

Bharat Sikka

Bharat Sikka's long-term project about his father in *The Sapper* (Fw:Books, 2022; 192 pages, €40) is composed of fragments: a still life of his father's tools glinting in the sun; a portrait of his desk left unattended. Other images depict the impression of the elastic of his socks on his calves and shins, the constellation of age spots on his back. These oblique but telling observations leaven a series of studies of his father's face, of his figure in the landscape or caught up close in the burst of an off-camera flash. In *The Sapper*, Sikka's approach to portraiture resonates with *The Great Unreal* (Patrick Frey, 2015), the Swiss photographers Taiyo Onorato and Nico Krebs's American road-trip book.

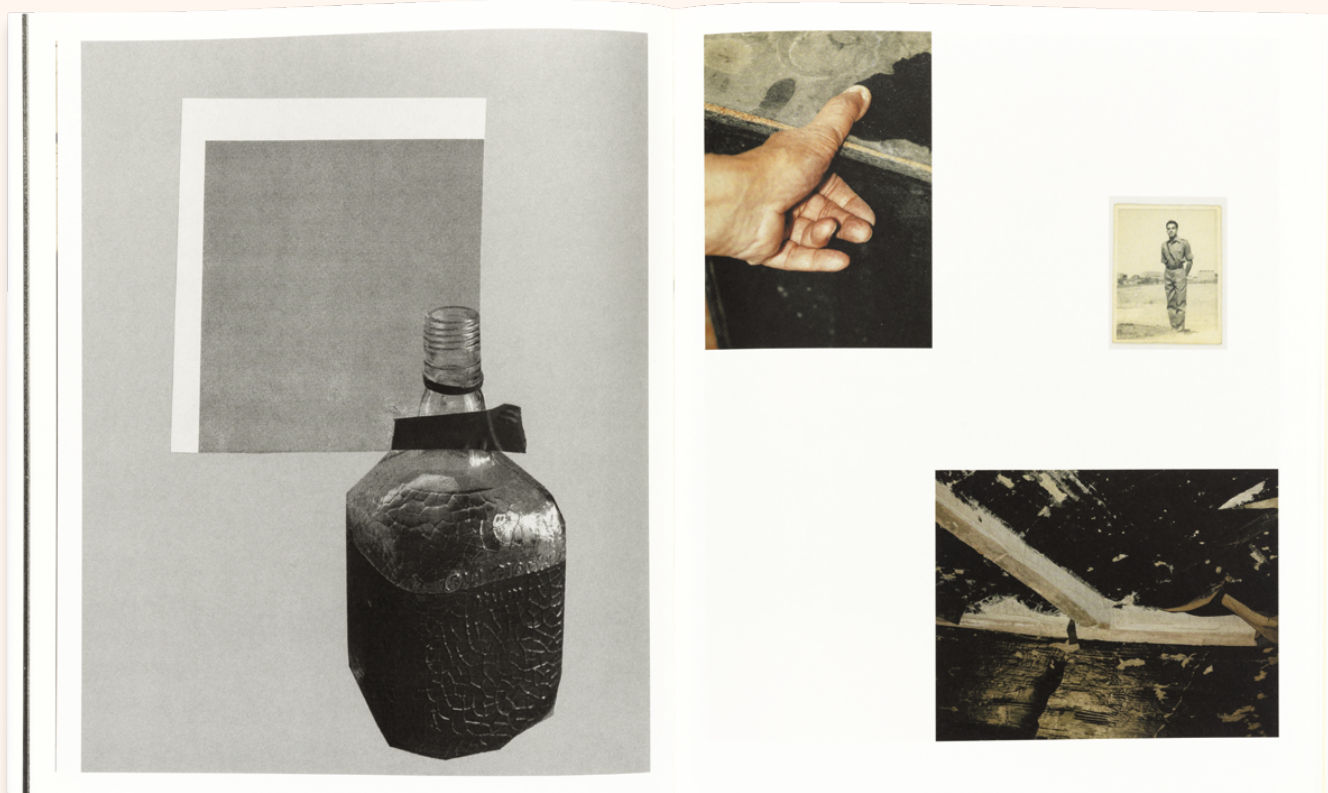
Sikka was born in New Delhi and studied photography at Parsons School of Design in New York. He has frequently focused on the subject of masculinity, and his intervention with the artifacts of his father's career as a member of the Indian Army Corps of Engineers pays tribute to a man's life outside of traditional familial roles—in the book's evocative presentation of sharply observed elements there is a puzzle to be worked out. His construction and deconstruction of photographs as a means of teasing answers out of these otherwise mute details is effectively underwritten by the book's deft pairing and

sequencing of images—patterns emerge and subside, only to return again. We remember, or think we do, but each moment of recall has been slightly altered from the last.

One segment in particular—an eight-page suite of full-bleed, black-and-white images reproduced to emulate cheap, Xerox-style copies—creates an enigmatic rupture in the otherwise gentle flow of images, confirming that something has been knocked asunder. An easy summation of Sikka's subject of consideration lies tantalizingly just beyond reach. Instead, *The Sapper* offers an affecting negotiation of meaning and understanding of a father by his son, and a bittersweet confirmation of the fragility of memory. —**Lesley A. Martin**

Newspaper

In 1968, Peter Hujar, Steve Lawrence, and Andrew Ullrick began printing and distributing *Newspaper*, a short-form, image-only, black-and-white newsprint publication. Over its brief three-year lifespan, *Newspaper* compiled a star-studded list of contributors—Diane Arbus, Richard Avedon, and Andy Warhol, among many others—and provided a platform for artists to exhibit different kinds of work from what was shown at galleries at the time. Unfortunately, scholarship about and recognition of *Newspaper* has been limited; the ephemeral nature of newsprint (which resists archiving)





and the original publication's limited distribution and print run meant that after its end in 1971 it quickly faded into obscurity.

More than fifty years later, the Brooklyn-based publisher Primary Information has compiled the complete fourteen-issue set of *Newspaper* for the first time. While, for practical considerations, Primary Information's publication doesn't replicate the original's format and material, the issues are presented in their entirety, giving light to the boundary-pushing publication that Hujar, Lawrence, and Ullrick smartly edited. The content of *Newspaper* (Primary Information, 2023; 416 pages, \$40), edited by Marcelo Gabriel Yáñez, is kaleidoscopic. The book forces the reader to consider connections between and create meaning across multiple visual registers. Photographs, drawings, collages, imagery from high and low culture—all chaotically coexist within the pages. The effect is befuddling, cerebral, and provocative. Reproduced in Primary Information's volume, the content of *Newspaper* can at times feel dense and indecipherable.

However, once primed to imagine the work within its earlier form and context, one can sense the underlying dynamism between the riotous arrangement of imagery, the casual and disposable form of the original tabloid, and the larger ecosystem of artist publications and queer periodicals of the late 1960s and early '70s. In his preface to a detailed timeline of *Newspaper*'s history included in the back of the book, Yáñez clearly states his intentions: "to make the periodical accessible as a document. My hope is that by doing so, further information and scholarship about Steve Lawrence and *Newspaper* will arise."

—Noa Lin

Spread from Steve Lawrence, Peter Hujar, Andrew Ullrick, *Newspaper* (Primary Information, 2023)

Giulia Parlato, *Gap*, 2020, from *Diachronicles* (Witty Books, 2023)
Courtesy Palazzo Butera, Collezione Francesca e Massimo Valsecchi



Giulia Parlato

Giulia Parlato is drawn to false accounts and fictional retellings, to the tension between museums and cultural objects—particularly how each endows the other with historical meaning. The Italian photographer conceived of her debut photobook, *Diachronicles* (Witty Books, 2023; 120 pages, €35), while researching forgeries and counterfeits at the Warburg Institute in London, and she argues that this meaning is first and foremost a construct, unstable and often the result of numerous interventions. Photographs play a split role in this equation, sometimes as displayed object and other times as document. For Parlato, they also offer a clever form of investigation and play as she appropriates the visual language of archaeological excavations, forensics, dioramas, and museum archives and displays to stage her own constructions, which are somewhere between evidence and fiction. Parlato's photographs—which she made between her London studio, Sicily, and several European museums—appear stark and direct, almost instructional. A gap in the painted ceiling of an eighteenth-century palace in Palermo reveals innards of wood, stone, and rubber piping. Gloved hands confer archaeological meaning to an object concealed in tarp, seemingly exhumed from a dig. "Indeed, it is almost as if the more straightforward the imagery seems, the less