

MUSEUM BHAVAN GUIDE

“Museum Bhavan is a living exhibition that will wax and wane with the lunar cycle.”

Dayanita Singh

This is the premiere of MUSEUM BHAVAN on its home ground — at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi, it becomes a museum within a museum.

MUSEUM BHAVAN is a collection of museums made by Dayanita Singh. They have previously been shown in London, Frankfurt and Chicago, and here, in Delhi, the artist has installed nine museums from the collection. Each holds old and new images, from the time Singh began photography in 1981 until the present.

The architecture of the museums is integral to the realization of the images shown and stored in them. Each structure can be placed and opened out in different ways. It can hold around a hundred framed images, some on view, while others await their turn in the reserve collection kept inside the structure. All the museums have smaller structures within them, they can be displayed inside the museum or on the wall. The museums can form chambers for conversation and contemplation, with their own tables and stools, as in the *Museum of Chance*. They can also be joined to one another in different ways to form a labyrinth.

The internal relationships among them have evolved through the endless process of editing, sequencing and archiving that sustains the formal thinking essential to the realization of Singh’s work. So, within the extended family of MUSEUM BHAVAN, it is now becoming clear that *File Museum* and *Museum of Little Ladies* are sibling museums, while *Museum of Photography* and *Museum of Furniture* are cousins. Museums also give birth to other museums: *Museum of Embraces* came out of *Museum of Chance*, but turned out to be somewhat premature. *Museum of Vitrines* emerged from *Museum of Furniture* quite by chance during the unpacking at a previous venue. It is possible that there is a *Museum of Glass* lurking somewhere within the *Museum of Chance*; it remains to be seen when it will be delivered.

While the exhibition is on, Singh will be curator-in-residence with an office and museum shop. She will be continually restructuring the museums, and will conduct spontaneous seminars, award ceremonies and book readings; she will also bring in *Parkett* editions for a pop-up store within the museum shop during the India Art Fair.

MUSEUM BHAVAN will be eventually installed at Vasant Vihar, New Delhi, to be opened to the public on the first and second full moon of each year, or by appointment when the registrar is in the city. The museums will occasionally travel to other museums and in time, MUSEUM BHAVAN will host an archivist-in-residence programme and loan its space for conversations.

A special book version of MUSEUM BHAVAN will be published by Steidl in 2016.

The Registrar,
MUSEUM BHAVAN.

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