March 9 - April 22, 2017

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That photo we never got
Shilpa Gupta
*In collaboration with Asia Art Archive*

The Photograph is Proof
*Visual history of criminal investigations from the Indian Subcontinent [19th - 20th century]*
Anusha Yadav, The Memory Company

Some Portraits
curated by Devika Daulat Singh, Photoink

Previews on March 9, 2017
Exhibition continues until April 22, 2017

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Part of FOCUS Photography Festival
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Shilpa Gupta
(In collaboration with Asia Art Archive)

That photo we never got

Mumbai-based artist Shilpa Gupta and Asia Art Archive (AAA) present ‘That photo we never got’, a research-based project that explores friendship, associations, love, and incongruities in the field of art.

By drawing out narratives from AAA’s collection, Gupta gathers incomplete stories from documents on art institutions, artist-organised camps, workshops, exhibitions, publications, and artist travels around the world.

The artist worked alongside AAA Senior Researcher Sabih Ahmed, looking at material from the 60s, 70s, and 80s housed at AAA to follow the innumerable tangents and overlapping vectors across and beyond the Archive’s collection. Gupta delves into chance encounters and fraught friendships, some imagined and others not, revealing the varied aspirations of artists and their relationships to peers, cities, and the world.

Gupta’s practice examines the dynamics of contexts, perception, and cartographies of knowledge, and has often incorporated methods of archiving into her work. While a number of stories gathered for this project had archival trails to follow, others surfaced as annotations from conversations and interviews conducted during its research. As the artist herself stated, ‘an archive can only be a proposal’; this project positions itself as an incomplete proposition of fragments placed in the interstices of the archival document and living memory.

Earlier iterations of this project were shown at the 2015 India Art Fair in New Delhi, and at Asia Art Archive in Hong Kong in 2016.

Shilpa Gupta (b.1976 Mumbai, India) completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in sculpture at the Sir J. J. School of Fine Art, Mumbai, in 1997. She lives and works in Mumbai.

She has held several solo exhibitions with Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai; Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati; Museum voor Moderne Kunst in Arnhem, Arnolfini, Bristol; Castle Blandy, France; OK Center for Contemporary Art in Linz, Gallerie Yvon Lambert, Paris; Galleria Continua, San Gimignano.


About Asia Art Archive

Asia Art Archive (AAA) is an independent non-profit organisation initiated in 2000 in response to the urgent need to document and make accessible the multiple recent histories of art in the region. With one of the most valuable collections of material on art freely available from its website and onsite library, AAA builds tools and communities to collectively expand knowledge through research, residency, and educational programmes.

www.aaa.org.hk


Special thanks to The Avantha Group.

Talks and workshops to be announced.
This *Photograph is Proof*
A historical representation of select crime investigations in the Indian Subcontinent 19th-20th century

In 1833, William O’Shaughnessy, an Irishman joined the East India Company in Calcutta (now Kolkata), and fulfilled duties of a surgeon, professor of chemistry and a scientist. Over nine years of his stay in India, he introduced Western medicine to the therapeutic use of Cannabis, erected ‘the longest line of Telegraph ever constructed’, and in October of 1839, he presented, at the Asiatic Society, for the first time, experiments with a new photo drawing that had all of Europe’s attention - the Daguerreotype - a fated presentation that began a photographic revolution in the Indian subcontinent.

In the late 1850s, Charles Canning, the first Governor General of India, commissioned one of the largest photographic surveys ever conducted. The ‘People of India' was a documentation of native communities undertaken with the hope of a deeper understanding and thus control of Britannia’s ‘colonial subjects’ and thus avoid unrest.

Around the same time, in 1856, *Norman Chevers*, an English physician in Bengal, accorded photography with even more powers: of freezing time and space, and in so creating an incontestable and objective record of a crime scene or a piece of evidence. However, not many in the colonial administration were in agreement that photography should be used as a tool to document evidence or criminals. While photography was exciting and endorsed, the logistics, heavy equipment, huge costs and lack of expertise in handling the technology was deemed a burden. Evidence or Forensic Photography found itself hard to be justified.

Through most of 20th century, Photography in the subcontinent enjoyed the patronage of the elite and entertainment manufacturers. However, with independence struggles gaining momentum, evidence photography began to regain favour as a tool to serve politics and power, both for and against the British Raj.

Post independence the story was quite different. The academic rigour, with which the colonial government used photography augmented into different purposes. Photography encroached and took over Indian tabloids feeding public hunger for voyeurism & sensationalism by reporting crime in vocabularies never seen before. Exposure to Hollywood films and its noir aesthetic inspired several Indian movies and literature. The lines between fact and fiction were being blurred. Evidence photography had world over begun to appropriate itself for purposes other than legal proof, and India was no exception. But it took a few decades before evidence photography became a necessity for lawmakers in India.

The visual records on display here re-look at a few select cases where photographic evidence and the lack thereof lent itself to a variety of objectives: understanding the criminal act, as a means to an end, or voyeuristic entertainment and illicit thrills - by law enforcements, public and at times by the subjects themselves. In this exhibition they are a visual rhetoric and a narrativised representation of alleged or proven criminal actions from a largely undocumented and diverse subcontinent.
When confronted with these images we are entering a world few have witnessed first-hand. With the distant past offering an opportunity for evidential narratives to be considered and reconsidered, the images begin to pose more questions than answers; and suggest more than they show. These exposures display a palimpsest of narratives, provoking a frustration of alternate possibilities and secrets – perhaps proof that one can never know the exact truth about our pasts, even with supreme evidence such as a photograph.

This exhibition was first displayed at the Format International Photography Festival in Derby, UK in March 2015

Contributions by:
Haldipur Family, Thane
Indian Art Studio, Mumbai.
Jason Tilley Collection/The Library of Birmingham
National Archives of India, New Delhi
Nehru Memorial & Museum Library, New Delhi
The British Library Board, London
Sabine Gadihoke, Curator & Writer, New Delhi
V.M Pandit, Former CBI & Private Investigator, New Delhi

Researched & Curated by
Anusha Yadav / The Memory Company
Mumbai

Images of Previous Show by : The Memory Company
SOME PORTRAITS
curated by Devika Daulet Singh, Photoink

Pablo Bartholomew
Richard Bartholomew
Madan Mahatta
Ram Rahman
Sadanand Menon
Ketaki Sheth
Sooni Taraporevala

Some Portraits is an exhibition of black and white photographs drawn from the archives of Pablo Bartholomew, Richard Bartholomew, Madan Mahatta, Ram Rahman, Sadanand Menon, Ketaki Sheth and Sooni Taraporevala. This exhibition spanning over forty years, is an evocative mosaic of portraits of painters, writers, poets, architects, dancers, designers and photographers - most of whom have passed away. What makes this series of portraits distinctive and novel is the profound interest the photographers felt for their subjects as none of the portraits were commissioned. Some Portraits is as much about remembrance and celebration as it is about that blurred space between life and art — artists photographing other artists.

PABLO BARTHOLOMEW
Pablo Bartholomew (b.1955, Delhi, India) is a self-taught documentary photographer. World Press Photo awarded him the first prize in 1975 for his series on morphine addicts. In 1984 he won the World Press Photo ‘Picture of the Year’ award for his iconic image of the Bhopal gas tragedy. As a photojournalist he has documented societies in conflict and transition for over 20 years and has been widely published in international magazines. His photographs have been exhibited at international photography festivals: Chobimela, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2006), Angkor Photo Festival, Siem Reap, Cambodia (2006), Nooderlicht Photo Festival, Netherlands (2006, 2007), Month of Photography, Tokyo, Japan (2007) and Les Rencontres d’Arles, Arles, France (2007). Group exhibitions include Private Spaces Public Spaces at Newark Museum, USA (2007), Where Three Dreams Cross at Whitechapel Gallery, London (2010) and at Fotomuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland (2010). Pablo Bartholomew lives in Delhi.

RICHARD BARTHOLOMEW
Richard Bartholomew (1926–1985) was born in Tavoy, Burma. He fled his homeland as a teenager during the Japanese occupation and made India his home in 1942 like many refugees of that time. He finished his schooling and received a Bachelor’s (1948) and Master’s degree in English (1950) from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi. He married Rati Batra, a theatre personality and fathered two sons, Pablo and Robin Bartholomew.

His major literary works include articles on Indian and Tibetan art, contemporary Indian art and the Indian experience, as well as poems, monographs, short stories, a co-authored book on M.F. Husain, published in 1971 by Harry Abrams, New York, and a monograph on Krishna Reddy in 1974 by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

From 1960 to 1963 Bartholomew was the Gallery Director of Kunika Art Centre, the first commercial gallery for contemporary art in New Delhi. Subsequently he worked with the Tibet House, New Delhi, from 1966 to 1973 as their curator where he personally catalogued the Dalai Lama's collection of religious artifacts, traveling with them to the US and Japan. From 1977 to 1985 Bartholomew served as the Secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi, India's prestigious national academy of art. Among his other many honors and achievements are a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in 1970; Commissioner of the Silver Jubilee Indian Independence exhibition held in Washington DC, 1973; a British Council Visitor in 1982; and Commissioner of the Art Exhibition of the Festival of India, held in Britain in 1982.
MADAN MAHATTA
Madan Mahatta (1933-2014) was born in Srinagar, Kashmir, India. The Mahatta studios have a distinguished history as the most well-known family-run studios in North India. Madan went to England to study photography in the early 1950s and joined the family's Delhi studio upon returning to India in 1954 and introduced negative-positive colour printing for the first time in India. A prolific photographer, Madan worked across all genres of photography.

Madan Mahatta’s architectural photographs from the late 1950s to the late 1980s were exhibited for the first time at Photoink in 2012 in an exhibition titled, Delhi Modern: The Architectural Photographs of Madan Mahatta. His photographs are a remarkable record of the building of New Delhi at the height of Nehruvian modernism. Madan worked closely with two generations of India’s most well known architects including Achyut Kanvinde, Ajoy Choudhury, Charles Correa, Habib Rahman, Joseph Allen Stein, Jasbir Sawhney, J. K. Chowdhury, Kuldip Singh, Raj Rewal, Ram Sharma, Ranjit Sabhiki and designers Mini Boga and Riten Mozumdar. His photographs of their works are an equal part of the legacy of a great period in Indian modernism.

SADANAND MENON
Sadanand Menon (b. 1950, Thrissur, Kerala, India) is an Indian arts editor, cultural journalism teacher, photographer, and stage lights designer and a prolific speaker at seminars on politics, ecology and the arts. He is currently Adjunct Faculty, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai, and at IIT, Madras.

Sadanand is member, Apex Advisory Committee, National Museum, Delhi; Advisory Committee, National Gallery of Modern Art, Bengaluru; Advisory Council, Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi; Governing Council, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla; and Managing Trustee, SPACES, an arts foundation, Chennai.

A close associate of legendary choreographer Chandralekha, he is deeply involved with issues concerning contemporary Indian dance. He also curated a retrospective exhibition examining fifty years of Dashrath Patel’s work in painting, ceramics, photography and design for NGMA, Delhi and Mumbai.

RAM RAHMAN
Ram Rahman (b. 1955, India), is a photographer based in Delhi, The son of architect Habib Rahman, he grew up watching modern New Delhi being built. He earned degrees from MIT and Yale in physics, architecture, photography and design, and has been a professional architectural photographer for over thirty years. Ram has lectured on the history of contemporary Indian photography, as well as curated many exhibitions. His last one-person exhibition in Delhi was Bioscope in 2008.

KETAKI SHETH
Ketaki Sheth (b.1957, Bombay, India) was committed to black and white photography, chemistry, and silver gelatin prints until 2014 when dwindling analogue supplies forced her transition to digital photography and colour. She won the Sanskriti Award for Indian Photography in 1992, and in 2006 the Higashikawa Award in Japan, for best foreign photographer. In 2008, she was honoured with an individual show (Bombay Mix) at Fête du Livre in Aix-en-Provence. In 2015 the National Portrait Gallery, London, exhibited a selection of her photographs of the Sidis titled, On Belonging: Photographs of Indians of African Descent. Besides India, her photographs have been exhibited in Australia, France, Japan, Spain, Switzerland and the UK.
Her first book *Twinspotting: Photographs of Patel Twins in Britain & India* (Dewi Lewis Publishing) was launched in 1999 to critical acclaim. Selected images from this book were exhibited in *Century City* at the Tate Modern, London, in 2001. Her second book, a culmination of 14 years of work, *Bombay Mix: Street Photographs* (Dewi Lewis Publishing, Stockport and Sepia International, New York) was launched in 2007. Her street photographs have been exhibited in Aix-en-Provence, Bombay, Delhi, New York and Tokyo.

**SOONI TARAPOREVALA**

Soonie Taraporevala (b. 1957, Bombay, India) is an Indian photographer, screenwriter and filmmaker who is best known for her screenplays of *Mississippi Masala*, *The Namesake*, the Oscar-nominated *Salaam Bombay* & the national award winning *Little Zizou*.

In 2000 and 2004 she authored and published a book of her photographs *Parsis: The Zoroastrians of India; A Photographic Journey*, which was a critical and popular success. Sooni's photographs have been exhibited around the world and are in the permanent collections of NGMA, New Delhi and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She has won numerous national and international awards for her screenplays and film. She was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2014.