

## Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

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This exhibition traces the development of photography in the Indian subcontinent. Focusing exclusively on locally born photographers, *Where Three Dreams Cross* brings together the work of 82 artists and other practitioners from 1860 to the present day who have pioneered a powerful visual aesthetic.

This historical survey explores culture and modernity through the lens of photographers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Its starting point is the crucial moment when the power to hold a camera, frame and take images was no longer exclusively the preserve of colonial or European photographers. This sense of self-determination and self-representation takes different forms throughout the show: from photographs taken by the first Indian-run photographic studios, to documentary and photo-journalism, to experimental contemporary photography and images made as part of NGO community projects.

Structured thematically, *Where Three Dreams Cross* integrates important historical material and contemporary work within five broad avenues of investigation. *The Portrait*, *The Performance*, *The Family*, *The Street* and *The Body Politic* all draw work from a number of sources including the influential Alkazi Collection, Delhi, White Star Archive, Karachi and the Drik, Dhaka, as well as presenting work from numerous private archives, galleries and individual artists brought together for the first time.

The first section of the exhibition in Gallery 1 brings together the related themes of *The Portrait* and *The Performance*. *The Portrait*, charts the evolution of self-representation, through the documentation of a range of individuals from maharajas to working people taken exclusively by native-born photographers such as **Gobind** and **Oodey Ram** and **Golam Kasem Daddy**. Works range from 19th century studio portraiture by **D. Nursanwanjee** and **S.B. Syed** to Pakistani *ruh khitch* street photography by **Babba Bhutta**, **Gogi Pehlwan** and **Mohammad Amin**. The section also includes contemporary work that offers innovative reinterpretations of classical composition by **Shumon Ahmed**, **Gauri Gill**, **Sohrab Hura** and **Samar** and **Vijay Jodha** among others.

*The Performance* focuses on the golden age of Bollywood and Pakistan's equivalent film industry, Lollywood in the 1940s and 50s; the nostalgic glamour of actors and film stills is presented alongside the reality of contemporary behind-the-scenes action shots by **Fawzan Husain**. Images by **Bijoy Chowdhury**, **Saibal Das**, **Amanul Huq** and **Sayeeda Khanom** all evocatively record performers, actors and others involved in the entertainment industry. This theme also encompasses artistic practices that engage with ideas of masquerade, role playing and adopted personae by photographers such as **Bani Abidi**, **Sonia Khurana**, **Pushpamala N.** and the key figure working in the early 20th century **Umrao Singh Sher-Gil**.

The images in Gallery 9 explore the close relationships and group affiliations existing within society that encompass, but also go beyond, blood relations. Starting with late 19th century hand-painted family portraiture by artists such as **Khubi Ram Gopilal**, this section traces the evolution of the form's close relationship to miniature painting; to formal studio portraits and on to informal amateur snaps which started to be taken from the 1920s onwards in a domestic context by non-professional photographers such as **Nony Singh** and **Swaranjit Singh**. Innovative contemporary interpretations of *The Family* by **Anay Mann**, **Ketaki Sheth** and **Vivan Sundaram** are also included in this section.

*The Family* also reflects contemporary investigations of creed, communities and race. Its scope includes, **Asim Hafeez's** documentation of a 'third gender' community in Karachi, **Momena Jalil's** series on female inmates in Bangladeshi prisons and images by the children of sex workers children (living in Kolkata's red light district), all of which look at the close bonds that can be developed between individuals existing outside the norms of society.



The work in Gallery 8 brings together the often interrelated themes of *The Street* and *The Body Politic*. *The Street* addresses the built environment, social documentary and street photography. This theme encompasses a range of works from the early street studies of **Lala Deen Dayal**, to photographs capturing the modernisation of Mumbai by **Praful Patel**, to images of a globalising India by **Bharat Sikka**. It intersperses the photo-documentary traditions of **Raghubir Singh**, **Raghu Rai** and **Ram Rahman** with photo journalism by **Abir Abdullah**, **Mohammad Arif Ali** and **Arif Mahmood** alongside contemporary practices by artists such as **Dinesh Khanna**, **Rashid Rana** and **Dayanita Singh** and which show the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity.

*The Body Politic* looks at political moments and movements within the subcontinent's history. It references independence, partition and the creation of Bangladesh, as well as expanding beyond the tension lines between different castes and beliefs to explore sexuality and eco-politics. Portraits of politicians feature alongside **Sunil Janah** and **Homai Vyarawalla's** iconic press images from the 1940s and 50s. More contemporary issues and campaigns are captured by the photo journalism of **Rashid Talukder** and **Tanveer Shahzad**, **Kriti Arora's** documentation of Kashmir and **Munem Wasif's** images recording the effects of global warming in Bangladesh.

Participating artists: Abir Abdullah, Bani Abidi, Syed Mohammad Adil, Ravi Agarwal, Shumon Ahmed, Aasim Akhtar, Shahidul Alam, Mohammad Arif Ali, Mohammad Amin, Kriti Arora, Abul Kalam Azad, Pablo Bartholomew, Farida Batool, Jyoti Bhatt, Babba Bhutta, Hasan Bozai, Sheba Chhachhi, Children of Sonagachi, Bijoy Chowdhury, works produced by CMAC, Iftikhar Dadi, Saibal Das, Prabuddha Dasgupta, Shahid Datawala, Lala Deen Dayal, Anita Dube, Gauri Gill, Asim Hafeez, Amanul Huq, Sohrab Hura, Fawzan Husain, Manoj Kumar Jain, Momena Jalil, Sunil Janah, Tapu Javeri, Samar and Vijay Jodha, Golam Kasem Daddy, Sayeeda Khanam, Dinesh Khanna, Anita Khemka, Sonia Khurana, Abdul Hamid Kotwal, Arif Mahmood, Nasir Ali Mamun, Anay Mann, Deepak John Matthew, Huma Mulji, Nandini Valli Muthiah, Pushpamala N., T.S. Nagarajan, D. Nusserwanjee, Prashant Panjiar, Praful Patel, Mohammad Akram, Gogi Pehlwan, Dileep Prakash, Ram Rahman, Raghu Rai, Khubi Ram Gopilal, Rashid Rana, Kushal Ray, Kulwant Roy, Vicky Roy, Mohammad Ali Salim, T.S. Satyan, Tejal Shah, Tanveer Shahzad, Ketaki Sheth, Fahim Siddiqi, Bharat Sikka, Dayanita Singh, Nony Singh, Pamela Singh, Raghubir Singh, Swaranjit Singh, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, Vivian Sundaram, S.B. Syed, Rashid Talukdar, Ayesha Vellani, Homai Vyarawalla, Munem Wasif and G.A. Zaidi.

The exhibition is curated by Sunil Gupta, photographer, writer and curator; with curatorial assistance from Shahidul Alam, Drik, Dhaka; Hammad Nasar, Green Cardamom, London; Radhika Singh, Fotomedia, New Delhi; Anthony Spira and Kirsty Ogg from Whitechapel Gallery.

Where Three Dreams Cross: 150 Years of Photography from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

21 January–11 April

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