

# SUNIL GUPTA

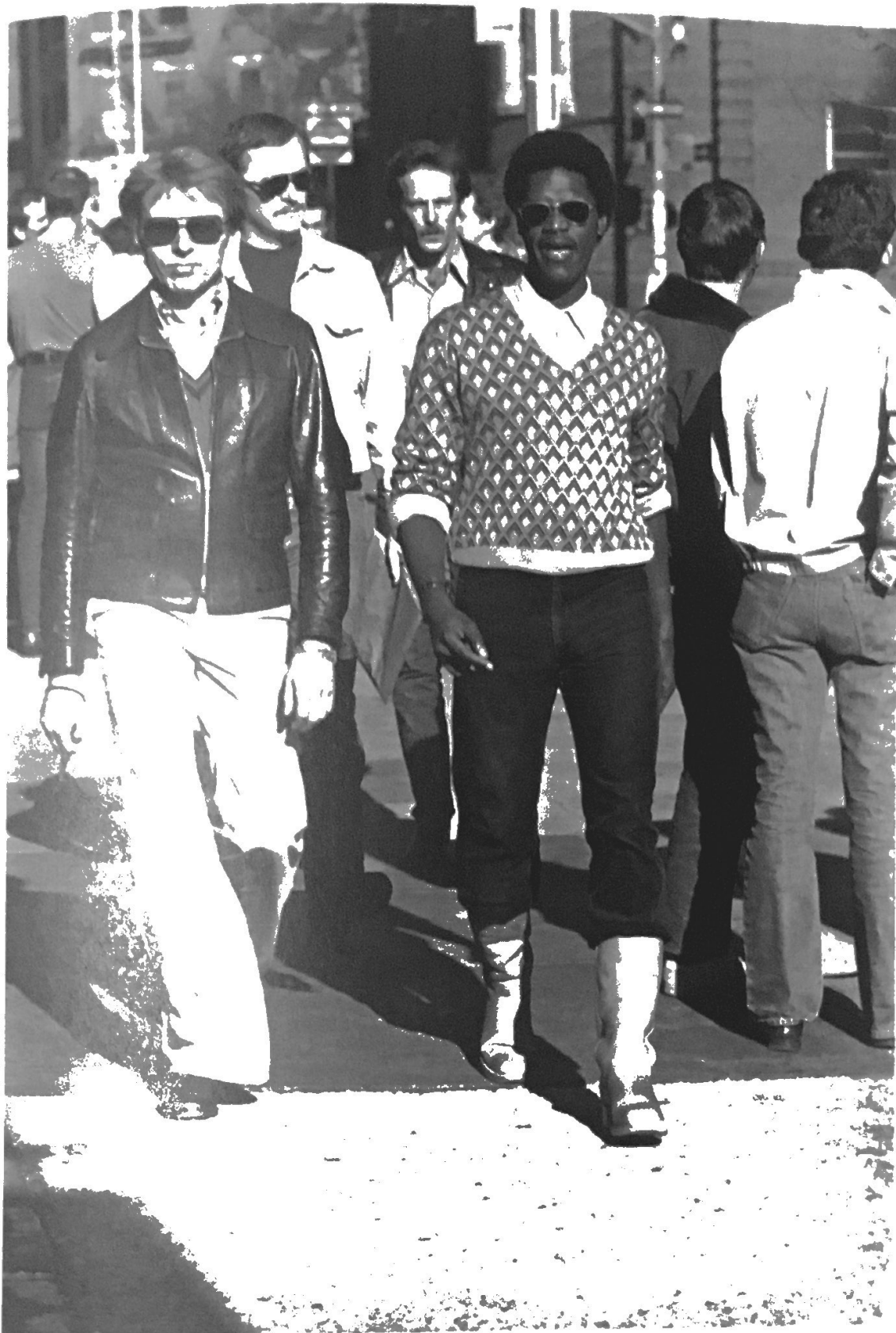
This photograph of two confident gentlemen walking down Christopher Street was taken in 1976, the year Sunil Gupta came to New York City from India to enroll in a one-year program to earn a master's degree in business administration. However, he would eventually study with Lisette Model at the New School for Social Research, and this would become the tipping point for his shift of profession to a fully fledged artist.

For me, the experience of viewing this photograph not only entangles my own history with Gupta's but also blurs the past, present, and future. When I was four years old, in 1979, a few years after Gupta took this photograph, I emigrated from England to the United States with my family, originally from Gujarat, India. I am only now making the connection that even before I stepped foot in the U.S.—let alone came out and became an art historian—there was already in this country a transnational gay-identified person of South Asian descent who was interested in the visual arts.

In retrospect, Gupta writes on his website that the series evokes a nostalgia for the “heady days after Stonewall and before AIDS.”<sup>1</sup> Given the more recent resurgence of nationalism in America, for me—and perhaps Gupta, who is one of India's most celebrated photographers—the series harks back to a period that was not so xenophobic, too. In the end, though, I like to think of the individuals depicted in this photograph as confidently strutting towards a more ethical future rather than being representative of a bygone era.

—Alpesh Patel

<sup>1</sup> Sunil Gupta, “Christopher Street,” <https://www.sunilgupta.net/christopher-street-new-york-1976.html>, accessed April 9, 2018.



SUNIL GUPTA, *UNTITLED #8 FROM CHRISTOPHER STREET*, 1976

Archival inkjet print

11 x 7 inches (27.94 x 19.05 cm)

Courtesy of the artist and SepiaEYE