



*Another mini-review, this one of Gauri Gill's recent show. I wrote this for an upcoming issue of *Camerawork Delhi*, which Gauri co-edits, but it was in the context of a long wrap-up review of about seven recent photography shows, so I didn't get to use it all. I thought I'd post it here uncut. As usual with these mini-reviews, don't bother clicking on the "read more" link below. This is it.*

With a nod to Robert Frank's seminal 1955 book of the same title, Delhi-based photographer Gauri Gill's [The Americans](#), on display from March 15th to the 29th at Delhi's Nature Morte Gallery, documents the anxieties, excesses and sprawling suburban dreams of South Asians living in the United States. Drawn from a body of images shot over the course of seven years, the results are intimate and arresting, collected in an evocative show that echoes her famous predecessor's commitment to the narrative power of the still image.

Gill brings an outsider's lens to bear on a community of people who are themselves poised near the threshold, constantly negotiating a sense of belonging, forging individual and group identities amid the manifold forces of memory, tradition, displacement and change.

Alienation and ennui are running themes in the photographs. A young couple leaves for work in a cookie-cutter gated community, turning away from each other and from the camera, getting into separate cars. Elderly immigrants sit in immaculate and empty rooms, sparsely furnished with objects charged with symbolic meaning: a garlanded portrait, a religious icon, a family photograph caught from the side. But Gill doesn't give in to the temptation to reduce the complexity of diaspora lives to a simple experience of loneliness, loss and nostalgia: we also see Indian-Americans actively shaping their engagement with the world around them, making homes and families, exercising agency in the choice and pursuit of a distinctively *desi* American dream.