



**Manjari Sharma**  
**Limited Edition *Darshan* Portfolio**



Marking the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Manjari Sharma's iconic project *Darshan*, Assembly is delighted to announce the launch of a limited edition portfolio containing prints of all nine deities in the series. The 11" x 14" prints are housed in a teal and red linen clamshell lined in velvet. The clamshell is encased in an ornate lattice-work slipcase designed by the artist, reminiscent of ancient Indian motifs. It offers a "darshan," a glimpse of Maa Saraswati, goddess of art, music, and education which is tipped into the cover of the clamshell. This twelve-edition art object is a wonderful addition for collectors interested in displaying the work as an object-oriented book or as a grid of prints of the entire series, offering the opportunity to collect work that is otherwise unavailable in their original editions.



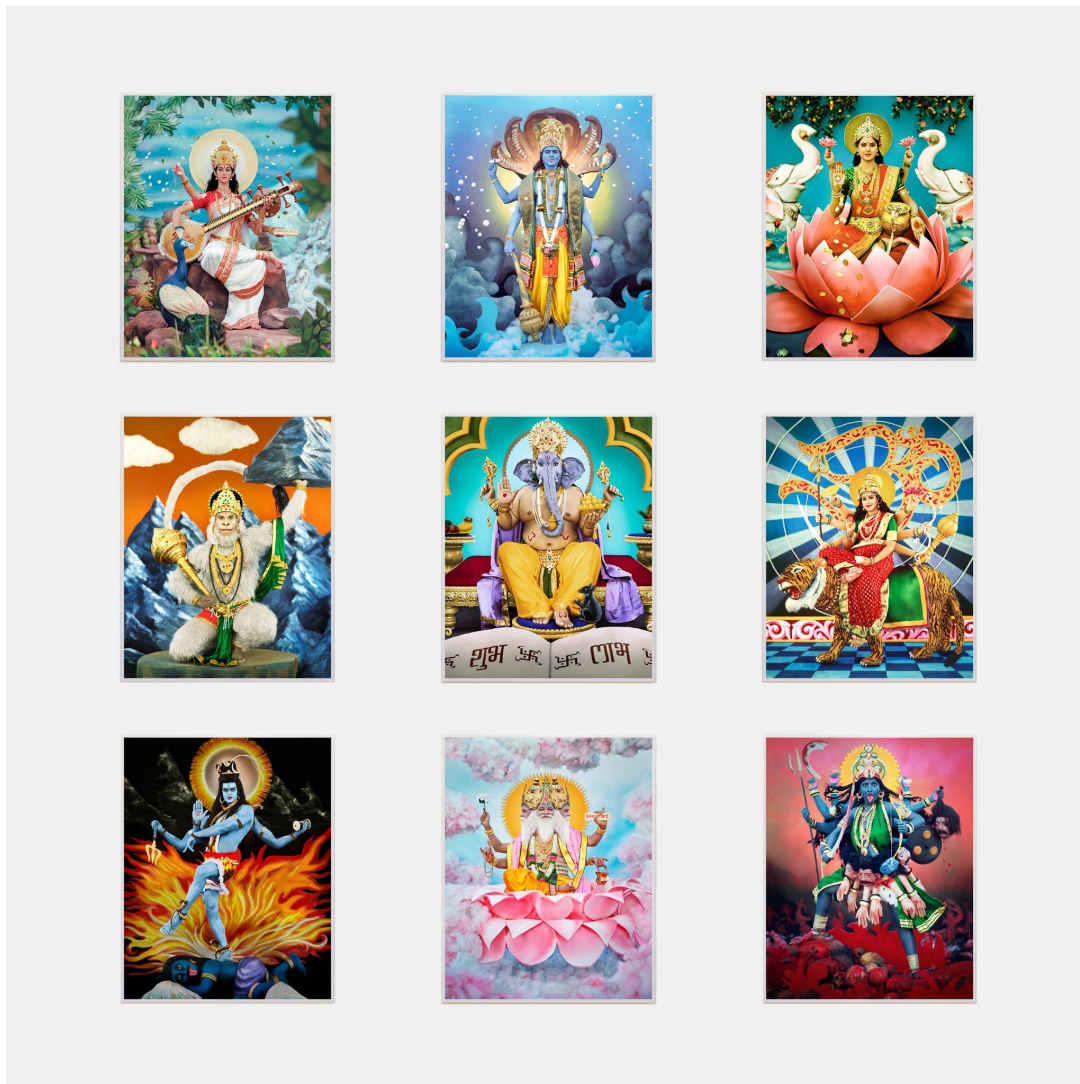


## About the *Darshan* series

Exploring the delicate relationship between photography and representation, *Darshan* is a series consisting of photographically recreated, classical images of Hindu Gods and Goddesses that are pivotal to mythological stories in Hinduism. Darshan (a metaphysical connection established upon sight) is a Sanskrit word that means “apparition” or a “glimpse,” and led by its experiential nature, this large-scale series is presented as an elaborate installation complete with incense, lamps, and invocation. Manjari’s work has been collected and exhibited internationally. It is in the permanent collections of important institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Carlos Museum at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Birmingham Museum of Art, where the series is currently on extended display through 2023.

On the series, Sharma writes:

*Having left a ritual-driven community in India, my move to the U.S. precipitated an enormous cultural shift that motivated me to study, construct and deconstruct the mythologies of my land. My goal was to turn multidimensional memories of sculptures and ornamental paintings of Hindu Gods into two-dimensional photographs. To make the imagery for the series, research on each character led to the assemblage of a diorama by a team of approximately thirty-five Indian craftsmen who created props, sets, prosthetics, make-up, costumes, and jewelry to exacting specifications. Photography is historically recognized as a medium used to keep records. It wasn't until the late twentieth century that it found itself in fine art galleries. For centuries, the way that we have experienced Darshans is via laying gaze upon a molded figure, a carved statue, or an illustration. Examining these trends, I wondered why are paintings and sculptures chosen to represent Gods and what gives legitimacy to these mediums over a photographic portrait. Is it because we don't want to run into 'Lord Brahma' at the supermarket? Is a photograph far too real for reality itself? In a strange cocktail of faith and logic, this series became home to a visual and conceptual collage of painting, sculpture, and photography that represented both mortal humans and immortal Gods at once.*



*At first sight, Sharma's creations are so disarming. They are hard to pin down because they don't fit neatly into common pictorial categories. The images seem both real and not real—Sharma has referred to them as unreal moments fashioned from concrete reality. At the same time, careful inspection reveals certain details (the cotton-like clouds surrounding Lord Brahma; visible brushstrokes on some of the painted scenery) that belie pure digital fabrication. As Malcolm Daniel has stated, the "images hover between the traditional art they reference and something wholly inventive, between constructed fiction and 'straight' photography, and between sincere spiritual expression and kitsch."*

- Stephen C Pinson, Curator, Department of Photographs, Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC