



Press release, June 23, 2025

Possehl Prize for International Art 2025

First museum exhibition in Germany for prize-winner Shilpa Gupta

Shilpa Gupta

we last met in the mirror

27 September 2025 – 01 March 2026

Kunsthalle St. Annen, Lübeck

www.kunsthalle-st-annen.de | www.possehl-stiftung.de

Award ceremony and opening

27 September 2025 in the presence of the artist

Shilpa Gupta (*1976, Mumbai) will receive the Possehl Prize for International Art 2025. To mark the award, which comes with prize money of €25,000, the Kunsthalle St. Annen is hosting the artist's first museum exhibition in Germany. *we last met in the mirror* brings together some 25 works created over two decades.

"*we last met in the mirror examines the multiplicity of knowledge and the ways in which meaning is ascribed, and questions the boundaries of unambiguous definitions in a fluid, permanently shifting world in which we live*", explains Shilpa Gupta. The title of the exhibition is taken from one of the artist's key works, which plays with text fragments that continuously rearrange themselves into new messages.

POSSEHL
Preis
INTER/
NATIONAL
ART
2025



Kunsthalle St. Annen

In her art Gupta deals with such subjects as censorship, state authority, social and political power structures, and collective responsibility. The starting point for her artistic reflection is often Mumbai, where she is based. This megacity is a microcosm of social inequality, post-colonial fractures and global economic dynamics.

The artist fuses local observations with universal questions and so connects people across cultural and geographic borders. Visitors to the exhibition in Lübeck are invited to reflect their own experiences in the mirror of global developments. It includes installations, sculptures, audio and video works, drawings and textile pieces.

"With the award of the Possehl Prize for International Art we are honouring Shilpa Gupta for her sensitive, often socio-political works and the great variety of forms of expression in her overall body of work. Her art is of global significance and can now be seen and experienced here in Lübeck. Our aim is to build bridges from Lübeck out into the world", says Prof. Dr Wolfgang Sandberger, Chair of the Possehl Foundation.



Shilpa Gupta, *Blame*, 2002 - 2004, glass bottles, artificial blood, posters, stickers, video, 300 x 130 x 340 cm, Courtesy of the artist © Shilpa Gupta

Boundary experiences

Borders – geographic, ideological, social – are the thread that runs through the exhibition. In the neon installation 2652 Gupta counts the steps between the Wailing Wall, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The border between India and Pakistan is represented by 1:14.9 (2011/12), a sculpture consisting of a thread wound into a ball. The flexible material evokes the fissures of the landscape and stands in contrast to the rigid borders on official maps. Gupta also explores territorial regimes in the work *Stars on Flags of the World* (2012/23). Hundreds of wax stars, taken from the flags of recognised and unrecognised states, have been placed on the floor of the exhibition. Visitors are invited to take a star away with them, so the work changes continuously and defined affiliations are dissolved.

Poetry and the power of language

Shilpa Gupta's art gives a voice to marginalised and oppressed people. She confronts censorship with the power of words; spoken, written and sung. In *Spoken Poem in a Bottle* (2018) she has gathered texts by banned writers dating from different centuries. The work *Untitled* (2018-2023) is also dedicated to this topic. The drawings show persecuted authors as silhouettes and gaps between powerful figures. Another room in the Kunsthalle is filled with the sounds of songs from modified microphones, including "We Shall Overcome" and "Bella Ciao". In this pervasive sound installation, *Listening Air* (2019-2024), Gupta has collected protest songs from different regions and eras to form an acoustic archive of revolt and solidarity.

Reflections on diversity and belonging

In an environment marked by patriarchal structures and violence against women, Shilpa Gupta gives young girls a voice. In the sound work *I have many dreams* (2007-2008) they recount their desires for the future, demonstrating the universality of adolescent hopes. The large light installation, *I live under your sky too* (2004) is another manifesto for plurality – the sentence shines out in Mumbai's most spoken languages, Hindi, Urdu and English, and makes this juxtaposition of languages and identities tangible.

"In her art, Shilpa Gupta succeeds in translating globally relevant questions into a universal language", says Noura Dirani, Director of the Kunsthalle St. Annen. *"Her works open up spaces for dialogue and connect people in different locations, enabling them to see their own history through others' eyes. We are particularly looking forward to a new work that the artist is developing especially for Lübeck and will incorporate the people here."*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a **wide-ranging programme of activities**, involving the different communities in the Hanseatic city. An **exhibition catalogue** will be published, featuring contributions from Monica Juneja, Sabih Ahmed, Sunil Khilnani and others.



Shilpa Gupta, *Stars on Flags of the World*, July 2011, 2012-2023, thread on fabric, 300 x 400 cm, courtesy of the artist and neugerriemschneider, Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe © Shilpa Gupta

The artist Shilpa Gupta

Shilpa Gupta is considered to be one of the most important voices in South-East Asian contemporary art. The artist lives and works in Mumbai, India, where she studied sculpture at the Sir J. J. School of Art from 1992 to 1997. Her works have been shown at the Venice Biennale, the documenta in Kassel, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Triennale in Yokohama. Inspired by conceptual art and everyday aesthetics, she works in multiple media and always stays close to social realities.

Possehl Prize for International Art

With the Possehl Prize for International Art the Possehl Foundation recognises ground-breaking representatives of international contemporary art for their life's work, an outstanding piece or body of work. The award comes with prize money of €25,000 and includes an exhibition in Lübeck. The exhibition will be designed and organised and the exhibition catalogue produced in 2025 by Kunsthalle St. Annen, a member of LÜBECKER MUSEEN. The prize is awarded in the categories of sculpture, installation, new media and performance, as well as art intervention. Intermedia connections and different forms of artistic expression in the artist's body of work are given particular weight. The jury selects the prizewinner from proposals by an international panel of experts. The Possehl Prize for International Art is awarded every three years; the previous prize-winners are Doris Salcedo (2019) and Matt Mullican (2022). In addition to the Possehl Prize for International Art, the Possehl Foundation has awarded the Possehl Prize for Lübeck Art to local artists since 2018.

Possehl Foundation

Since it was founded in 1919 the Possehl Foundation has provided funding to maintain the architectural diversity of Lübeck's Old Town, sponsored non-profit organisations, young people, arts and sciences, and supported people experiencing social hardship. In 2003 the Possehl Foundation created a new space for modern art in Lübeck when it funded the construction of a new annexe at Kunsthalle St. Annen in the heart of the Old Town, boosting the city's reputation as a vibrant location for international contemporary art. The foundation is also the shareholder of the European Hansemuseum Lübeck and KOLK17 Puppet Theatre & Museum. With Possehl Prizes for Music, Art, Engineering and Architecture, the Foundation rewards outstanding performances every year. The Foundation is the sole shareholder of Germany's largest *Mittelstand* investment holding company, L. Possehl & Co. GmbH, whose portfolio companies have operations worldwide.

Kunsthalle St. Annen

Kunsthalle St. Annen is a member of the LÜBECKER MUSEEN group and an important location for modern and contemporary art in north Germany and the Baltic region. With its important collection of European post-war art, the Kunsthalle sees itself as a place for spirited dialogue and promotes an open society that includes perspectives that go beyond eurocentric narratives.

#possehlstiftung #kunsthalle-st-annen

Further information:

→ [Possehl-Stiftung](#)

→ [Possehl-Preis für Internationale Kunst](#)

→ [Possehl-Preis für Lübecker Kunst](#)

→ [Kunsthalle St. Annen](#)

Press contact

ARTPRESS – Ute Weingarten
Alexandra Saheb
saheb.artpress@uteweingarten.de
+49 30 48 49 63 50

artpress-uteweingarten.de

ARTPRESS
UTE WEINGARTEN

POSSEHL
Stiftung



Kunsthalle St. Annen