TITLE INFORMATION
Tel: +44 (0) 1394 389950
Email: uksales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/uk



# Shilpa Gupta: Sun at Night

## Contributions by Urvashi Butalia

## Interviewee Shilpa Gupta

## Interviewer Hilary Floe

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- Exhibition catalogue for the Barbican Centre's 34th Curve commission showing the artist Shilpa Gupta
- Includes a surprise addition for the reader of a loose-insert postcard featuring a poem in Urdu and English by the revolutionary Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz

For its 34th Curve commission (2021), the Barbican presents the first major London solo exhibition by Mumbai-based artist Shilpa Gupta, whose celebrated practice explores physical and ideological boundaries and how, as individuals, we come to feel a sense of isolation or belonging. Gupta presents and builds on her acclaimed project *For, In Your Tongue, I Cannot Fit* (2017–18), an experiential sound installation of 100 microphones suspended above 100 metal spikes, each piercing a page inscribed with a fragmented verse of poetry by a writer who has been imprisoned for their work, writings or beliefs. Spanning the eighth to the 21st centuries, the soundscape alternates between languages, each microphone uttering verses of poetry, echoed by its 99 counterparts. Giving a voice to those who have been silenced, Gupta's haunting installation highlights the fragility of personal expression while raising urgent questions of censorship and resistance. Gupta also presents new drawings and sculptures that reflect on issues of confinement and the right to free expression. The book includes a loose-insert postcard featuring a poem in Urdu and English by the revolutionary Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz.

**Urvashi Butalia** (born 1952) is an Indian feminist writer, publisher and activist. She is known for her work in the women's movement of India, as well as for authoring books. Butalia is also Director and Cofounder of Kali for Women, India's first feminist publishing house. An active participant in India's women's movement for more than two decades, she holds the position of Reader at the College of Vocational Studies at the University of Delhi.
**Hilary Floe** is Assistant Curator at the Barbican Centre and the exhibition curator.

**Faiz Ahmad Faiz** is a revolutionary Pakistani poet.
**Shilpa Gupta** (b.1976, Mumbai) lives and works in Mumbai, India, where she studied sculpture at the Sir J.J. School of Fine Arts from 1992 to 1997. Gupta has exhibited work internationally, with solo exhibitions at galleries including M HKA, Antwerp; Voorlinden Museum and Gardens, Wassenaar; YARAT Contemporary Art Center, Baku; Kiosk, Ghent; Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld; Centre d'art contemporain la synagogue de Delme, Delme; Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo; Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem; Arnolfini, Bristol; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz; and Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. In 2015, Gupta presented a two-person joint India-Pakistan exhibition by the Gujral Foundation in Venice and has participated in the Venice Biennale (2019); Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2018); Berlin Biennale (2014); New Museum Triennale (2009); Gwangju Biennale (2008); Yokohama Triennale (2008); and Liverpool Biennial (2006), among others.





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