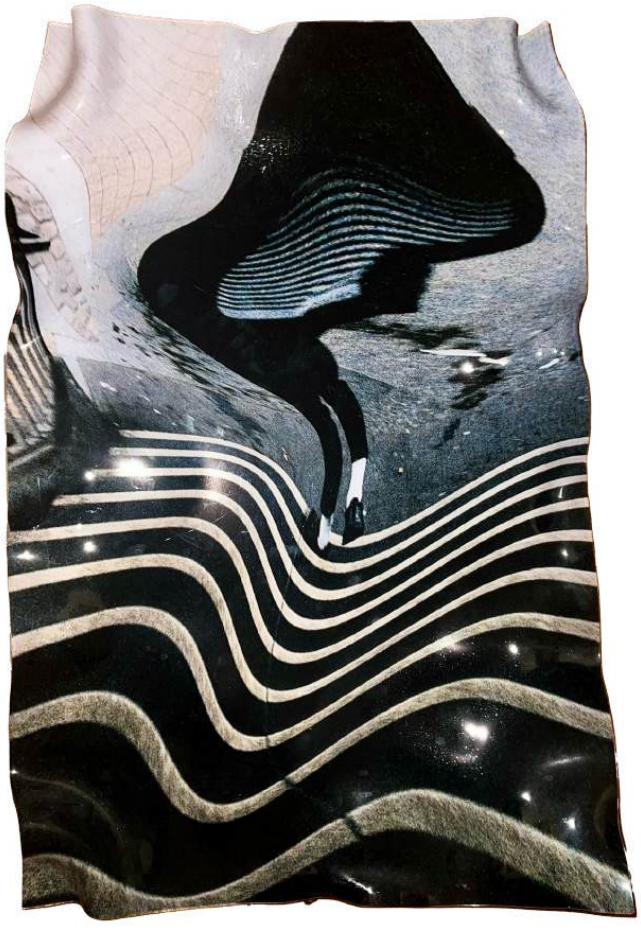
MAANSI JAIN

WARP MAFIA

a reader · texts, threads and sources, 2017 to 2026



arms lengths distances and other parallel realities, 2019. plexiglass, 35mm film, 50 x 75 cm

editioned prints drop friday 27 november 2026 · maansijain.com/warpmafia

WARP MAFIA ORIGIN STORY

in 2017 i slept for a month on a friend's couch in brooklyn, facing a convex mirror where the tv should have been. every morning the room bent toward me. that's where the warp started, and it's still the simplest way i can explain it: the mirror isn't lying, it's just honest about where it's standing.

physics got there first, sort of. light behaves like a wave or like a particle depending on how you measure it. in 1924 satyendra nath bose, teaching in dhaka, worked out how to count light as particles, sent the paper to einstein, and einstein translated it into german himself. light is made of bosons, named for him. so the answer to "what is light" depends on the question you ask it. the physicist and philosopher karen barad puts it plainly: "we know because we are of the world." there is no outside spot to stand and look from.

jain philosophy had a name for this more than two thousand years earlier: anekāntavāda, many sidedness. any view of reality is true from somewhere and partial everywhere else. the old parable is the blind men and the elephant: one holds the trunk, one the tail, each one right, none of them complete. (i have a work called *sorry 4 being so blind*. i'm aware.)

put the two together and you get my problem with photography. a photograph promises to be the view from nowhere, what donna haraway calls "the god trick." but every picture is taken by someone, from somewhere, with a body and a mood and a bank balance. actually the lens is not warped. i don't know if any honest images exist. do any honest people?

so i warp them on purpose. i shoot on 35mm film, scan it, and liquify the scan by hand until the frame admits where it was standing. some become prints. some i heat and bend into plexiglass, so the picture turns into an object and the light lands on it differently from every side of the room.

the hand matters. machines distort images all day now, at scale, for engagement. vilém flusser wrote that a photographer's freedom lies in playing against the camera's program. my warp is the opposite of a filter: a schticky watermark of human pause.

and the warp isn't mine alone. zero and the circumference of a circle were figured out in different places, by different people, in different ways; around 1400 the kerala mathematician madhava found an infinite series for pi, centuries before europe did. euclid wasn't the only one who got geometry, and i'm not the only one drawn to the warp. i just want it to be honest about where it's looking from.

maansi jain, 2026. notes: bose 1924; barad 2007; matilal 1981; haraway 1988; flusser 1983; joseph 1991. full references in the reading list.

THE EDITIONS

22 photographs, released as archival pigment prints on canson baryta, signed with certificate. S edition of 5 · €450 M edition of 3 · €1,400 L edition of 2 · €3,200.



headless homie, 2017



cat allergies, 2018



do u rly meme it, 2018



everybody got choicez, 2018



i love you, 2018



party dawg, 2018



queerdos and weirdos all under one roof raving, 2018



runway ramo, 2018



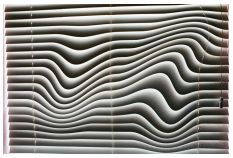
silent disappointment, 2018



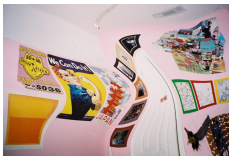
six months ago, they'd met, 2018



sorry 2 have confused fear with intuition, 2018



sorry 4 being so blind, 2018



teen dreams, 2018



tomatoluv in long beach, 2018



preamble, 2020



i find it astonishing i have any distinct memories at all, 2021



all the things eventually intersect and here did two important rivers, 2026



brainwashing the youth into liking vegetables and loving themselves..., 2026



magic, 2026



the gathering, 2026



u got me bb, 2026



yeah sure who hasn't imagined her legs, 2026

EIGHT YEARS OF TEXTS

the artist has written about the warps since the first show in 2018. these excerpts trace how the idea moved, from a question about who gets to look, to honesty, to light and objecthood. full texts are in the warp mafia open library.

2018

maansi's warped tour, press text

written for the first warp show, at all about indian food in bushwick, new york (23 september to 11 october 2018). visitors sat at the tables and browsed over 500 images in photo albums, with new york fashion week pictures on the walls.

the physical distortion lends a painterly quality and acts a reference to the ethical dilemmas borne through the inherent subjectivity of any given lens.

2018

sleek, "inside the warped world of maansi jain's twisted technicolor"

berlin's sleek magazine covered the new york show on 8 october 2018: an introduction by harriet sheppard, then ten works explained in the artist's own words.

"conjures a warped world like no other."

2019

janus roth interviews maansi jain, kunstler/kunstlerin.com

a long, joking interview in december 2019 about the show paranoia and where the warp came from: the convex mirror in brooklyn, play, and whether any image can be honest.

being an analog purist felt wrong to me, whereas playing with film scans on the computer felt like an intuitive extension of play.

2019

vice germany

an interview about the series ppl of technicolor, in german. in english: "people always think photos are real. but that isn't true. i didn't want to pretend that anything i document is objective."

ich wollte nicht so tun, als wäre irgendetwas von dem, was ich dokumentiere, objektiv.

2025

«i fancy some more rest», sculptural notes

notes for a presentation of the warp mafia sculptures: hand warped acrylic glass and 35mm film scans, from 2019 to 2025.

a three dimensional reminder that documentary photography has an inherent perspective as imbued by its auteur and context.

2026

artist statement

the statement used in the 2026 portfolio and in residency applications, where the warps meet physics for the first time.

through processes of warping and reconfiguring light sensitive media, they expand the photograph's purview from documentation and into myth.

READING LIST

selected sources. every quotation was checked against the original or two scholarly sources in november 2026. the full bibliography, with a fact check log and open access links, is in the warp mafia open library.

bose, satyendra nath. "plancks gesetz und lichtquantenhypothese." *zeitschrift für physik* 26 (1924).
light counted as particles; translated by einstein.

barad, karen. *meeting the universe halfway.* duke university press, 2007.
"we know because we are of the world."

matilal, bimal krishna. *the central philosophy of jainism (anekānta vāda).* l.d. institute of indology, 1981.
every view holds only from a standpoint.

haraway, donna. "situated knowledges." *feminist studies* 14, no. 3 (1988).
against "the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere."

flusser, vilém. *towards a philosophy of photography.* reaktion books, 2000 (german 1983).
the photographer plays against the program of the camera.

joseph, george gheverghese. *the crest of the peacock: non european roots of mathematics.* i.b. tauris, 1991.
zero, madhava and pi.

steyerl, hito. "in defense of the poor image." *e flux journal* 10 (2009).
"the poor image is a copy in motion."

barthes, roland. *camera lucida.* hill and wang, 1981.
"every photograph is a certificate of presence."

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maansi jain (b. 1992, munich) is a conceptual artist working between berlin, delhi, new york and paris.