

## Press Release



Baseera Khan (born Denton, Texas, 1980). *Bratdrag*, 2017—ongoing. Performance, duration variable. Photograph documenting performance at Participant Inc., New York, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York. © Baseera Khan. (Photo: Maxim Ryazansky)

### Brooklyn Museum Announces *Baseera Khan: I Am an Archive*

*I Am an Archive* is the artist's first solo museum exhibition, presented as part of the annual UOVO Prize for an emerging Brooklyn-based artist.

Baseera Khan's mural for UOVO Brooklyn unveiled June 22.

*Baseera Khan: I Am an Archive* debuts eleven new artworks, in conversation with key works made since 2017, that explore Khan's body as a site of accumulations of experiences, histories, and traumas. Khan uses their own body as an archive, often employing a variety of multimedia collage techniques to visualize the lived experiences of people at the intersections of Muslim and American identities, both today and throughout history. The works on view in the exhibition include sculptures, installations, collages, drawings, photographs, textiles, and a video in which Khan unpacks practices of othering, surveillance, cultural exploitation, anti-blackness, and xenophobia within our public and private spaces and proposes avenues for protection and liberation. As the recipient of the UOVO Prize, given for an artist living or working in Brooklyn, Khan was

awarded an exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum as well as a commission for a large-scale public art installation—now on public view—on the façade of UOVO’s Brooklyn facility, in Bushwick. The exhibition is on view October 1, 2021–July 10, 2022, and is curated by Carmen Hermo, Associate Curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum. A full list of public programs supplementing the exhibition will be announced at a later date.

The first section of the exhibition features a new series of chandelier sculptures that are inspired by disco balls and that reference Khan’s family collection of traditional textile patterns, transforming a gallery of the Sackler Center into a shadowed space with glimmering lights. The chandeliers are accompanied by four works from Khan’s photographic series *I Arrive in a Place with a High Level of Psychic Distress* (2020–21), which explores self-protection in the face of bodily and mental distress caused by surveillance, oppression, and generational trauma.

The exhibition title is taken from a new artwork, *I Am an Archive*. For this sculpture, Khan used body-scanning technology to create a self-portrait bust that refers to classical South Asian goddess figures such as those found in the Brooklyn Museum collection. The sculpture points to the ongoing violence against femme-identified people in South Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa and reflects the artist’s background. The artwork *I Am an Archive* is also in dialogue with *Braidrage* (2017), one of Khan’s best known performance and installation works. *Braidrage* depicts the artist climbing a wall made from ninety-nine resin casts of portions of their own body embedded with gold and silver chains, hypothermia blankets, and synthetic and real hair imported from India. In the performance, Khan incorporates rock climbing techniques of endurance and strength as metaphors for overcoming personal and imperialist traumas including the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the global impact of American economic policy, and the rise of Hindu nationalism in South Asia.

The exhibition also questions the framework of colonialism that persists throughout collecting institutions such as the Brooklyn Museum, and explores the wider history of how museums categorize—often arbitrarily—the cultures represented in their collections. In *Snakeskin* (2019), hollow Corinthian-column fragments, which refer to the Roman empire, are wrapped in Kashmiri rugs and discarded as ruins, cutting to the core of the insidious nature of empire and colonialism. Khan also presents new photographs incorporating works from the Brooklyn Museum’s Arts of the Islamic World collection. These and other artworks featured in the exhibition express Khan’s deep interest in revealing the economics of goods and materials—such as oil, hair, architecture, and art—as commodities that create inequalities and otherness and that are historical and contemporary drivers of global change.

“Just as a body can be an archive, artworks also contain images and stories that revel in complexity and specificity,” says Carmen Hermo, Associate Curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum. “Baseera Khan harnesses humor, history, and a sense of catharsis in their visually rich and powerful work. It’s an honor and a thrill to present this exhibition.”

Khan is the recipient of the second annual UOVO Prize, which recognizes the work of emerging Brooklyn artists. As part of the prize, they receive a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, a commission for a 50x50-foot public art installation on the façade of UOVO’s Brooklyn facility, and a \$25,000 unrestricted cash grant. The mural, which was unveiled June 22, is a large-scale reproduction of an image from the artist’s *Braidrage* performance, which is documented—using video, sculpture, and drawing—in the Brooklyn Museum exhibition.

*Baseera Khan: I Am an Archive* is curated by Carmen Hermo, Associate Curator, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum.

The UOVO Prize is made possible by



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**About UOVO**

UOVO is the premier provider of storage and services for art, fashion, and cultural artifacts. With seven state-of-the-art facilities in New York, Delaware, and Florida, UOVO offers bespoke solutions to meet the specialized needs of any collection. Our services include climate-controlled storage, private viewing galleries, transportation, installation, packing, in-house photography, and digital inventory management. Each UOVO facility is purpose-designed and managed by a team of industry-leading experts dedicated to the highest caliber of security, discretion, professionalism, and care.

**About the Brooklyn Museum**

Founded in 1823 as the Brooklyn Apprentices' Library Association, the Brooklyn Museum contains one of the nation's most comprehensive and wide-ranging collections, enhanced by a distinguished record of exhibitions, scholarship, and service to the public. The Museum's vast holdings span 5,000 years of human creativity from cultures in every corner of the globe. Collection highlights include the ancient Egyptian holdings, renowned for objects of the highest quality, and the American collections, which are unrivaled in their diversity, from Native American art and artifacts and Spanish colonial painting, to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American painting, sculpture, and decorative objects. The Museum is also home to the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, which is dedicated to the study and exhibition of feminist art and is the only curatorial center of its kind. The Brooklyn Museum is both a leading cultural institution and a community museum dedicated to serving a wide-ranging audience. Located in the heart of Brooklyn, the Museum welcomes and celebrates the diversity of its home borough and city. Few, if any, museums in the country attract an audience as varied with respect to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, educational background, and age as the audience of the Brooklyn Museum.