

Label and Panel Copy for INDIA: Public Places, Private Spaces

Pablo Bartholomew

Born 1943 Lives in New Delhi

With a sense of objective distance coupled with keen insight, Pablo Bartholomew has earned an international reputation as a photojournalist. Bartholomew traveled to the United States in 1987 on a grant from the Asian Cultural Council. In Bartholomew's photographs of Asian Indians living in the United States—in settings ranging from the lobbies of seedy motels to cutting-edge laboratories—he portrays a delicate fusion of assimilation and integration tempered by the preservation of traditions and values.

I examine the two worlds of the migrant Indian, the inner world which he brought within himself: the world of roots, religion and tradition—of “Indianness”—to see how much of it was retained and preserved in the exterior world. What is the relationship between the two? How does one world manifest itself in the other? What are the relationships, adjustments, juxtapositions of signs and images that might explain the truth between the two worlds? It has not been my intention to project only the “Who's Who” of Indian success stories, nor just a profile of those who have made good. Because for those handful who have struck gold, there are thousands who struggle and strive in pursuit of their dreams. The project is to be able to counterpoise the struggle with the success, the humor with the irony, to look at rites and rituals in everyday life such as births, marriages, death, and community and religious occasions in the context of their shifting cultural and physical landscapes.

Pablo Bartholomew

Gauri Gill

Born 1970 Lives in New Delhi

Gauri Gill has photographed Indian immigrants in the United States since 1993. In the series she titled “The Americans,” Gill shows Indians firmly entrenched in American suburban sprawl, engaged in religious and secular rituals that embrace both traditional Indian and contemporary American values. Gill's diptychs in the series venture away from photographic reportage and reach beyond a distanced documentary objectivity. They begin to suggest a more enigmatic, subjective, psychological realm, both on the part of the photographer and the subjects of the photos. By pairing the images as she does, Gill creates a tension between the individual and a larger communal identity.

I wished to make portraits of individuals—the taxi driver and shopkeeper and IT professional, also the magician, NYPD officer, DJ, rapper, farmer, drag queen, pharmacist, gas station attendant, remarkable people that may have their roots in one particular community, but represent only themselves. In that, they are as American as anyone else. I hope my work shows some of the details and dramas of daily life, how individuals navigate their circumstances, and selves, in a new country. How does one adapt and yet retain one's soul? Is this one's place after all, or is one perennially out of place?

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Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

Born 1964 Lives in Rhode Island

Born in India, raised in England and now living in the United States, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew has also explored her relationship to India and its cultural heritage. Matthew refers to her American experience through parodies of vintage photographs of Native American Indians, cheekily pointing out how her identity has been shaped not only by the misunderstandings of contemporary culture, but by the assumptions of the past. Imitating the romanticized ethnographic styles of the past in composition and costume, Matthew engages her “otherness” as an Asian Indian living in the United States. Through masquerade and digital manipulation, Matthew denies her audience the opportunity to accept the photograph as a simple document, emphasizing the political, social, and historical commentary in her work.

As an immigrant, I am often questioned about where I am “really from.” In this portfolio, I look at the other “Indian.” The way nineteenth-century photographers of Native Americans looked at what they called the primitive natives is similar to the colonial gaze of the nineteenth-century British photographers working in India. In every culture there is the “other.” In this portfolio I play on my own “otherness,” using photographs of Native Americans from the nineteenth century that perpetuate and reinforce stereotypes. I challenge the viewers’ assumptions of then and now, us and them, exotic and local.

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

Sunil Gupta

Born 1953 Lives in Delhi

Sunil Gupta focuses intently on social issues that are relevant to his personal experience as an HIV-positive gay man. Gupta has also explored his identity shaped by his multinational experience—he has dual Canadian and Indian citizenship, and homes in London and Delhi. In work that can address the broadest social issues or the most intimate personal experiences, Gupta makes diptychs about multiple national identities and the challenges of navigating the intricate labyrinth of each nation’s subcultures.

Exiles. Yes, that’s what I called my photo art project in the 1980s that took a close personal look at gay life in Delhi. Well, what passed for gay life, at any rate. It wasn’t a very happy scene. A few like me found ourselves outside the country and chose to remain there. Those that were here made the best of it by remaining as silent and invisible as possible.

At the turn of the Millennium the news from Delhi became more positive. Gay life was making itself felt and things were getting better. I made another body of work seeking to locate the geography of homelands. There was Canada, where my parents had migrated to, there was New York, where I had gone to finally escape from them, then there was London, what seemed like my final resting place. But, inescapably there was Delhi.

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Navjot Altaf

Born 1949 Lives in Mumbai

Navjot Altaf's *Lacuna in Testimony* references the riots in 2002 that left thousands of Muslims dead or homeless in Ahmedabad, the largest city in Gujarat. Altaf's haunting, semi-intelligible murmuring testimonies of the events and abstracted images of ocean waves are intermingled with images of various catastrophes. This calls into question the ability to document and understand world events through media, even media as trusted as video and photography. Here the artist speaks of contemporary history in a language of poetic abstraction.

The material incorporated is from footage and stills, recorded interviews with the people singled out in the Ahmedabad riots in 2002, and archival material, from various sources, concerning similar events from India and other parts of the world. Testimonies contain a lacuna, the threshold of the indistinction between inside and outside. This work is about attempting to listen to testimonies, and questions whether one can enumerate and describe these events, as they remain opaque when one truly seeks to understand them.

Navjot Altaf

Raghu Rai

Born 1942 Lives in New Delhi

Raghu Rai is among a remarkably talented generation of groundbreaking photojournalists who brought humanism and insight to street photography in order to record a young India. He captures both the momentous and the poetically banal, focusing his cameras on both major historical events and scenes of casual everyday life. Rai's photographs of Indira Gandhi from early in her career through her assassination in 1984 humanize historic events that would later help alter the trajectory of India's history in the late twentieth century.

Even after so many years of photographing, I feel I am just beginning to understand what our country is all about. Over the centuries, so much has melded into India that it is not really our country; it's not one culture. But it has its own pace, which keeps things together. All we have in India still lives—several centuries at the same time. The eternity of it all, that is what matters finally.

Raghu Rai

Manish Swarup

Born 1968 Lives in New Delhi

Manish Swarup creates photojournalistic narratives on wide-ranging subjects as diverse as professional wrestling and the aftermath of vicious religious rioting in Gujarat. In his photos of wrestlers he guides his viewer to an understanding of the tender comradeship of young men pursuing traditional training for the once royal, but now disappearing, sport of wrestling. And in his Gujarati series, Swarup's image of young boys, who appear at once innocent and also world-weary, focuses not on the spectacle of physical violence, but rather on the subtler, yet no less devastating, human impact of the horrific events of 2002.

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The Gujarat riots in Ahmedabad were the gory aftermath of the Godhra train incident. Who is to blame? While the government is still trying to fix liability, a silent fear still lurks in the hearts of the people.

Manish Swarup

Raghubir Singh

Born 1942 in Jaipur, India Died 1999 in New York, NY

An incredibly keen observer of the Indian public sphere, Raghubir Singh explored many subtle aspects of contemporary India. These include the intersection of the public, the private, the political, the commercial and the religious in the Indian landscape.

In his photographs, Singh often built an intense pictorial complexity through framing and cropping and by focusing on the simultaneous transparency and reflectivity of windows and other surfaces. In a spectacular body of color work that marries this play of space with striking subject matter, Singh helped create a bridge between the photojournalistic aspects of street photography and a more conceptualized and subjective contemporary art photography.

In India, I am in the court, the tennis player's court, where the ball has to be hit to the edge of the camera frame, so that it raises dust, but yet, it is inside. Within the tension of those frame lines, there is the buoyant spirit of Kotah painting, and there is the Zen of sight and sense, the archer's oneness with the subject. And early on, I put within my frame lines a sense of Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*: the ancient sites, the crossings, the confluences of rivers, the sources and mouths, the big and small roads, the big and small cities—as well as the peacock picking up a grain of millet in an Indian village. Simultaneously, I had begun to chase a variety of balls in art history—from the idea of detail, metaphor and color from Indian art to an understanding of the human condition from Western art.

Ram Rahman

Born 1955 Lives in Delhi

Ram Rahman, like his friend and mentor Raghubir Singh, combines an eye for clever formal photographic structure with intriguing happened-upon street subjects. Rahman lets his sense of humor, personal world and political stance slip into photographs. His clever images often feature chance juxtapositions of ironically contrasting elements of Indian visual culture: playful hand-painted signs mingle alongside slick political posters; giant figures of strongmen and prime ministers are drawn back into the ordinary world of open air urinals and public parks; the intellectual and cultural elite engage in casual antics at parties.

South Asia is particularly rich for the photographer with an eye for the spontaneous and phenomenally layered visual theatre that we seem to create with a throwaway ease. One area of focus in my photography has been to look at how we inscribe our public and private histories, our old and new myths, on the walls and streets of our public spaces. Surrounded on all sides by religious, political, film and social icons and messages, we create a public frieze of our collective consciousness—as loaded with signs and meanings as any analytical work by a social scientist or political thinker. This unfolding and changing visual epic is a kind of “people's” art.

Ravi Agarwal

Born 1958 Lives in New Delhi

For Ravi Agarwal, photojournalism becomes a tool of social activism and more as he delves deeply into the lives of laborers in southern Gujarat or into the shifting relationship between the city of Delhi and the river Yamuna. Many of Agarwal's images present more than just visual narratives about the lives of his subjects—they have an inescapably photographic quality that makes the viewer aware of the process of picture-making. In his photograph of a Gujarati textile dyeing and printing mill, spinning bolts of cloth and the dynamic gestures of a worker move more rapidly than the camera's shutter, creating a partially blurred image that makes it clear the viewer is encountering a photographic interpretation, not the scene itself.

As I found myself in the company of some of the most politically and economically marginalized people, the process left me personally transformed at many levels. At one level was a sharing of the experience of their very quiet dignity and uprightness despite a very sparse material existence. At another, I could not but interrogate and negotiate my own position as a photographer trying to represent another, especially where I was clearly privileged in many ways.

Gigi Scaria

Born 1973 Lives in Delhi

A Day with Sohail and Mariyan offers insight into a world of poverty and labor seldom seen by outsiders. Scaria accompanies a pair of young “waste pickers,” who salvage useful discards on their nighttime rounds, introducing viewers to the boys' difficult and thankless tasks, while charming them with the boys' ability to retain some youthful playfulness.

I met Sohail, aged 17, and Mariyan, aged 14, during their afternoon class organized by an environmental research and action group, working with waste pickers in the city. I spent some time in the classroom talking to them and asking about their daily routine. They said they go every night to collect waste from nearby places and work through the night 'till daybreak. While portraying a late-night tour with Sohail and Mariyan, my video tries to establish a relationship with a world that we are not normally familiar with. This tour also signifies a search for the back door of an established social order representing the world of consumption.

Surekha

Born 1965 Lives in Bangalore

Surekha's video recalls an ancient Indian fertility myth in which a goddess could touch a tree and cause it to burst into bloom. Surekha turns this story around, with an apparently barren woman bringing an entire grove of trees into existence through years of patient care.

I don't have kids.* When I was thirty, my husband and myself decided to plant these trees, to compensate, to fill the void in our life and to earn a sense of well-being. It was out of our free will that we had planted and were taking care of these four hundred trees. Initially we planted ten

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sticks per year, watered them in the summer 'till the rainy season arrived. Both of us carried water to the plants all through the stretch of four miles. We carried water in mud pots, placed on our heads and waists. Gradually we increased the number of saplings to be planted annually. We stopped planting any more after, say, ten years. By then my husband had taken to illness. I managed to “spend” on cremating him after he passed away. From then on the bond between the trees and myself became more intense.

—Thimmakka, the Tree Woman

*The video subtitle translation, due to inherent differences in language structure, may be slightly misleading. Thimmakka tried for many years to have children but was unable to do so.

Shahid Datawala

Born 1974 Lives in Mumbai

Much of Shahid Datawala’s photography focuses on architectural environments as repositories of cultural memory. In his work on cinema halls and hoardings (the Indian term for movie billboards) Datawala creates a subtle interrelationship between the exhausted dream of the old movie halls, the flotsam of the street and the energy of Bombay’s dream factory.

My study is inspired by the pure visual treat of cinema hall spaces and their changing cultures. Discovering spaces within spaces is something in which I have been particularly interested. I have tried to focus upon people’s interaction with and within these spaces. This exploration has in many situations been an essentially intuitive process. Hoardings create an atmosphere. People interacting with those hoardings create a story. It has been of particular interest to me to seek out and document cinema halls where hand-painted hoardings are still being used. I have also tried to photographically compare examples of cinema hoardings produced by the two different techniques, i.e., hand-painted and digitally printed.

Rajesh Vora

Born 1954 Lives in Mumbai

Rajesh Vora is a keen observer of the forces transforming the lives of everyday Indians. His depictions of amateur beauty contests highlight the cult of celebrity that thrives as popular visual culture—especially cinema—seeps into contemporary experience in India.

Over the past few years, traditional Indian society has been invaded by Western music and fashion, and by the cosmetic and fashion industries. With the winning of titles of “Miss Universe” and “Miss World” (twice in a row) by Indian beauties, the floodgates of globalization were thrown open. With this “planned” recognition, the cosmetic and the fashion industries raised the hopes of the young generation, luring them to adorn themselves with their products, through the Western model of consumerism and materialism. The generation that was largely confined to indoors, living by the Indian customs and traditions, is rapidly shedding its veil of inhibitions. This global invasion gave wings to this generation’s aspirations and many dream of walking in the footsteps of successful models and even Bollywood stars.

Rajesh Vora

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Vijay Jodha

Born 1966 Lives in Delhi
and

Samar Singh Jodha

Born 1968 Lives in Delhi

A collaboration between brothers Vijay and Samar Singh Jodha, *Through the Looking Glass* takes the examination of television's impact on Southeast Asian society beyond debates of the medium's scope of influence. Rather, it explores television as an object in a physical setting that can offer insights into shifting economic and social structures.

The television now shares space with sacred symbols and deities in many homes and workplaces, if not becoming a deity of sorts itself, commanding all eyes, ears and even furniture. Placed under words of solace in a hospital, ahead of portraits of dead ancestors in a hotel reception or among the inventory in a hardware store, television is omnipresent. The manner of its display conveys unintended tales about its relationship to its owners, their aspirations, their life-world and a social history to which it has borne witness. Television becomes more than an artifact, it is transformed to a window into a society.

Pushpamala N

Born 1956 Lives in Bangalore

In a satirical play on early post-Independence family values, Pushpamala N's film *Rashtriya Kheer and Desiy Salad* draws inspiration from old patriotic recipe books. The mood of Pushpamala N's parody of dogmatic patriotism of the middle of the previous century is endearingly silly, but at the same time conjures more troubling associations with present day religious and political hard-liners.

The film uses excerpts from the 1950s and 1960s recipe books of my mother and mother-in-law to create a montage of text, visuals and music between the military notes of the father, a Lt. Colonel in the army, the recipes and domestic notes of the heavily pregnant mother and the school boy son's homework—all found on the pages of these scrap books. The title of the film comes from two 1950s Independence Day recipes based on the colours of the Indian flag. It begins and ends with the Indian national anthem.

Pushpamala N

Born 1956 Lives in Bangalore

Pushpamala N engages popular ideals of womanhood presented in Indian cinema, literature and other aspects of Indian visual culture. She choreographs self-portraits and sequences of photographs in which she plays varying roles from wistful lover to swashbuckling heroine and picturesque villager. Her characters evoke feminine archetypes easily understood by the general population. In *Phantom Lady* or *Kismet*, Pushpamala N builds an ambiguous narrative that recalls the melodrama of Bollywood films.

Phantom Lady or *Kismet* is a photo-romance set in Bombay, about a masked adventurer and her search for her lost twin sister, separated in childhood, who has now become a part of the

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underground mafia. It was shot like a thriller using real locations, with typical scenes and characters. Bombay has a place in the Indian imagination as the great modern metropolis—a place of great opportunities and freedom, but also of decadence and cruelty. It was an homage to the city as a centre of theatre and film, as the producer of modern fantasies. When I become the protagonist, I put myself into various kinds of narratives: one of them is my own story.

Vivek Vilasini

Born 1964 Lives in Bangalore

Traveling through the state of Kerala, Vivek Vilasini encountered people named Marx, Lenin, Che Guevara, Soviet Breeze, Ho Chi Minh, Gramsci and Stalin, all living within a radius of five kilometers. Vilasini observes the penetrating influence of politics and the burden of history long after the waning of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

That all this naming is happening or has happened in a small village is what inspired me. The day I went to photograph Gorbachev, he had gone early to work in the paddy fields and Mao Tse Tung had a fight with the local party bosses and refused to be photographed.

Jitish Kallat

Born 1974 Lives in Mumbai

Much of Jitish Kallat's recent work evokes the city as what he calls "Rickshawpolis," the site of jarring encounters between generations of technology, first and third world economies, as they meet head-on in the street. In *Artist Making Local Call*, Kallat anchors his photographic exploration of the urban landscape with his own image squarely in the center of the streetscape.

Employing the 360-degree panoramic format, one is able to hold multiple timeframes within a single still image. For instance, within the red brackets, a moving taxi occupies the same spot where a rickshaw stood moments ago, mimicking a mishap. The two men seen on either side of this crash are the same; they have marched across in the moments that passed.

Shantanu Lodh

Born 1967 Lives in New Delhi

In order to encourage his viewers to think analytically and critically, Shantanu Lodh often challenges the power structures and mores of society. His sequence of images of a nude son (the artist himself) serving tea to his father takes a common moment of domestic interaction and transforms it into a strange performance of generational and social tension.

The tea-serving ceremony by the servant class (a unique phenomenon of the colonial period which has attained a household/domestic popularity) to the English Babu or the colonial master is a particular way of representing internalized colonial values and relationships. These constitute a large section of the modern Indian family, and are inherited from the colonial masters as ancestral property.

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Anita Dube

Born 1958 Lives in New Delhi

The title *Kissa-E-Noor Mohammed (Garam Hawa)* refers to the classic 1973 film about the impact of Partition on a Muslim Indian family. In this video, Anita Dube plays “Noor Mohammed,” a male character whose focus over the course of his monologue goes from narrating a friendly and unassuming biographical history to lamenting religious fundamentalism and fascism. Yet the piece delves much deeper than obvious commentary on intolerance and religious violence. As a female artist playing the male role, Dube raises questions of gender and patriarchal structures.

I attempt to transcend my gender, class and religion through the identity of Noor, my alter ego, where fact and fiction collide, where I speak to myself and of myself, with the intention of problematising both performative gestures within culture, as well as activism.

Tejal Shah

Born 1979 Lives in Mumbai

With its fluid morphing of a similarly dressed man (Brazilian performance artist Marco Paulo Rolla) and woman (the artist herself), *Trans* reflects the fluctuation of identity across gender lines.

Male and female, where is the limit?

The beard as a macho statement.

Jewelry and makeup constructing the female.

Two masks that work as a cliché sign of gender for society.

What is happening when male and female cross these borders?

What is the limit of human sexuality?

Pushpamala N

Born 1956 Lives in Bangalore

Pushpamala N’s multifaceted system of references is especially apparent in *Navarasa Suite*, a series of nine self-portraits. These works combine the conventions of classic Bollywood studio portraiture and types with allusions to characterizations of the nine rasas—essential human emotions found in traditional Sanskrit literature and drama. The artist’s masquerade reflects an attempt (or perhaps the impossibility of attempting) to construct an individual female identity from fragmented cultural ideals.

The *Navarasa Suite* is a set of self-portraits taken at the studio of Mr. J. H. Thakker, based on the nine moods of Sanskrit poetics. Mr. Thakker used to be a still photographer for Hindi films in the 1950s and ’60s, and his black-and-white portraits of the famous stars of the era shot in his wonderful art deco studio in Mumbai are classics today. I used his early style of expressionist lighting with elaborately created shadows and narrative elements to create the photographic tableaux.

Shilpa Gupta

Born 1976 Lives in Mumbai

Many Indian artists are developing an increasingly international perspective and seeking a global audience. Shilpa Gupta's interactive works simultaneously address issues ranging from constructed gender identities to global consumerism and violent political upheaval. This work sparks a digital dialogue between the viewer and seven moving images of the artist wearing various uniforms and costumes made from camouflage cloth. Voyeuristic manipulation of sexualized types and the stylized militarism of camouflage-as-fashion merges into an elaborate exploration of cultural and individual identity.

Dumbed in a capitalist society, we enjoy being programmed. We find instant satiation and loss of memory in turning ourselves into puppets. We allow media, electronic extensions of ourselves now in [the] hands of a corporate often with state support nexus to think for us and amputate individual reasoning. Mental and physical activity slips from the mechanical to the mindless, deteriorating into fear, chaos and violence, against an enemy that does not exist, in a world where global consent is hijacked to fight a war in search of weapons which were never there. Everybody Bend; Don't Talk, Don't See, Don't Hear. Gandhi said so.

Shilpa Gupta

Gigi Scaria

Born 1973 Lives in Delhi

Gigi Scaria's *The Lost City* presents a philosophical, fictional narrative. Here, the protagonist looks for ways to counter his rapidly disintegrating memory by creating a system of maps, texts and images that remind him of his everyday routine. *The Lost City* creates a world in and of itself—a contemplative inner world of personal and subjective experience.

The Lost City deals with the existence of an individual in his vast urban surroundings. Losing memory, on the other hand, reminds us of the layers of information one has to carry out in a single day's business. The city tries to betray its own people by its ever-changing physical appearance. It appears to us as a constantly changing unattainable space; the city wages war against our collective consciousness.

Vivan Sundaram

Born 1943 Lives in New Delhi

Vivan Sundaram mines his illustrious family's archive for images that he manipulates and combines to create a new history of constructed family narratives. Sundaram's maternal grandfather, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, was a self-educated Sikh scholar and an amateur photographer. He married a Hungarian opera singer, Maire Antoinette Gottesman, and one of their daughters (Sundaram's aunt), Amrita Sher-Gil, gained international recognition as a painter. Though she died at age twenty-eight, she proved to be one of the most celebrated Indian artists of her generation. The members of Sundaram's family also appear and reappear in different contexts, transcending time and place. From an archive of images made by a family both savvy and reflective about self-representation and multifaceted identity, Sundaram builds new,

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imagined documents of family history that acknowledge the complex layers of his mixed cultural experience.

I will orchestrate the images with a digital wand half a century later. In excavating the photograph of the artist as a boy with a Voigtländer camera, I signal a provocative relationship. An artist using his family archive of photographs to make “future” works of art: what kind of “genetic” maneuver, what kind of narcissistic relay does this unwind?

Subodh Gupta

Born 1964 Lives in New Delhi

Many of Subodh Gupta’s works explore dualities in his own identity that are mirrored in modern India as a whole. A successful, internationally traveled and urban-dwelling artist, Gupta has roots in the largely agrarian state of Bihar, one of India’s poorest regions. These two very different worlds meld in *Pure*, a mesmerizing video in which the artist stands in the shower of a modern apartment block. Because the video runs backwards and in slow motion, globs of cow dung rise into the frame and coat his body. While the dung may seem repugnant to an urban dweller (especially a Westerner), it is an essential and valued resource in rural India, where it is used as fertilizer, insect repellent and as fuel. In *Pure*, the rural and the urban, the mundane and the ritual, the contemporary and the timeless collide. This makes the work one of the most compelling contemplations of the complexities and multiplicities of personal, spiritual and national identity in India.

In India, cow dung has contradictory connotations: within spiritual belief it assumes the hallowed position of the cleanser/atoner; while on the other hand, its day-to-day associations are as waste element/defiler.

In *Pure*, I use my body as the subject and the object of a scene in which these contradictory notions of cow dung are ritualistically played out in an urban context.

Surekha

Born 1965 Lives in Bangalore

In much of her work, Surekha references the physicality and spirituality of the female body—its biological rhythms and its timeless sensuality, its mythologization and its politicization, its oppression and its empowerment.

A cautious but irresistible urge to address the gender issue—through visual media—has been a natural part of [my] creative methodology. [My works] explore the concept of “body” as a site of contestation and appropriation that existed in locations/sites that share similar/different histories. These address the issue of redefining/relocating feminine spaces, within a given circumstance and discourse, private or public. A creative tension lies between private, subjective values and social concerns.

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Sonia Khurana

Born 1968 Lives in New Delhi

In Sonia Khurana's *Head-Hand*, the associations conjured up by playful touches of an Indian hand on an African head can vary from sweet flirtations to a consideration of post-colonial identity and globalization.

I attempt to draw critically on references to the social domain—to the geo-political locale and to cultural and gendered identity—in ways that are often visually simple and understated.

Sonia Khurana

Born 1968 Lives in New Delhi

The slow metamorphosis from abstract form to carefully composed figure in Sonia Khurana's *Tantra* echoes the interconnection of the physical and the spiritual, not just in tantric practice, but also in the artist's work as a whole.

Much of my video work is predicated on the idea that video extends the impact of performance, adding the possibility of remote and future audiences for a one-time presentation. I set up everyday, performative encounters, either with myself or with others, through which I explore psychosocial and psychosexual tensions between different forces: public and private, social and cultural, lofty and libidinal.

Anita Dube

Born 1958 Lives in New Delhi

A ritualized performance is implied in much of Anita Dube's work, with the human body often serving as what she calls a "micro site for macro forces." Here a play of positive and negative create a surreal effect that echoes the composition's title, which refers to the philosophic struggle of knowing that which is unknowable. The imagery also recalls a story of the young Hindu god Krishna who is accused of eating mud and is found to have a vision of the entire cosmos in his mouth.

Although the starting point of my work is autobiographical and subjective, I'm concerned that none of this should lead to closure—a kind of self-referential psychological hole. So what starts internally as sensation and emotion, expands and returns to the objects and events in the world. That is where the work finds elucidation: in the threading of the subjective into its correspondence, where it begins to have another life, an art life.

Atul Bhalla

Born 1964 Lives in New Delhi

Atul Bhalla's series of sequential self-portraits, which are part of a larger body of work centered on the theme of water, is conceptualized with simple, open-ended statements. Through the quiet simplicity depicted by photographs of Bhalla's performance, the physical becomes transcendent and the mundane becomes mystical. The act of submersion becomes ritualized on many levels,

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addressing deeply personal experience, environmental issues, and the long Hindu tradition of bathing and submersion.

My work is an attempt to understand water.

How I perceive it, feel it, eat it, drink it, wash in it, bathe in it, swim, wade, sink or will drown in it.

How I drench, soak, douse, moisten, quench, dilute, dampen, cleanse or purify.

How I excrete tears, sweat or urine.

How it falls, drops, floods, inundates, levels, buoys, lashes, gushes, swells and ripples.

How it exists as fog, mist, cloud, steam, snow, sleet, rain or puddle.

How it contains or is contained.

How it is dammed or bottled.

Ranbir Kaleka

Born 1953 Lives in New Delhi

Ranbir Kaleka sees video as an extension and redefinition of the possibilities of painting as an expressive medium. Stressing dualities, mirroring and repetition, Kaleka's *Man with a Cockerel* plays on literal and symbolic dialogues between stasis and movement, capture and flight, possession and loss, material and dissolution.

A man is caught in a circle of endless pursuit and capture of his escaped "cockerel." The viewer's reverie is jolted by a play with conventions of sound: domestic, industrial, everyday and the environmental. The only relief is the long silent lapping of the waves on the empty screen at the end of the loop before the man again finds his "cockerel" and enters the frame.

Tejal Shah

Born 1979 Lives in Mumbai

Tejal Shah explores a feeling of affinity for those outside the norms of sexuality, gender and class. In her *Hijra Fantasy Series*, she breathed life into the fantasies of members of the male-to-female transsexual community (known in India as hirjas) in Mumbai and Bangalore. The flamboyant theatricality and scale of her photographs conjures up associations with the glitz of Bollywood and the melodrama of Raja Ravi Varma paintings. Transgender/transsexual models complicate the references. She mocks love fantasies as envisioned in cinema and visual culture to present desire outside the bounds of compulsory heterosexuality.

Raghubir Singh

Kemp's Corner from a Leather Goods Shop,

Mumbai, Maharashtra, 1989 C-print © Succession Raghubir Singh

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Raghubir Singh
Pavement Mirror Shop, Howrah,
West Bengal, 1991
C-print
© Succession Raghubir Singh

Raghubir Singh
Pedestrians, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, 1992 C-print © Succession Raghubir Singh

Raghubir Singh
Zaveri Bazaar and Jeweller's Showroom,
Mumbai, Maharashtra, 1991 C-print © Succession Raghubir Singh

Ram Rahman
Capitol Studios, Delhi, 1986
Digital print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy of the artist

Ram Rahman
Gents Urinal, Old Delhi, 1991
Digital print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy of the artist

Ram Rahman
M. F. Husain Paints a Horse, 1994
Toned gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

Ram Rahman
Hyderabad, 1982–83
Toned gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

Ram Rahman
Indira Gandhi, Delhi, 1989
Toned gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist

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Ram Rahman

Narasimha Rao, Old Delhi, 1996 Toned gelatin silver print Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew

A Motel Owner and his Wife, Fresno, 1987,
from the series Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew

Dr. Kumar Patel at Bell Labs in New Jersey,
1987, from the series Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew

Last Viewing of a Punjabi Woman in a Funeral Parlor, El Centro, USA, 1987, from the series
Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew

Nand Kaur, with her Son, an ex-WWII Pilot,
Yuba City, 1987, from the series Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew

One of the Many Patel Motels, Fresno, 1987,
from the series Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

Pablo Bartholomew Steve Banerji, Owner of Chippendales, at his
L.A. Operation, 1987, from the series Emigrés

Digital print on archival Epson paper

Courtesy of the artist

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Annu Palakunnathu Matthew
Red Indian/Brown Indian, 2001, from the series
An Indian from India
Archival digital print
Original photo courtesy of the Library of Congress,
Washington D.C.
Courtesy of Sepia International

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew
Noble Savage/Savage Noble, 2001, from the series
An Indian from India Archival digital print Original photo courtesy Northwestern University
Library,
Evanston, Illinois
Courtesy of Sepia International

Shantanu Lodh
I Slapped My (Semi-Feudal, Semi-Colonial)
Father, 2001 Series of 11 prints on archival Epson paper Courtesy of the artist

Shilpa Gupta
Untitled, 2004
Interactive video projection with sound
Courtesy of the artist

Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Amrita and Cousin Viola,
2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Amrita Dreaming, 2002 Archival digital print Courtesy of Sepia
International

Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Bourgeois Family—Mirror,
2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

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Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Lovers, 2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

Gigi Scaria
A Day with Sohail and Mariyan, 2004 Single-channel video, 17:00 Courtesy of the artist

Gigi Scaria
The Lost City, 2005
Single-channel video, 14:00
Actors: Praveen Thambi and Ashwani Kumar Ashu
Voice: Sohail Hashmi
Courtesy of the artist

Surekha
Tree Woman, 2005
Single-channel video, 4:30
Courtesy of the artist

Surekha
The Other-Self, 2005
Series of six digital photographs
Courtesy of the artist

Navjot Altaf
Lacuna in Testimony, 2003 Three-channel video installation with 72 mirrors, time variable
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill
Birthday Party, Virginia, 2002, from the series
The Americans
Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

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Gauri Gill

Jagdeepal Steven Sandhu's Mother and Wife,
Outside their Home, Virginia, 2002, from the
series The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill

Motel Owner Dhansukh Dan Patel's Parents, in his New Home, Nashville, Tennessee, 2004,
from the series The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill

Birthday Party, Virginia, 2002, from the series
The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill

Party for Indian Entrepreneurs, Washington,
D.C., 2002, from the series The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill

Preparing for the Rath Yatra, Ganesha Temple, Nashville, Tennessee, 2004, from the series
The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Gauri Gill

Wedding of Dr. Suresh Gupta's Son, Virginia,
2002, from the series The Americans

Digital print on Epson archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

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Sunil Gupta

Foundation/Sunil, 2006, from the series

Country—Portrait of an Indian Family

Archival inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Gun/Wheat, 2006, from the series

Country—Portrait of an Indian Family

Archival inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Havan/House, 2006, from the series

Country—Portrait of an Indian Family Archival inkjet print Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Holi/Freedom Fighters, 2006, from the series

Country—Portrait of an Indian Family

Archival inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Love & Light #1, 2004

Archival inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Washing/Disabled, 2006, from the series

Country—Portrait of an Indian Family

Archival inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta

Mundia Pamar, Uttar Pradesh/Chesapeake Bay,

Maryland, 2001–3, from the series Homelands Archival inkjet print Courtesy of the artist

Sunil Gupta Queens, New York/Albert Embankment, London

2001–3, from the series Homelands Archival inkjet print Courtesy of the artist

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Sonia Khurana
Head-Hand, 2004
Single-channel video, 7:30
Courtesy of the artist

Sonia Khurana
Tantra, 2004
Single-channel video installation, :44
Courtesy of the artist

Anita Dube
Via Negativa, 2000 Three gelatin silver prints on aluminum, photographs by
C. K. Rajan
Courtesy of the artist

Tejal Shah
Trans-, 2004–5 Two-channel video, 12:00 Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York &
Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai Collection of the artist

Ravi Agarwal
Kite String Making, Surat, Gujarat, 1998, from the
series Down and Out: Migrant Labor in Gujarat C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Ravi Agarwal
Printing of Cloth, Surat, Gujarat, 1998, from the
series Down and Out: Migrant Labor in Gujarat C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Ravi Agarwal
Roadside Cobbler, Surat, Gujarat, 1998, from the
series Down and Out: Migrant Labor in Gujarat C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Ravi Agarwal
Boat, from the series Alien Waters, Delhi, 2004–6 C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the
artist

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Vivek Vilasini

Between One Shore and Several Others, 2005 Digital prints on Hanemuhle Photo Rag 308 g/m2, with name plates Courtesy of the artist

Ravi Agarwal

Interior, from the series Alien Waters, Delhi, 2004–6 C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Ravi Agarwal

Refuse, from the series Alien Waters, Delhi, 2004–6 C-print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Anita Dube

Kissa-e-Noor (Garam Hawa), 2004

Single-channel video, 15:00

Courtesy of the artist

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

Quanah Parker, Washington DC/Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Providence, R.I. [Indian], 2000, from the series An Indian from India

Archival digital print

Original photo courtesy University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Courtesy of Sepia International

Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

Quanah Parker, Washington DC/Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, Providence, R.I. [American], 2000, from the series An Indian from India

Archival digital print

Original photo courtesy University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Courtesy of Sepia International

Vivan Sundaram

Re-take of Amrita—Preening, 2001 Archival digital print Courtesy of Sepia International

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Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Remembering the Past,
Looking to the Future, 2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Sisters with ‘Two Girls,’
2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

Subodh Gupta
Pure, 2000 Single-channel video, 8:00 Courtesy of the artist

Raghu Rai
Army Generals Preparing for Indira Gandhi’s
Funeral, Delhi, 1984
Digital print on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Raghu Rai
Crowds Crashing into Teen Murti House to Take a Last Look at Indira Gandhi, New Delhi, 1984
Digital print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Raghu Rai
Indira Gandhi at her Residence, New Delhi, 1984 Digital print on archival paper Courtesy of the
artist

Raghu Rai
Indira Gandhi with the then President
Mr. V. V. Giri, 1974
Digital print on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Raghu Rai
Indira Gandhi in Congress Meeting, Delhi, 1966 Digital print on archival paper Courtesy of the
artist

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Raghu Rai
Rajiv Gandhi at the Funeral Pyre of his Mother,
Indira Gandhi, 1984 Digital print on archival paper Courtesy of the artist

Raghu Rai
Widows of Sikh Riots Following the Death of
Indira Gandhi, 1984
Digital print on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Cows in Burnt-out Shop, 2002
C-print
Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Boys in Shadow, Gujarat, 2002
C-print
Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Family through Barred Door, Gujarat, 2002 C-print Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Wrestlers on Steps, Delhi, 2002
C-print
Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Wrestlers with Rope, Delhi, 2002 C-print Courtesy of the artist

Tejal Shah
Southern Siren—Maheshwari, 2006
Digital photograph on archival photo paper

Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York & Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai
Collection of the artist

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I met Maheshwari in Bombay and I was struck by her loud laughter, sense of fantasy and belief in magic. Her desire was to become a south Indian film star and see herself in a song and dance sequence, romancing the hero and to be romanced by him.

Tejal Shah

You Too Can Touch the Moon—Yashoda with Krishna, 2006 Digital photograph on archival photo paper Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York & Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai Collection of the artist

You too can touch the moon is a portrait of Malini. She expressed the desire to be a mother. “I want to point to the moon and tell my child that s/he too can reach out and touch the moon.” This photo-fantasy of Malini is clearly meant to function as a perverse “queering” of Ravi Varma’s mythological pictures, and of the colonial history that produced them. The opulence of the chosen reference also helps to transcend the class hierarchies that prevent hijras from moving into any positions of power or privilege.

Tejal Shah

The Barge She Sat in, Like a Burnished Throne/ Burned on the Water, 2006
Digital photograph on archival photo paper
Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York & Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai
Collection of the artist

The barge she sat in is a photograph of Laxmi, a very well known hijra (transsexual), human rights activist based in Bombay. Laxmi is obsessed with Cleopatra and expressed the wish to become her. Extended conversations and research preceded the conceiving of this image. I have tried to retain as much of Laxmi’s personality in this contemporary, queer and Indian version of Cleopatra.

Atul Bhalla

I Was Not Waving But Drowning, 2005
Series of 14 inkjet prints on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist

Ranbir Kaleka

Cockerel-2, 2004 Single-channel video installation, 6:00 Actors: Ram Gopal Bajaj; Cockerel:
Mustapha Digital compositing and video stills: Riverbank Studios, New Delhi Courtesy of the
artist Projection screen provided by Spyeglass

Samar S. Jodha (Photography)

Vijay S. Jodha (Research and editing)

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Through the Looking Glass: Television & Popular Culture in South Asia, 2003
20 digitally projected photographs
Courtesy of the artists

Pushpamala N
Rashtriy Kheer & Desiy Salad (National
Pudding and Indigenous Salad), 2004 Experimental short film, 11:00 Courtesy of Bose Pacia
Gallery, New York, and artist

Pushpamala N
Phantom Lady or Kismet, 1996–98 Series of 24 photographs Photography: Meenal Agarwal
Actor: Vinay Patak as the Don Courtesy of Shumita and Arani Bose Pacia Collection, New York

Pushpamala N
Phantom Lady or Kismet, 1996–98 Series of 25 photographs Photography: Meenal Agarwal
Actor: Vinay Patak as the Don Courtesy of Shumita and Arani Bose Pacia Collection, New York

Pushpamala N
The Navarasa Suite, 2000–3 Set of nine photographs Photography: JH Thakker and Vimal
Thakker, India Photo Studio, Mumbai Courtesy of Shumita and Arani Bose Pacia Collection,
New York

Jitish Kallat
Artist Making a Local Call, 2005
Digital print on vinyl mesh
Courtesy of the artist

Shahid Datawala
Ladies' Toilet, 2003
Print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy Tasveer/Foss-Gandi, Mumbai

Shahid Datawala
Layered Arch, 2003
Print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy Tasveer/Foss-Gandi, Mumbai

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Shahid Datawala
Purdah Ladies, 2003
Print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy Tasveer/Foss-Gandi, Mumbai

Shahid Datawala
Regal Man, 2003
Print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy Tasveer/Foss-Gandi, Mumbai

Rajesh Vora
Aspiring Model, Mumbai, 1998
Inkjet print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy of the artist

Rajesh Vora
Beauty Pageant, Mumbai, 1998
Inkjet print on archival Epson paper
Courtesy of the artist

Rajesh Vora
Hairdresser of the Year Awards, Mumbai, 1998 Inkjet print on archival Epson paper Courtesy of the artist

Rajesh Vora
Look of the Year Contest, Mumbai, 1998 Inkjet print on archival Epson paper Courtesy of the artist

Manish Swarup
Wrestler on Floor, Delhi, 2002
C-print
Courtesy of the artist

Vivan Sundaram
Re-take of Amrita—Night Sky, 2001
Archival digital print
Courtesy of Sepia International

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Pushpamala N

Rashtriy Kheer & Desiy Salad (National
Pudding and Indigenous Salad), 2004 Excerpt from the film on view in Gallery 3 Courtesy of
Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, and artist

Step on the mat to activate the video.