skyscrapers are coming around the corner. When he looks out from his window, while making his first cup of tea, he sees dog-walkers, people rushing to work, children going to school, there is still some assurance, the time hasn’t come yet. It’s still the early hours of the morning but his dog is crawling out of her bed when she hears something is happening in the kitchen. Today he has to get himself ready to meet his doctor at the hospital for his routine check-up and get his medications for the next few months. He walks past the same old Methodist church, the small houses now transforming into little flats, which have secret cameras at their door, instead of rose bushes. He still keeps an eye on the corner where everybody leaves his or her discarded belongings; today he has found his own couch, which he left outside after having an argument about the colour of its upholstery with his ex-boyfriend. He has to take two buses; one bus to Vauxhall, where he waits again for another bus to his hospital. He is on the bus to the hospital and a young polish construction worker comes to sit next to him. The young worker is wearing an orange overall but he left his gloves and cap at a building site. The young worker starts talking to him and asks him where he’s from? He replies, “I am from India but now live in Stockwell.”

Sunil Gupta is a photographer, artist, educator and curator based in London and New Delhi. Born in New Delhi (1953) and educated at the Royal College of Art (London 1983,) he has been involved with independent photography as a critical practice for many years. His last solo show, “Sun City and other stories” was at the Alliance Francaise Gallery, New Delhi 2012 and his last book, “Queer” was published by Prestel/Vadehra Art Gallery in 2011. His next solo show is at Sepia Eye, New York, November 2014. He is Visiting Faculty at NID, Ahmedabad and UCA, Farnham UK. His work is in many public collections including; George Eastman House (Rochester, USA), Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tate Britain, the Royal Ontario Museum and Harvard University.
Far away across the great Mannur river,
A little boat snaked its way.

A young man
On a voyage
To seek a bride.
The town was changing
Society was changing
In search of new prospects left my father
The black sheep in the family tree

A normal middle class family
They seemed to be.
So many dreams, ideals and aspirations
A young daughter and another son to be,
And a dream to explore, to always be on their feet.
A promising doctor
Died tragically young

Three little girls
As 14, the second was married

A young postmaster
Promised to make her happy
41 Hewitt Road had tiles in the kitchen on the floor that were sagging down into the basement, they were repaired.

The bathroom was done up, but the wood around the sink wasn’t sealed and it all ballooned up so you couldn’t put your cup down when it was full.

It was top and falling to bits airy, which was ignored through red and white wine drinking.

It was an olives and halloumgi walk through the back door for a fag.
In 1996, Anna Fox, her family and a number of lodgers moved into 41 Hewitt Road, a large, rambling Victorian house in Haringey, North London. The house was like any other house in the ladder streets above Finsbury Park, cracked paint crumbling walls and riddled with cockroaches. Anna photographed constantly and Cockroach Diary was made during the time that she lived here. This series of photographs, edited from a much larger collection, shows the house as if abandoned, no people, just evidence of their presence. Photographs of corners, cupboards, mantel pieces, bathrooms, piles of possessions, souvenirs, cryptic notes and phone numbers scratched on the walls, the strange hieroglyphics of children allowed to write on walls. A Madonna and a shabby relic from a Butlins holiday camp. The only signs of life are the worms brought in by the cat. It is as if some wandering archaeologist has come across the markings of an old sect or tribe. artefacts, objects with an idiosyncratic past, messages making up an inconsequential narrative.

“Who did live here?”

“It’s hard to identify them”

“Look at the anarchy of what they owned, collected, scattered and discarded”

“Who found this place?”
Subject: Re:
Date: Saturday, January 3, 2004 12:52:29 pm
From: Parrpolygon
To: Annafox61

dear Anna,

Ok so here is another version.
I remember Hewitt rd looking like a student flat, familiar to myself as I once lived in a student flat.
Half the time of this is that the washing up is never done until there are no dishes or mugs left at all,
and of course a dirty cooker. However as I only stayed a couple of nights during the Shortstack
Fantasie this didn't matter a jot as we all had a good time.
MP.
Memories from Hewitt Road

I'm not sure but I think I remember a lot of fleas and getting bitten all over my ankles.

I remember the kitchen and the eclectic cd collection, left-overs inherited from all the people who had ever lived there.

When I think of Hewitt Rd I think of the kitchen and the back door lying open, a friendly room. I remember looking for something to eat once and all I could find was an old packet of budget ice-lollies welded into the back of the freezer.

I remember the attic because I left all my stuff there.

Hope this okay Anna. Give me a shout if not.

It's fast, it's easy and it's free! Click here to download MSN Messenger
<http://g.msn.com/BHMMENUK/2737>
From: anna fox <annafox61@btinternet.com>
To: lycos <phocus@lycos.it>
Date: Monday, March 17, 2003 8:44 PM
Subject: Re: R. Hello!

on 3/16/03 9:31 PM, lycos at phocus@lycos.it wrote:

Kit in the study room with the computer and his bicycle, on the kitchen table lots of crumbs, bits of toast and sticky stuff. We go ice skating with the kids. Rob.
(3) **ANUSHA YADAV**  |  *Home, an irrevocable condition, colour photographs, 12” x 18”*
(4) CHARAN SINGH | Not at Home, colour photographs, 12” x 18”, 2013-2014
(5) **DEBRA-LORRAINE GRANT** | *28 Days 28 Dinners*, colour photographs and text, 11” x 10”, 2014

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**Day six**

Still not free from pain.

Attempting to stand to tend to the above for any period of time is not going to be possible.

This is making me even more stressed because the fresh food in the fridge is going to go off.

Husband prepares dinner. It’s a takeaway.

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**Day eight**

I think yesterday had an impact on the family.

My husband has suggested takeaway food rather than be trying to cook.
Day sixteen

This shouldn’t be this difficult.
Going to bed.
Day twenty-five

Pain has returned a bit sharply this time, so I probably pushed a bit too hard last night to get things completed. Unfortunately, this is referred to as ‘burnout’ and is bad for my physiotherapy. He’s probably not going to be too impressed.

I am currently supposed to be practicing at pacing to help keep my pain levels under control. However, I have been very fortunate that the large family meal has been left over from dinner last night using the rabbit and microwave. I have lamb stew, which I can do in the oven or on the hob.

I also seem to have a glut of eggs at the moment from our chickens so I’ll add a couple of these.
DINESH ABIRAM | Querencias, box set of 30 salt prints, 9.5" x 7", 2014
(7) PEDRO MAÇÃS  | The Storm that Bends the Birch Trees, black and white photographs, 47” x 33” (3 photographs), 23.5” x 33” (2 photographs)
(8) RISHI SINGHAL  | Catskills, colour photographs, 32” x 38”, 2005-2006