

## Unveiling of Dayanita Singh's edition in Issue 95 of Swiss contemporary art magazine PARKETT, Swiss Residence, 2 April 2015

### *Speech by Ambassador of Switzerland Dr. Linus von Castelmur*

Dear friends, Welcome! Françoise and I are happy to have you all with us tonight!

This is a very special evening, it is rooted in a series of high-octane encounters, perhaps more precisely, I should talk of collisions, liberating shocks and out of the box explosions... Encounters, collisions, shocks, explosions obviously of artist Dayanita Singh with other creative people and innovative art institutions. Being at the Swiss Embassy, you will certainly forgive me to highlight some Swiss connections which I believe have crucially influenced Dayanita's artistic career. But let's be modest and factual, let's talk of Françoise's and my first encounter with the "person" Dayanita:

- Bijoy Jain's exhibition "Architecture as an open process. Recent works of Studio Mumbai" here at the embassy courtyard in November 2013: shy, special aura with her camera around her neck, peculiar way to observe... We on our side were behaving like diplomats do at professional receptions, following protocol and *étiquette*, but we were sensing something special, something precious and we immediately felt that – through her art work - we could easily be connected and get to be friends. And friends we became, happy to meet and to chat, in Delhi, at exhibitions and at her beautiful and hospitable house in Goa.

Obviously, we knew her "work" before we got to know her – we saw her photographs at the Rencontres photographiques in Arles, at the Kiran Nadar Museum in Delhi, the 2013 Biennale in Venice, in London and recently again at the Kochi-Muziris Biennial, and each and every time we were spellbound by her strong pictorial expression and the open, often enigmatic and enchanting narratives behind the pictures.

- But her interactions with Switzerland start much earlier: In the late 1990ies, she met in Zurich, Walter Keller, an editor cum art aficionado cum gallerist – it is the late Walter Keller who edited her oeuvre "Myself Mona Achmed", a highly artistic photo book, in 2001.
- Another crucial encounter was the one with Urs Stahel, the art-critic and former director of the Fotomuseum Winterthur. Again, the experimental collaboration with Urs Stahel and his friends meant a lot to Dayanita, it was offering her a new and open artistic breathing space.
- It was during one of her numerous visits to Switzerland that she came across PARKETT, the famous contemporary art magazine published in Zurich since 1984 by Bice Curiger, Jacqueline Burckhardt and Dieter von Graffenried. Over the last 30 years, PARKETT magazine has edited more than 230 art works of most famous artists like Sigmar Polke, Francesco Clemente, Markus Raetz, Laurence Weiner, Tracy Emin, John Armleder and Pipilotti Rist (just to mention a few of them). It did not come as a surprise to me that PARKETT was asking Dayanita Singh to do an edition for them. Not a surprise, but certainly an acknowledgement and recognition of her relevance and status in the international art scene. Congratulations, Dayanita! You are the first Indian artist to get an edition in and by PARKETT (that is if we for once consider Anish Kapoor as a British artist...).

It is for the unveiling of the art work published in Issue 95 of PARKETT that we gather tonight, the title of her work again alludes to the late Walter Keller, it's called: "Dear Mr. Walter – Mona and myself" 2014.