

THE ARTS

Photographer Gauri Gill Wins the 10th Prix Pictet Award

Gill was selected from the shortlist of 12 photographers for her series 'Notes from the Desert'.



Izmat, Barmer, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'. Credit: Gauri Gill

The Wire Staff

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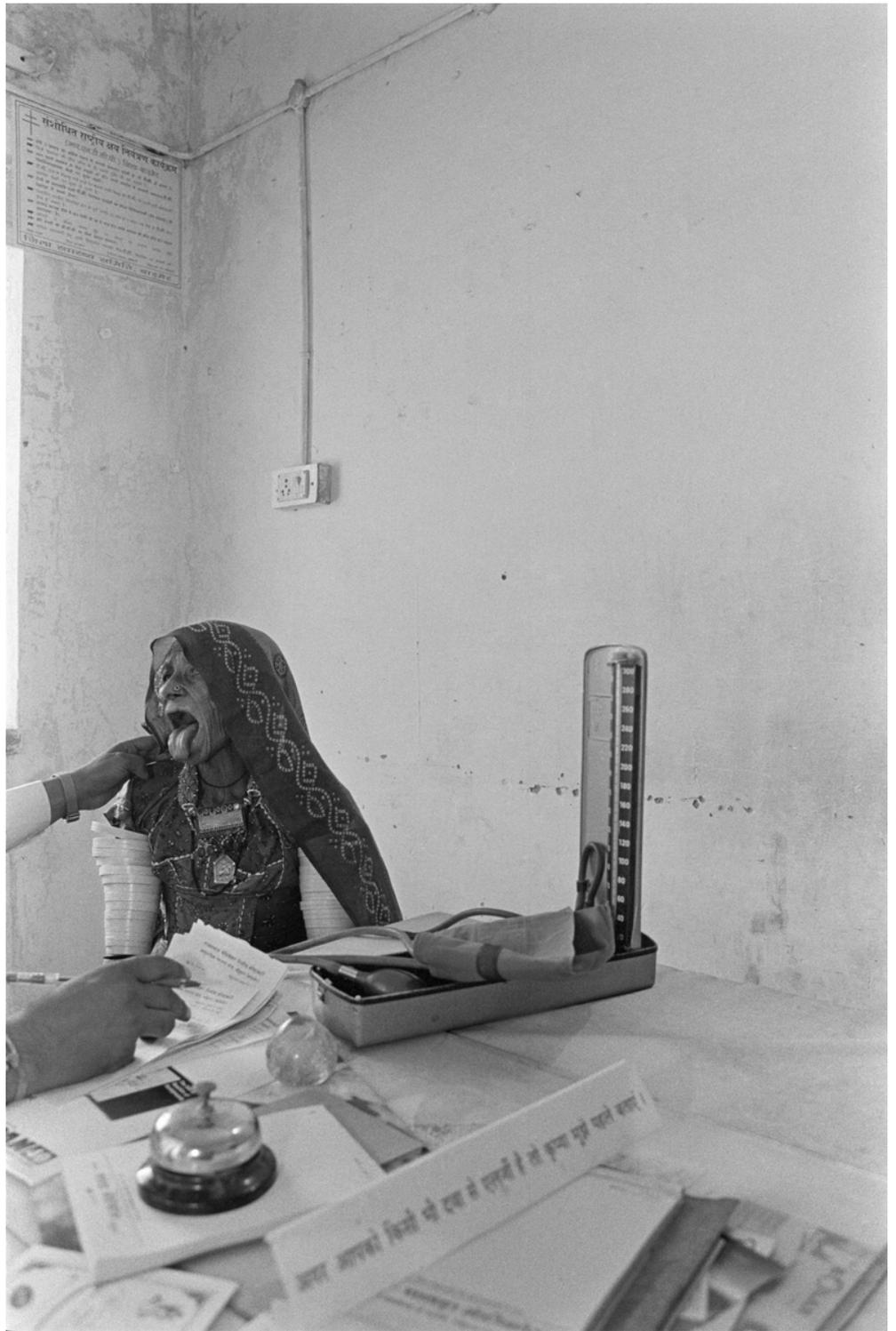
New Delhi: Photographer Gauri Gill has won the prestigious 10th [Annual Prix Pictet Photography and Sustainability Award](#), securing the massive prize of 100,000 Swiss Francs (approximately \$109,219). This award is recognised as one of the world's most significant, if not the largest, prizes in the realm of photography.

The award was announced on Thursday, September 28.



Gauri Gill.

Gill was selected from the shortlist of 12 photographers for her series *Notes from the Desert*.

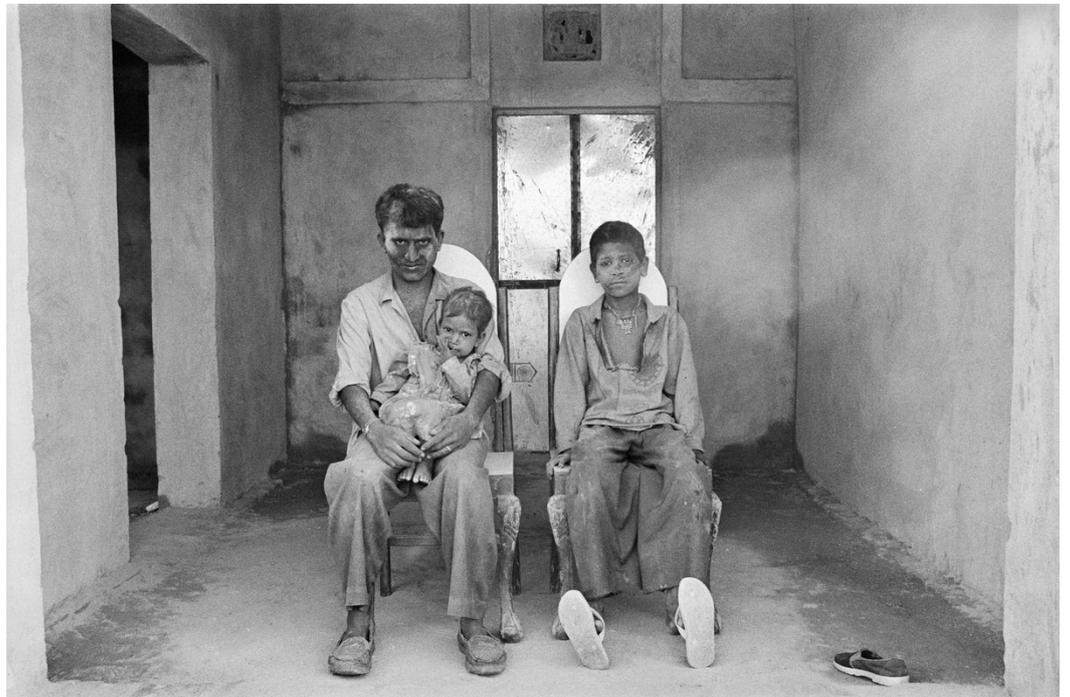


Government hospital, Barmer, from the series 'Notes from the Desert', 1999-ongoing. Credit: Gauri Gill

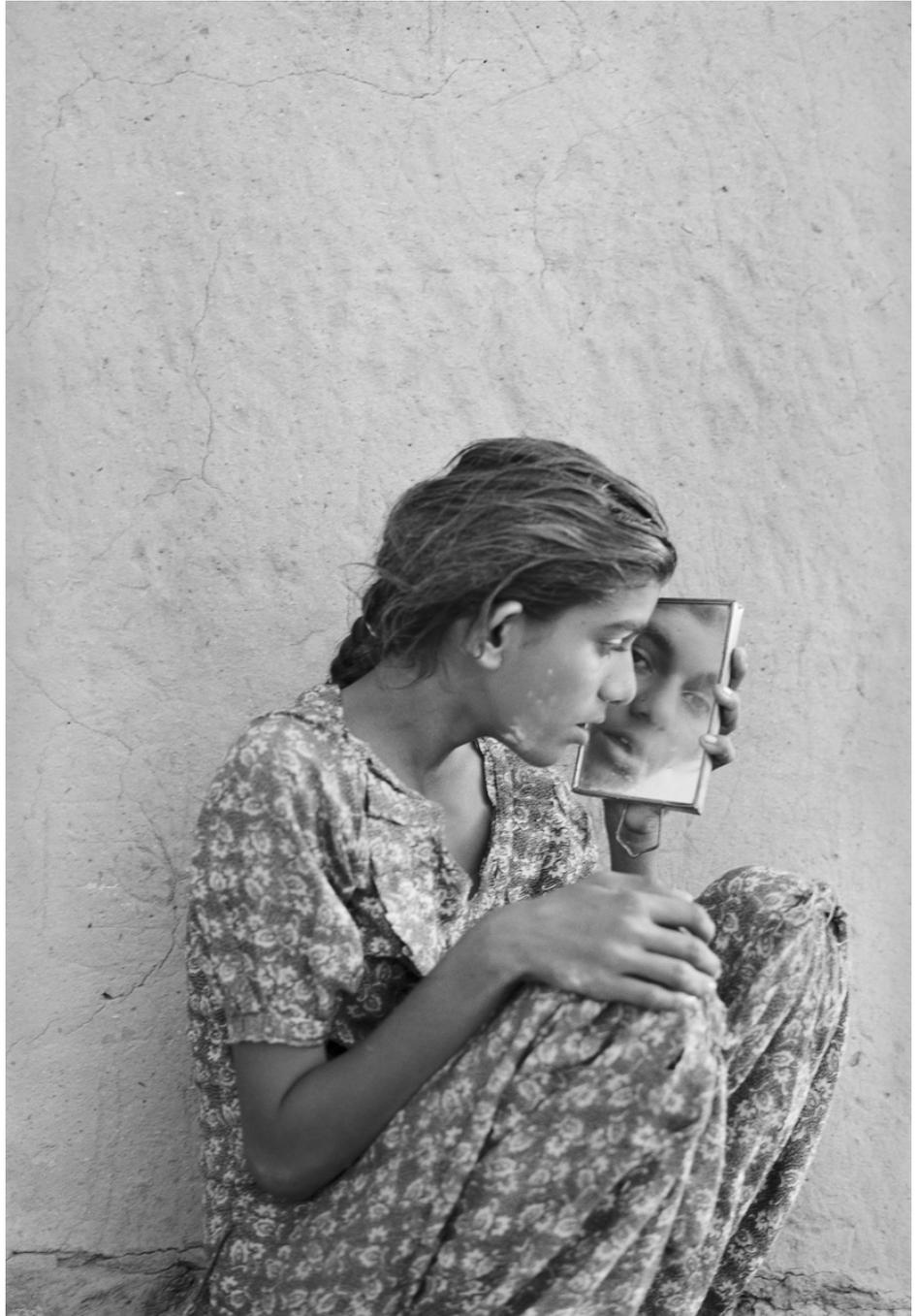


Waterwells, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'. Credit: Gauri Gill

“On my many visits to rural Rajasthan, I have witnessed a complex reality I knew nothing about as a city dweller. To live poor and landless in the desert amounts to an inescapable reliance on oneself, on each other, and on nature,” said Gill.



Hanuman Nath with his daughter and Hem Nath, on Holi day, Lunkaransar, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'. Credit: Gauri Gill



Jannat, Barmer, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'. Credit: Gauri Gill

The Prix Pictet is described as the world's leading award for photography and sustainability. Founded in 2008 by the Pictet Group – a Swiss multinational private bank and financial services company – the award's goal is to harness the power of photography to draw global attention to critical environmental issues.

Entry to this competition is only allowed to individuals nominated through Prix Pictet's global network of over 300 nominators which includes critics, curators, and other specialists in the visual arts.

Nominators are asked to recommend portfolios that have the power and artistic quality demanded by the prize.

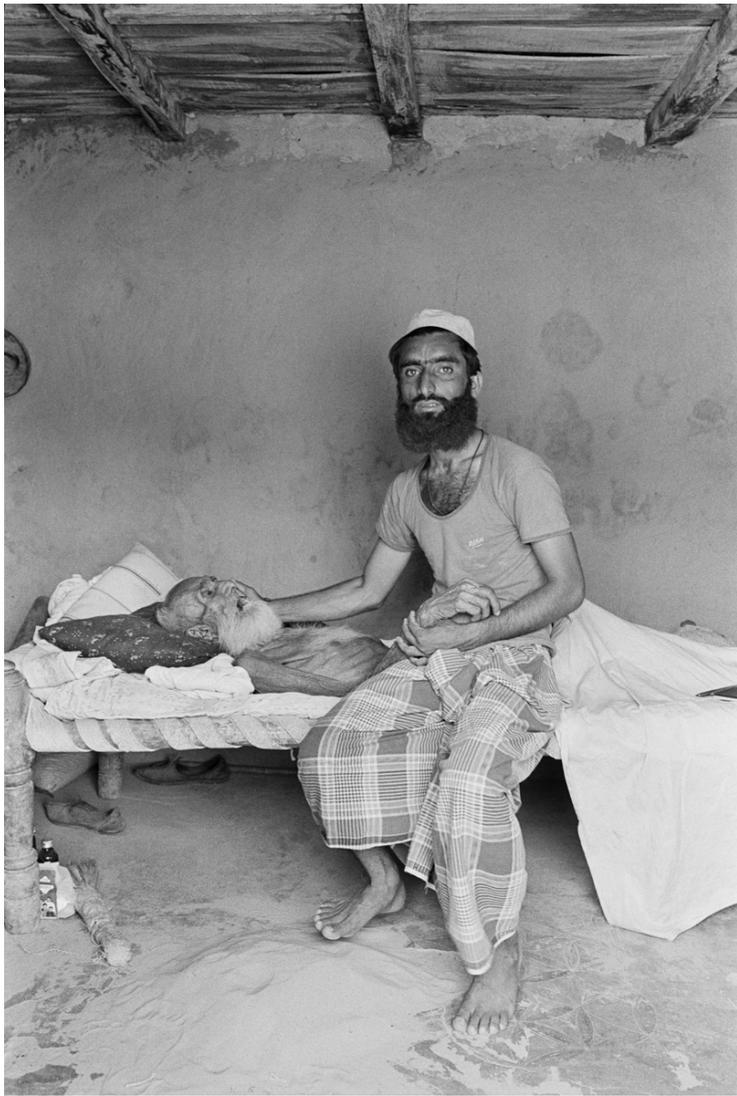
Since it was founded, the organisation says that more than 5,000 photographers have been nominated, “all of whose work in one way or another testifies to the fragile state of our planet.”

“In a world facing unprecedented challenges, from social inequality to environmental crises, it was crucial to turn the lens towards humanity itself. The theme *Human* provides a platform to explore the complexities, vulnerabilities, and strengths of the human condition. It allows the artists to capture and communicate the stories, struggles and triumphs of individuals and communities around the globe,” Executive Director of Prix Pictet, Isabelle von Ribbentrop, said.

“Through this theme, Prix Pictet aims to foster a deeper understanding of our shared humanity and inspire meaningful conversations about the issues that impact us all. Especially when thinking about the theme *Human*, I strongly believe that instead of the future of photography, we should think about photography of the future. The power of the image lies in its ability to foreground critical and urgent environmental issues in a visually impactful yet direct way.”



‘Jogiyon ka dera’, Lunkaransar, from the series ‘Notes from the Desert’. Credit: Gauri Gill



Mir Hasan with his grandfather Haji Saraj Ud Din, oldest member of the community, in his last days, Barmer, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'.

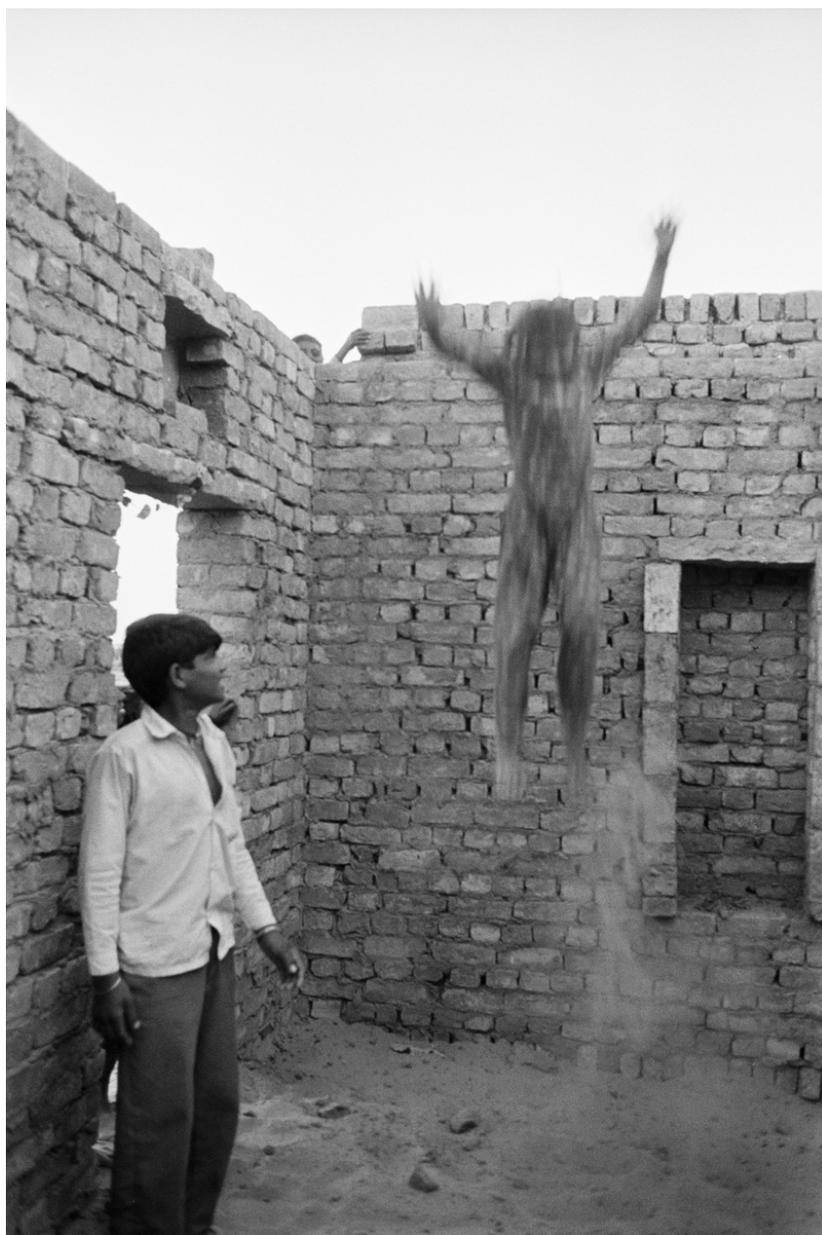
Credit: Gauri Gill

Gill's work emphasises her belief in working with and through community, in what she calls 'active listening'. For more than two decades, she has been closely engaged with marginalised communities in the desert of western Rajasthan, Northern India and for the last decade with Indigenous artists in Maharashtra.

Her winning series 'Notes from the Desert' began in April 1999 when she set out to photograph village schools in Rajasthan. Having grown up mainly in cities, she soon realised that rural schools were a microcosm of a complex reality she knew nothing about.

Visiting the same people and places over decades, she witnessed the whole spectrum of life: drought years and great monsoon; dust storms leading to widespread fevers and floods leading to the rebuilding of

homes; epidemics; overwhelmed hospitals and understaffed school; festivals, feuds, celebrations, and prayers.



New homes after the flood, Lunkaransar, from the series 'Notes from the Desert'.

Credit: Gauri Gill



Sumri, daughter of Ismail the Shepherd, Barmer, from the series 'Notes from the Desert' .
Credit: Gauri Gill