camerawork delhi

May 2007
Vol I Issue II

"I photograph to see what the world looks like in photographs." *Gary Winogrand*

Horses Fighting © Vikas Malhotra, Delhi, 2006

The Print

Prabhuddha Dasgupta

I STARTED printing my own work more than 20 years ago, in a tiny makeshift darkroom under the staircase in my parents' house, with an Agfa 2B enlarger, Sterling paper, and what used to be Kodak D-163 developer; the only combination available to someone without a fat family fortune and access to fancy materials from overseas. Colour was out of the question, too expensive for exclusive personal use, and I wasn't about to open a lab to make it commercially viable. In fact the initial reason for taking the trouble to set up a darkroom was to see if I could do it cheaper than the commercial labs, and of course the quality of prints I was getting from the labs was appalling. Colour was still alright but the black and white prints used to come back from the lab, looking like weak, washed out newsprint, with no blacks, no depth, and no tonal richness. Once I set up the darkroom and discovered what was possible, I was hooked and there was no going back. Might be relevant to mention here that about this time I started processing my film too, as I realized it was impossible to make a good print with a badly processed negative. It wasn't easy, there was no airconditionig, no thermostat control, no water filtration, the papers were inconsistent, the hypo gave you headaches and each print took a couple of hours, after laborious tests and much paper wastage. But it was fun. The image coming up in the developer tray like magic and then the fixed and dried print in your hands was a joy that sometimes even surpassed the act of making pictures.

Of course as the years progressed, the hardware and the materials got better and finally I could afford a Durst enlarger and air conditioning and also discovered multigrade paper which made work in the darkroom a lot easier. Alongside came technical know- how, including the famous zone system, which I modified to my own use to be able to pre -visualize the end print in B&W, during the time of making the picture. All along I was also trying to simplify my process, and upto the time when I finally stopped printing I had settled on a combination of Ilford warm tone paper and D-163, printed through a Durst condenser enlarger and a Nikon lens. I had experimented with a variety of toning methods and finally settled on selenium toning as a constant. During this time a few labs came up specializing in black and white but I was still hesitant to use them except for some commercial jobs where the sheer quantity of prints required, compelled me to hand them over to others. Also because printing is so subjective and personal it was impossible for me to hand over a negative to somebody and expect anything more than maybe a technically competent commercial print. It was only after working with Vicky of S.V. Photographics for several years, that I could get the confidence to have him personally process and print for me. And he did a masterful job and still does when occasionally I have a silver print to make.

Prabhuddh Dasgupta is a photographer living in Goa.

When the so called revolution in digital imaging started knocking at my door, I was totally skeptical of the process. I was a purist, totally commited to the craft of fine printing, a silver junkie; and a bunch of electronic pixels on a computer screen did not cut it for me. Also I was technophobic and a computer illiterate. Till one day while searching for a B&W lab in Bangalore, I happened upon some prints made by Pallon Daruwalla, a Bangalore based photographer. The prints were beautiful, full of delicate greys, with the subtlest tonal nuances, printed on the most gorgeous paper, and while somewhere I knew these were not conventional prints, my curiosity was aroused. These I discovered, were inkjet prints and that was my entry into the digital universe.

Soon after, I started reading and experimenting with inkjet technology and brushing up on my computer skills by attending Photoshop classes. I thought it was just a flirtation and I would be back to the darkroom soon enough, but that did not happen. The more I experimented, the better my prints got and there came a time when I would tack up an inkjet print alongside a silver one, on the wall, and stare at them for days trying to pick holes in the digital variation, but from what I saw, I couldn't. The quality of the inkjets were mind-blowing, and because of the control afforded by the software, they had much more information, the gradations were better, the blacks were richer, the whites were cleaner; I had no argument. Today I am printing almost exclusively on inkjet, using a combination of an Epson 8 colour printer with archival inks, RIP software and Epson Ultra Smooth Fine Art archival paper.

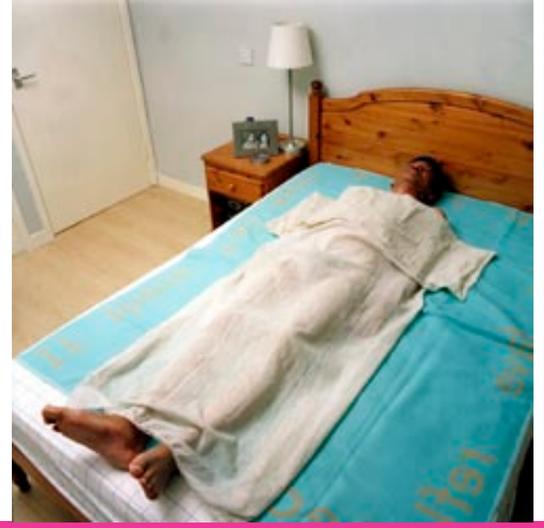
The digital print will never equal a silver print for the simple reason that it is not one. The technology involved in making the print is completely different. But the point is, what does it do for you visually. When glass plates were replaced by roll films, a craft was lost and along with it a certain quality certainly not achievable by the new emulsions. View cameras were replaced by the faster miniature ones and there too something was lost. My point is not what is lost but what is gained. Since I moved to digital, I'm working at least four times as much as I was earlier. No films, no foul chemicals, no badly processed negatives, no one to blame for lousy prints, just me, my mac and my gigantic printer all sitting pretty on my desktop. My chemical darkroom has been replaced by an electronic one. I do the same thing, dodge, burn, control, contrast, print. Only I don't get my hands wet. And I am completely happy with the quality I get.

Aleeya Asleep, © Prabuddha Dasgupta, Goa 2007

There seems to be this myth that the digital print works in colour but in B&W it can never come close to a silver one. My experience however shows the reverse to be true. Maybe because of my years of darkroom practice I know exactly what to go after in a B&W print while my colour vocabulary is not so expansive. So I guess a fine tuned sensibility concerning the nuances of conventional printing is a great asset when you move to digital. The end goal is the same. Just the means to get there are different. I am not sure how it will be for a generation who has never been involved with conventional printing. Since the dynamics of the medium has changed I don't know if the silver print will be anymore held up as a yardstick or whether new aesthetic frontiers will be explored.

I think I am more or less done with analog photography. I go back to it occasionally, just the same way I occasionally pull out a long- playing record and play it on a turntable. The records are dusty, full of scratches like my film cameras but there is a sense of nostalgic comfort that both provide from time to time and I am happy to have that in my life.

I think that the only thing you can carry over from one medium to the other is your own sensibility and your idea of what constitutes the final printed image. Both to me are just mediums. One gives me a silver print, the other gives me an ink print. I know the silver print, and I use that to further the frontier of what I can extract from the new technology.



From Here to Eternity © Sunil Gupta, 1999

Shroud Pleasuredrome

Sunil Gupta

BACK IN the 1960's my best buddy in school, Amit Jayaram and I used to mess around with our dad's cameras and we had some kind of rudimentary darkroom going in his barsati in Kidwai Nagar in Delhi. It was magical, I think we made extremely rough 2x3" prints of our various sisters posing in magazine styles of the day. 4x6" would have been a big print. Then suddenly I was transported to Montreal.

My fledgling amateur interest gathered pace, one day I could afford a basic manual Pentax and 50mm lens. Instead of saving up for more lenses I saved up for a basic enlarger and some trays, soon I was in business, making prints in the loo. I taught myself from books; the Time-Life series of the day were extremely helpful as were the timeless Ansel Adams books. But I wanted to make colour prints. The man in the photo store said that it was impossibly expensive and I could never achieve the degree of temperature controls in my bathroom darkroom. But I had read that it was possible using drums, so I went ahead, making bad colour prints, but they became better.

The turning point came in New York in the 1970's, I had tried to escape from the tedium of being an accountant by enrolling in an MBA programme there. I found myself in a city where photography was booming, dozens of galleries had opened up and MOMA's ground breaking shows were carrying on. The "New Documents" of Arbus, Winogrand and Friedlander and turned into the "New Colour" photography. I had never seen so many original photographic prints, both historical and contemporary on display. The Witkin Gallery on 57th St became a mecca and there were another fifty galleries dedicated to photography, or so it seemed.

I soon dropped out of the nightmare of studying New York Stock Market prices on a daily basis and enrolled in the New School. Lisette Model said I should give up entirely on a corporate career and take up photography. I studied portraiture with Philippe Halsman who had shot endless Life covers. And of course, the print, with George Tice. This was a very exacting class. We arrived with ten negatives and had to print them differently every week. It was an eye-opener! By now I was becoming a master bathroom printer, although the various people I have lived with complained over the years about having to share the loo with toxic chemicals. Cibachrome had arrived with it's deadly chemistry set.

However, at the end of the year my parents were sent a big bill by the MBA school and a transcript that showed that I had attended no classes and no exams. After a fraught few months I parted company with them and left for London with my gay partner. I think to this day they think that if they had never taken me out of Delhi as a teenager, I would have married and worn a suit to work.

London was tough. In order to stay on I enrolled in this new phenomenon, a three year college course in photography at an art school, which I extended to five years by taking an MA as well. This was a step forward and a step backward. In art school, the object, in my case the print, was everything. However, the photo students were happier using a processor and RC prints which I detested. I had to share a wet darkroom with non-photo art students who were just experimenting. Most of the photo students were obsessed with their cameras and with shooting, very few were bothered about the print. Which seemed odd to me as in New York, everyone was concerned about the print and not the camera. Some art photographers actually had their assistants shoot the actual pictures. At the RCA the focus returned to the print. You made your own prints and had ruthless critical reviews every three weeks where people might have said very rude things about your work.

After this however, another shock lay in wait. I ended up freelancing editorially for Fleet Street. Suddenly all the colour was chrome and no one even processed their own film. The money was in the shooting, I finally got myself a proper darkroom and persevered with my own prints. Picture editors liked it though, and I think it got me work from the Times group. Most picture editors were old fashioned photographers who had moved up the management ladder. They loved seeing proper fibre based prints.

Then along came digital in 1991. I loved it, I had been making collages by hand. Photoshop was like God's gift. I got the first Apple scanner and made prints 10 feet wide for an exhibition. Everyone was wow-ed. They were seriously pixellated, but who cared? It was 1992. The only problem was that they didn't fit under my bed any more, and so started a serious storage problem.

I was an early convert to digital. Gave up the darkroom, but hung on to my Focomat, the best enlarger ever made for 35mm. In the 1990's I sat for hours in front of the computer screen, had far too many biscuits and cups of tea and gained weight. My eyes went, and my back went. I used to only get up when I was falling asleep. I moved the computer into the bedroom so I didn't have far to roll into bed. My partner complained bitterly that I had given up sex for the computer. We broke up, I fell ill with a deadly virus - HIV, and suddenly the computer wasn't looking so rosy any more.

Looking at pixels and curves on the screen daily wasn't making me feel better. There was no magic like the old days. One day I thought I'm on the verge of losing it so I am going to give it one last shot. I dusted off the trusty Hasselblad, got some 120 Reala film and made some pictures about my illness - From Here to Eternity. Enrolled in a community darkroom in Brixton and spent many happy weeks making colour prints of my negatives. And I felt much, much better. The magic of photography was back. Now in Delhi, it's all digital again. The same people print everyone's work in the same way, we're losing any sense of originality in the print. Young photographers describe themselves as shooters. They've never been in a darkroom. They've never seen a silver print, let alone a platinum one or even a dye-transfer one. Printing should be the result of choice not the consequence of a narrow market driven consumerist force.

My photographer friend, Joy Gregory, in London got a big grant, she used it to build a wet darkroom and to buy the latest Apple computers. She wants to make cyanotypes, silver prints, digital prints and videos. How can there be only one way of expression in the world? I don't buy this line that digital will be the only way. No way!

Harry & Laxman, © Gauri Gill, Delhi 2007

An Interview with Harry & Laxman

of Siddharth Photographix Bhogal, New Delhi

By Gauri Gill

Q What sort of photography goes through the lab now?
Harry: We do analog printing but now the trend is 50/50. Digital printing is also in demand so we do that as well. Almost every kind of photography goes through the lab including commercial, professional, and artistic.

Q How do you feel about this transition from analog to digital photography? How have things changed for you and from your perspective, younger and older photographers.
Harry: I think the transition from analog to digital will cause analog to lose its charm, because digital is now becoming very popular. But the better one is analog, provided you have understood it deeply. It is better because you learn much more about printing, how to expose film properly, when it is under or over, how to work with shadows and contrast, so many of the details. Younger photographers are going in more for digital, rather than the older photographers. The reason is simple ie, the generation gap. The younger lot understand the computer well and so they prefer digital to play with the pictures and change what they don't like.
Laxman: I really don't think you can get the tonal range with a digital print that you can with a C print. There is two dimensionality or flatness in the inkjet print. The whole process and feeling is different. In the enlarger or the analog camera you see things differently. In the enlarger for example, you see the negative image and then have to go through the whole wet process to get the positive. It's quite different from viewing the positive image directly on the computer screen.

Q Are photographers still making silver gelatin or C prints? Will these slowly become extinct?
Harry: Yes, people who are making artworks still want silver gelatin prints. To tackle the problem of paper shortage and unavailability in the market we have to order it from abroad. It's hard to say whether this will become extinct, but for now there is still a demand. However, in a few years the answer may not be positive.
Laxman: This is all a big man's game. Till they make the paper and film we will continue to print.

Q Should museums collect ink jet prints?
Harry: Yes, they can because they are life long. They possess certain qualities which no other prints possess, being printed on Epson Fine Art paper which the company tells us is archival, and using K 3 ink.
Laxman: Of course they are collecting, that is why we are making the prints!

Q What are the problems you face, and what would you like in terms of support? Is your printing at par with professional labs elsewhere in the world?
Harry: The main problem we face is that of lack of availability of appropriate stuff. The right chemicals and paper are missing. For instance we only get Multigrade RC paper for black and white prints, so the printing has to be done on that. In terms of support we would like to have a 'market' which has a wide scope for all these missing substances. Other than that, our printing is at par with professional labs elsewhere to a great extent.
Laxman: We are dependent on dealers and can only work with what is available. It has been like that from the start in India. But we work with the best photographers who are exhibiting all over the world, and we have learned from them, and through them our prints are entering international markets too.

On the Invention of Photographic Meaning*

Allan Sekula**

THE MEANING of a photograph, like that of any other entity, is inevitably subject to cultural definition. The task here is to define and engage critically something we might call the photographic discourse. A discourse can be defined as an arena of information exchange, that is, as a system of relations between parties engaged in communicative activity. In a very important sense the notion of discourse is a notion of limits. That is, the overall discourse relation could be regarded as a limiting function, one that establishes a bounded arena of shared expectations as to meaning. It is this limiting function that determines the very possibility of meaning. To raise the issue of limits, of the closure affected from within any given discourse situation, is to situate oneself outside, in a fundamentally metacritical relation, to the criticism sanctioned by the logic of the discourse.

Having defined discourse as a system of information exchange, I want to qualify the notion of exchange. All communication is , to a greater or lessor extent, tendentious; all messages are manifestations of interest. No critical model can ignore the fact that interests contend in the real world. We should, from the start, be wary of succumbing to the liberal-utopian notion of disinterested 'academic' exchange of information. The overwhelming majority of messages sent into the 'public domain' in advanced industrial societies are spoken with the voice of anonymous authority and preclude the possibility of anything but affirmation. When we speak of the necessary agreement between parties engaged in communicative activity, we ought to beware of the suggestion of freely entered social contract. This qualification is necessary because the discussion that follows engages the photograph as a token of exchange both in the hermetic domain of high art and in the popular press. The latter institution is anything but neutral and anything but open to popular feedback.

The problem at hand is one of sign emergence; only by developing a historical understanding of the emergence of photographic sign systems can we apprehend the truly conventional nature of photographic communication. We need a historically grounded sociology of the image, both in the valorised realm of high art and in the culture at large. What we need is an attempt to define, in historical terms, the relationship between photography and high art.

I would like to conclude with a rather schematic summary. All photographic communication seems to take place within the conditions of a kind of binary folklore. That is, there is a 'symbolist' folk-myth and a 'realist' folk-myth. The misleading but popular form of this opposition is 'art photography' vs 'documentary photography'. Every photograph tends, at any given moment of reading in any given context, towards one of these two poles of meaning. The oppositions between these two poles are as follows: photographer as seer vs photographer as witness, photography as expression vs photography as reportage, theories of imagination (and inner truth) vs theories of empirical truth, affective value vs informative value, and finally, metaphoric signification vs metonymic signification.

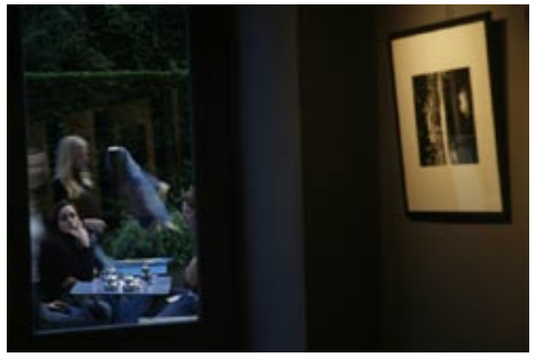
*Extracted from "Thinking Photography", Ed. Victor Burgin, Macmillan London 1982

**Allan Sekula is a photographer, writer and critic based in Los Angeles. His published books are Photography Against the Grain, Fish Story, Geography Lesson: Canadian Notes and Dismal Science with The Traffic In Photographs forthcoming from MIT Press

Shilpa Gupta
Apeejay Gallery, Delhi 2007

Agathe Gaillard and her ‘galerie’

Text and Photos
By Vikram Sundarji



“PHOTOGRAPHY can be like painting or literature“ pronounces Agathe Gaillard eccentrically attractive, dressed in silver-mauve shoes, flamingo pink scarf and an operatic red dress which matches the carpet on her otherwise very monochromatic and seventies look photographic gallery in the Marais (named for the marsh it once was). She sits with unobtrusive authority behind the simple elegant lines of an old wooden disk and punctuates her speech with functional rather than theatrical sips of tea: “ I prefer the kind of photography which is like literature.”

Could photographic art begin where the rivers of painting and literature meet ? I keep my question to myself.

Her desk’s surface is creatively cluttered with work by young artists who still shoot on film (PREFERABLY BLACK AND WHITE) and do their own printing. The work which catches her fancy will lead to a 6 week show some two years into the future.

Photographers who make it are in good company: Cartier Bresson and Andre Kertesz are just two legends who could be found sitting sipping tea at the Galerie Agathe Gaillard in years gone by. The Kertesz print which sold for a world record 170,000/ euro passed through her gallery at a more modest 8000 euro once upon a time and she still has several original Manuel Alvarez Bravo images for sale. Just a few other names from photographic history represented by her gallery include Edouard Boubat, Robert Doisneau, Bill Brandt and Harold Edgerton.

“You only have to look at digital prints to see they are dead. No good artist could not see the difference… It is not easy to be an artist. It is very difficult…” says the lady who started out by selling photographic postcards more than three decades ago.

In the age of ‘what the beep do we know’ her comments seem a bit dated, but I swallow back a counter argument and delay pulling out my own un-artistic digital camera until I have broken the ice further.

She tells me that the iconoclastic Ralph Gibson – “who can deny that Cartier Bresson is not photography” didn’t he say that? - was an important formative influence behind her transition from photographic postcards into the limited edition gallery business. Her pioneering photographic gallery which opened in 1975 was the first in Paris and only one of three in the world - the others were in New York and Cologne - three decades ago.

Beneath her desk I notice her shoes. They will soon remind me of an image by an anonymous photographer she once sold as a postcard. Other postcards she will confess she is partial too from that period will include Kertesz’s Martinique print with its trademark visual trampoline picture plane playing with lyric thoughts and deep space and pattern. And a picture by ex husband Jean-Philippe Charbonnier of an in-between-acts actress or model who converses casually with two men while wearing her nudity like an evening dress.

On her desk amidst the clutter I spot an indifferently produced commercial souvenir from a Paris auction which hawked what was left of Brassai’s photographic estate a few days ago. She didn’t buy anything. She doesn’t seem to be to be a Brassai fan.

Agathe tells me she believes in a strong relationship between the photographer and curator. “ It is a story of love of working together…” She thinks that her ongoing show by a relatively young photographer Jerome Soret says more about the night than Brassai did.

I can’t agree with her. Perhaps I’m a victim of all the hype like anyone else, but for me Brassai’s prostitutes and pimps and other creatures of the night caught unawares in silent emotional exchanges by his naked pioneering flash, have found their way into the collective consciousness of this planet for a reason . I hold my silence though and let her continue:

“When I select someone for a show I like to be sure that I will be able to live with the images for 6 weeks day in and day out. That I can discover something new in the exhibition everyday…I like artists who are very personal. And don’t try to be fashionable. People don’t care about what you do. If something touches them they get interested..”

Intuition, I get the feeling is Agathe Gaillard’s greatest strength despite her French penchant for theorising and intellectualising. At the end of the day she trusts her gut and feels that it is part of her god given destiny to have played a part in finding photography a place in the history of art and an authorial status for its exponents. As a long time practioner of chi gong she is aware of the experiential nature of things.

Finally, I feel the time has come to put forward my belief that the context in which images are presented is often more important than the artistic pretension of the image itself and definitely more important than who printed it or the technology behind its creation or even the creator of the image itself. To my relief (but not complete surprise) I find her open minded.

I feel that the time has come to take a chance pulling out my own just acquired digital camera to make a quick impressionistic record of a now legendary temple of images.

Vikram Sundarji, born human being 23/11/57. Hopes to evolve into new species before final take off from planet.

a road to be travelled

By MARK SEALY

CELEBRATIONS PLANNED TO COMMEMORATE THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE 200 YEARS AGO WILL DO LITTLE TO HIGHLIGHT THE GLOBAL GROWTH OF THE TRADE TODAY

Wilberforce Oak Bench, © Mark Sealy 2006

On 7 November 1775, Lord Dunmore, while governor of the Virginia Colony in America, made a proclamation whereby he offered freedom to black Africans if they joined the King's Army and took up arms against the Patriot Militias. Hundreds of slaves, men and women, ran toward the British lines. Dunmore then formed an 800-strong company of soldiers that became known as the Ethiopian Regiment. After Dunmore's retreat from Virginia and back aboard British ships, many of the Black soldiers and families contracted smallpox. On departure from Virginia, Dunmore put ashore the sick and dying to fend for themselves and retreated from Virginia to New York with the remaining 300 men of the Ethiopian Regiment.

By 1787, a movement in Britain had begun to take shape that was determined to work toward the abolition of the trading in slaves. The movement was spearheaded by key members of the Clapham Sect: Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce are among the key celebrated figures in the history of the abolition movement in the UK. Finally, on 25 March 1807, the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed and the trade in slaves within British territories ended. It was not, however, until 23 August 1833 that the Slavery Abolition Act was passed, and slaves did not get their freedom until 1838. As part of the deal, Caribbean plantation owners were paid over £20 million in compensation.

Over the past couple of years, cultural institutions across the UK have been planning activities to mark the bicentenary of the 1807 Act. The Department for Culture Media and Sport's website claims that.

A wide range of activities by cultural, faith and community organisations are already being planned to mark the bicentenary in 2007. Local authorities and cultural bodies in Liverpool, Bristol, Hull, Birmingham, London and across the whole of the United Kingdom will all be playing an important role. The Heritage Lottery Fund has already awarded over £16 million [US$32 million] to individual projects closely connected to the bicentenary, with more awards to be made in the months ahead. To some degree, it's going to be difficult to avoid engaging with this historic anniversary.

Tony Blair's recent, carefully worded interview in the New Nation newspaper sparked a media frenzy over his refusal to make a full apology for Britain's role in the trading of slaves. It was excruciatingly embarrassing listening to the minister of culture, David Lammy, on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme defending the government's position against Esther Stanford, vice-chair of the Pan-African Reparation Coalition, who made a strong case for reparation. It's difficult, even with a basic understanding of Human Rights, not to agree with Stanford that a formal apology would be an appropriate stance for the government to adopt as part of the lead up to the March 2007 'celebrations'.

We should not, however, be surprised that the current government did not take the opportunity to issue a full apology. It was only a few years ago, in 2001 at the United Nations Anti-Racism Conference in Durban, South Africa, that the UK, the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal were accused of jeopardising the conference by not supporting a Belgium-led initiative – championed by 11 other EU countries and something the African countries had been demanding throughout the conference – pushing for a full apology for slavery. The underlying core issue is not the act of apology itself but the fear of protracted, politically sensitive legal issues related to possible claims of compensation. 'Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,' said the US philosopher George Santayana over a century ago.

The events planned for 2007 will, no doubt, do much to raise awareness in relation to 1807 and Britain's role in the trading of slaves. However, many of them will do little to highlight the fact that an estimated 27 million people are today living as slaves throughout the world.

Slavery is on the increase and, as in the past, it is global economic conditions and world market forces that create the conditions for slavery. Many activists believe that trafficking in people is the fastest growing criminal activity in the world. There is a growing number of people who simply cannot find work and for them, the chance to work abroad, even under the harshest of conditions, is a matter of survival rather than opportunity. International criminal gangs of traffickers exploit the weak and vulnerable, who are shipped along with their dreams of a better life into a trap of abuse and violation, often under threat of death. Eighty per cent of victims trafficked across international borders are women; 70 per cent of these women and girls, according to the US State Department, are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Millions of people throughout Asia are caught up in systems of bonded labour, a system that was also used as a method of colonial labour recruitment for plantations in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia. Today, people with relatively no means of income are offered loans and then forced to work in order to pay off the debts. People are effectively tricked into working for little or no pay, kept under surveillance, threatened and abused. Whole families and generations are caught up in the spiral of bonded labour.

Recent global conflicts, especially in Africa, have seen an increasing number of children being abducted and forced to become soldiers: traumatised and forced to kill. According to Save the Children:

Around 300,000 children, some as young as seven, are fighting in wars around the world. Most are boys, but girls are also forced to fight, are often sexually abused and forced to 'marry' adult soldiers. Both government and rebel armies use child soldiers. Some children see fighting as the only way to escape from poverty. Even the offer of regular food is enough to make some children sign up.

In Sudan, researchers are concerned about the return of a racially-based slave trade. Typically, in raids by northern militias, men are killed while women and children are abducted, sent north and sold.

The common denominator in many of the factors governing the re-emergence of global slavery is economics. Globalisation and the oppressive economic conditions and policies of the World Bank and the IMF effectively recreate the conditions of the slave trade by creating trade slaves. Loans are made on condition that countries adopt economic policies that force the opening of markets to international companies, this reduces the support to domestic producers, drives through privatisation of state enterprises and devalues currencies. The outcome effectively turns whole regions of the world into cheap sources of labour for the production of cheap goods that are sold back into Europe and North America for maximum profit. In a recent interview, professor Kevin Bales explained eloquently that:
"We live in a global economy, so slavery is more globalised than ever before. It also tends to be more temporary – slavery for a limited amount of time as opposed to slavery over generations. And it used to be that ethnic differences were important: whites enslaved blacks, for example. Now ethnic differences are secondary to economic considerations".

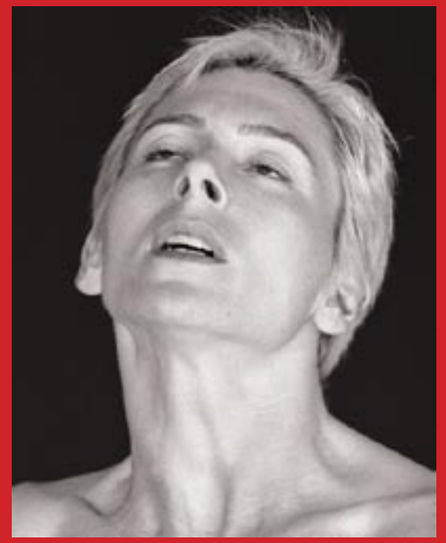
Most important, perhaps, there are now many more people enslaved. In fact, there are more slaves alive today than were brought over from Africa on the middle passage. The population explosion, combined with the economic and social vulnerability of large numbers of people in the Third World, means that there is a glut of slaves on the market. The result is that they have become cheap – far cheaper than at any other time in history.

It is hard to enter into the spirit of the 1807 bicentenary 'celebrations' without pausing to reflect on what has actually happened globally over the past 200 years in relation to the abolition of slavery without some recognition that the wretched conditions of slavery in many instances have never really left us.

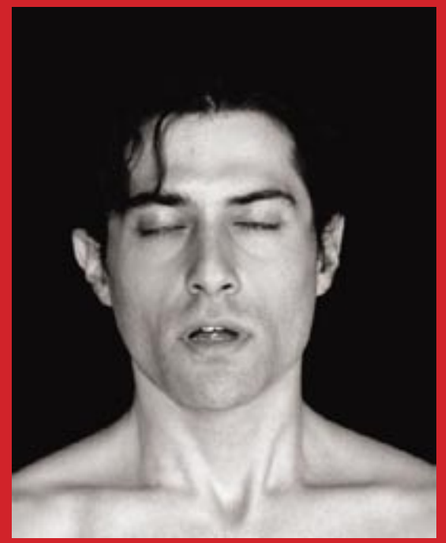
Mark Sealy is the director of Autograph ABP. Contemporary Global Slavery is an Autograph ABP, Magnum Photos Inc and Hayward Gallery touring exhibition. Opening at the Royal Festival Hall, London in January 2008, it is funded by Arts Council England

Frank Yamrus

Rapture



Untitled, Astrid, © Frank Yamrus, San Francisco 2000



Untitled, Paul, © Frank Yamrus, San Francisco 2000

Foremost, I see this work to be about rapture. These portraits were taken over a four month period from October 99 through January 00. I was interested in exploring intimate and honest moments of "rapture" that we usually do not have the opportunity to witness outside of personal experiences, let alone contemplate in a still photograph.

In this project I have stripped the subject and the viewer of all context and environment to examine these very moments. As a point of departure, I have asked my subjects to masturbate to orgasm(s). Much of this project was about trust and comfort level; therefore the images were shot in my home. Each subject was photographed from the initial moment of stimulation through 8-10 minutes after orgasm(s). The first 20-30 images were about establishing a deeper comfort level, another level of trust. In order to examine this state of "rapture" the subject needed to let go. In many of the images, the subject appears to have reached this level while other images represent the struggle of this process and reflective of certain truths. The editing process brought me to these images before you.

The window of time represented in this collection of images is approximately 5 minutes before orgasm to approximately 5 minutes after orgasm. There are a few images that are the actual moment of climax, but the work is not specifically about orgasm, but about rapture. Although the physiology of the physical crisis is unavoidable, I am more interested in the psychology of this time frame. These photographs represent a blending of the psychology and physiology surrounding this event.

Frank Yamrus is a fine art photographer living and working in San Francisco, California and Provincetown, Massachusetts. His work has been exhibited widely across the United States, Mexico, South America, and Europe. His images have been collected by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Art, Houston, Victoria and Albert Museum, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and The Kinsey Institute

Rapture was most recently seen in Expressive Bodies: Contemporary Art Photography from The Kinsey Institute, an exhibition of original prints from the collection of The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction at The School of Fine Arts (SoFA) Gallery at Indiana University, Bloomington . January 9-27, 2007

From the series MESSIAH

Aparna Jayakumar

Mumbai

Madurai

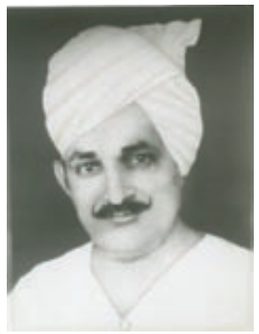
Christian Home in Bandra

Narmada Valley

portfolio

Introducing Inder Prakash

Master Hand Colourist



I am Inder Prakash, son of B.R. Manilal (Artist and Photographer). I learned basic photography from Kohli Bros Photographers, in Lucknow in 1952. In 1954 I learned Photo Coloring and Retouching from my elder brother Radhey Shyam, (Artist and Photographer), and final expert work from Sh. B.M Tripathi (very famous artist of Lahore).
I worked with Kohli Brothers from 1952-1958, Bakshi Bros, Lucknow from 1958 -1959 and Mahatta and Co, Delhi from 1960-2001.
Please contact me or my son Jaykumar Shankar at 9810796931, or at 3152/9 Old Ranjeet Nagar, New Delhi - 8 if you would like your photos hand coloured or restored.

Flower Market, New Delhi 2007

Third Culture Kids, 2007
© Maia Caemmerer, Grade 9, American Embassy School

Autoportraits: Queering the Lens

Nigah Queer Fest, Delhi
25th May - 3 June 2007

Self Portrait
Bishan Samaddar
Kolkata, 2007

The Wedding Season

Ryan Lobo
Mumbai, 2007

"The Wedding Season" by Ryan Lobo, a series of wedding images capturing melancholic moments on a joyous occasion.

"…my photos contained moments where people were alone with themselves, in the middle of crowds. Removed. Contemplating mortality. Looking inwards without pretension. Amidst crowds, I search for aloneness and intimacy"

© Ryan Lobo, courtesy Foss-Gandi / Tasveer

Education Sunil Gupta

WHY, ONE might ask, is there a need for formal photography education? After all it is a craft based skill and has an established history of learning the trade via technical courses and mentoring. It has now become a major art form in it's own right. However, whilst the study of traditional art forms, their formal aspects as well as their critical ones within a framework of art history is well established, a similar development has not occurred with photography. We need to engage with these debates; is it an art or a craft?

Professional photography found it's sponsors in the commercial world and distinctive trades appeared; photojournalism, advertising and editorial. Professional artists sometimes used the medium to make a work or two. Often badly crafted, such works have sat outside the realm of "photography". Here I am talking about a kind of "independent" photography; a medium of experimentation and innovation. Historically this has meant that only well-to-do amateurs could afford it. One's goal therefore, is to widen access so that more people can get engaged.

I feel very strongly that for the medium to develop and become enriched to it's fullest potential, access to it must be maximized. The most obvious way to do that is via the formal education sector. Photography and film, and now the internet, are the media of the masses. While academic art and art history departments take up film studies, and the new technologies, photography has been left on the shelf. The awful consequence is that we now have no consistent documented history of photography in India since about 1917.

Homai Vyarawalla with photography students from Bluebells School Delhi 2006, © Sunil Gupta

I teach young children in a school in Delhi. The nature of the craft has changed. No one wants to know about f-stops and emulsions. Their digital cameras take perfect pictures every time. Photography is at a crossroads. Facing these contradictions every week, I have opted for an introduction to visual culture. We don't discuss lenses in class, we study meaning in the image and how we can make our own experiences translate into images that are meaningful to the culture at large.

Occasionally we go out and see a photo exhibition and meet a living legend to seek inspiration. We visited shows by Homai Vyarawalla and Dayanita Singh. What the Class IX students have to say sometimes beats what we read in the catalogues and the critical press about photography.

We need more formal photography education, and an educated practioner/audience/collector base to take photography in India into the 21st Century.

(Sunil Gupta received his MA in photography from the Royal College of Art in 1983 and now teaches photography at Bluebells School International, New Delhi.)

Zariyein

Khoj Studios, New Delhi
November – December 2006

Emma Ridgway

BEHIND THE red Sai Baba temple down a narrowing street of open fronted chai stalls, barbers shops and vegetable carts are the studios of the artist-led initiative Khoj. As part of their outreach programme Khoj invited Ruchika Negi (researcher), Amit Mahanti (filmmaker) and Subhashim Goswami (researcher) to collaborate and together with Aastha Chauhan (artist and a Khoj co-coordinator) they set out to get to know the area via photography and conversations. In Delhi most navigation happens by asking local strangers to describe landmarks and give directions; in the 'Zariyein' project navigation was generated through inviting people to shoot and select photos then describe how they came to make their choices. Local residents Kamal (a cobbler), Laxmi (a schoolgirl), K.T. (a hairdresser) and Dinesh (who runs a teashop) were also invited to click some photos of the area. It was a one-day shoot using disposable cameras and afterwards they each chose ten of their own images. These eighty images were presented as the first of four photo-walls, with photographs loosely arranged on a large wooden board with immaculately painted quotes in Hindi on why particular images were selected. The only disparity between the two sets of photographs was that the locals were able to capture more intimate portraits of people and their relationships. The second and third boards displayed more images from the eight-person photo shoot and this time the photographers conducted the selection as a group and conversations regarding the choices were audio recorded.

Within an open courtyard near the Khoj studios a well-attended public event marked the culmination of the three-week project: presenting the three freestanding photo-walls with commentary through text and audio and a fourth empty board. Fuelled by copious amounts of tea provided by the local chai wallah the empty wall steadily filled with images as visitors made their own choices from the photos and added their notes and thoughts. The responses were quite open and honest: one man left an ad for his local business and another wrote a love note. Under a snapshot of tea being poured into cups at Dinesh's teashop near the Sai Baba Temple someone wrote "This is how Khirkee welcomes me".

Sandeep Biswas

curates VISION BEYOND
a group show of contemporary photography
for Art Indus, New Delhi 2007

Discarded Spaces, © Pradeep Dasgupta 2007

Untitled, © Naresh Singh 2007

IN November 2006, I was in Lahore for my first solo exhibition outside India. The Lahore opening saw people trickling in, in ones & two's throughout the evening. Unlike Delhi there was no wine, no Page 3, and no media (print & electronic) critically cross-questioning my work. However, there was an interesting mix of viewership and surprisingly, the invitees seemed knowledgable about art. Some were qualified art historians. On the whole I found that though there is a lot of art, music & literature in their culture, photography seems to have been left out. There were a few amateur photographers still busy shooting sunsets and portraits of old wrinkled people. Some said that they were not aware that photographs could look like paintings. And others complimented me on how skilled I was with my brush, painting such fine details that the objects looked real! I Realized how the tradition of miniature art has conditioned viewership. I will not deny the fact that there are a handful of artists who are extremely contemporary and global with their art, but they mostly show their work in the west. The city wasn't too different from Delhi. No traffic management,and bad public transport (as in India), has resulted in too many people using private cars.On one side is the old city, crowded, unplanned and noisy, and on the other,great wide roads, big posh houses and Lajpat Nagar and Greater Kailash kind of markets. Malls are still

on their way up. My experience of Lahore is that of a city extremely receptive to art and culture. It's a city wide open to Indians and Indian art. A great city to exhibit and interact with an intelligent public, and with a growing art market. Another Delhi art scenario in the making.

Sandeep Biswas is a photographer living in Delhi

Gallery view, © Sandeep Biswas

View of Lahore, © Sandeep Biswas

Sandeep Biswas
at Gallery Nairang, Lahore

Info

Camerawork Delhi is supported by the French Embassy in India and the Alliance Francaise Network

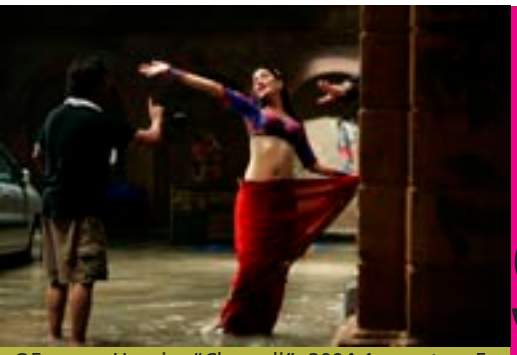
KHOJ
INTERNATIONAL ARTIST ASSOCIATION
khojworkshop.org

Co-editors Gauri Gill, Sunil Gupta & Radhika Singh
Design Vivek Sahni Design © 2007

Contact Us
gauri.gill@gmail.com • sunilgupta@mac.com
fotomedia@airtelbroadband.in

Competition

FOOD & AGRICULTURE PHOTO COMPETITION
Friends of the Earth International today announces the launch of its second annual photo competition, which will gather photos on the theme of food & agriculture from around the globe. Our global photo competition is free of charge, and both professional and amateur photographers are invited to submit photos. We particularly encourage young people, women and people living in the developing world to take part.
The deadline for entries is 15 June 2007.
FOR MORE INFORMATION and competition rules see: www.foei.org/en/photo



©Fawzan Husain, "Chameli", 2004-1, courtesy Foss-Gandi / Tasveer

Grants

- www. sarai.net
- www.indiahabitat.org/vag/ihf-fellowship-photography-award/ihc_fellowship_photography-criteria.htm
- www.majlisbombay.org/culture-fellowship.htm
- www.friezeartfair.com/carteraward

VIVEK SAHNI DESIGN

Shows

SILVER SCREEN
Photographs by Fazwan Husain
Piramal Gallery, National Centre for the Performing Arts,
NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021
Opening: **Thursday 19th April from 6 to 8pm**
On view: **20 to 28 April 2007 from 10am to 6pm**

GALLERY NATURE MORTE
New works by:
Samit Das *(collages using photographs)* •Anita Dube *(large-scale B&W photos)*•Raqs Media Collective *(new color photo works)*
Seher Shah *(digital ink jet prints using a wide range of imagery)*

July 3-28, 2007
Gallery Nature Morte A-1 Neeti Bagh, New Delhi -49
+91 11 4174-0215 • info@naturemorte.com
Monday through Saturday 11-7; closed Sundays.

DOUBLE TAKE
An Exhibition of Photo Images showcases significant recent work in contemporary photography by seven photographers- Anand Seth, Anna Tully, Atul Bhalla, Ayesha Kapur, Karan Khanna, Owais Husain and Ravi Agarwal. By uniting diverse photographic perspectives and styles of expression, the exhibition appears as a collective project that draws its strength from its individual photographers.

Preview Tuesday, **1 May 2007 7pm onwards**
On view **2-14 May 2007**
Venue Gallery Espace , 16, Community Centre, New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110025 +91 11 26922947, 26326267
art@galleryespace.com mailto:art@galleryespace.com

A NEW PHOTOAGENCY FOR SOUTH ASIA!
www.majorityworld.com http://www.majorityworld.com

The Drik Picture Library from Bangladesh is a leading agency from the global South which has collaborated with KijijiVision www.kijijivision.org http://www.kijijivision.org to launch Majority World* .This will provides a platform for indigenous photographers, photographic agencies and image collections from the Majority World* to gain access to global image markets, and it will make it easier for image buyers worldwide to find the wealth of fresh imagery emerging from the Majority World*.

**Majority World is the more accurate term for what has been known as the developing world or the global South.*

© Ayesha Kapur