

PRESENTED BY
French Embassy/French Institute in India and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

a panorama of photography's French connections in India
convergence
CURATED BY RAHAAB ALLANA

WITH THE EXCEPTIONAL PARTICIPATION OF THE MUSÉE NATIONAL DES ARTS ASIATIQUES – BOURGET

IN COLLABORATION WITH
The Alkazi Foundation for the Arts



I still often feel this double tension: the fear of destroying an intimacy by approaching it if the subject and at the same time, the strong desire to photograph as closely as possible what my eye dares not see...
Paul Outerbridge, *Photographs, Texts, Stories and Authors*, 2011

THIS YEAR commemorates the 150th anniversary of first ever photographic talcum, a heliograph (*Vue from the Window at Le Gras*, 1827) by French inventor Joseph Nicéphore Niépce. This exhibition, *Conspirez!*, explores how photography has evolved exponentially in the present, situated in the digital cascade of photons, pixels and algorithms. A stark metaphor emerging from Niépce's composition is Spanish conceptual artist, Juan Tamariz's *Photomagie*. Step into the future of photography, where the image, altered by processing the results of a keyword search through PhotoMagique free software. The outcome is a chid composite of various tiny electronic thumbnails arranged according to chromatic value and density, remaking the original image.

Similarly deployed as a provocation for further inquiry, *Conspirez!* draws upon works by prominent French practitioners, suggesting some of the most significant contributions to the field. From the 19th century to the present and evolved in India over the past two centuries. These unique works from major museums in France are here seen alongside select contributions from important institutions in the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK. We also see a striking series of images by artists from both nations including Oscar Muñoz, Chloé Myoui, Luis Díaz Díaz, Charles Moyse, Shapiro N. Blawie, Thomas Ybarra-Frausto, Paul Almásy and a host of others.

In addition to the historical photographs by French masters and artists, the exhibition on view spans the colonial, modern and postcolonial periods of Indian history, beginning with mid-nineteenth-century images by Louis Rousselet

and concluding with the work of Bernard Peter Wolf in the 1970s. The exhibition at its core also pays tribute, on the 75th year of Independence, to the remarkable photographer Manu Bhaker, a young woman who was a member of Puri-based Magnum Photos from 1971-79. While Bhaker and her colleagues were associated with the Magnum, an agency that has been instrumental in giving photographers they also expressed themselves through modes of practice that were unique within an overall humanist perspective.

Conspirez! therefore seeks to re-examine what is at stake in the space and material particularities, foundational to the histories of photography. As we accept that the individual image is now potentially imperishable, that it may pass through innumerable unknown hands, and may be used without the author's personal control, the exhibition of French practitioners, interlinking with Indian photographers, asks whether radical aesthetic and technological change alters the essence of the original artefact. It also questions practice-oriented, analytic as well as geo-political assumptions within both historical and contemporary photographic engagements, probing how collections, curators, scholars, archivists, curators and lovers of photography in general continue to explore the longevity and claims of images, framed by compelling frames.



Changing Legacies of 'Colonial Photography'

Institutions, history and its legacy disseminated, historians have long understood. The past may be past, but that does not mean it can be left behind. In fact, it must be revisited, but that now has come, and must be done at the heart level of all historians, of all institutions, of all people. But that now has come, and must be done at the heart level of all historians, of all institutions, of all people.

Two sections
Photographs, prints and postcards from the largely
Portuguese, Indian, French and British colonial photographic collections. These historical documents are presented in two sections: one on the left, which includes a display of framed photographs, and one on the right, which includes a display of framed prints and postcards. The displays are arranged chronologically, from the early days of photography to the present day.

The first section, on the left, features a display of framed photographs, including a collection of portraits from the early days of photography. The second section, on the right, features a display of framed prints and postcards, including a collection of postcards from the early days of photography.

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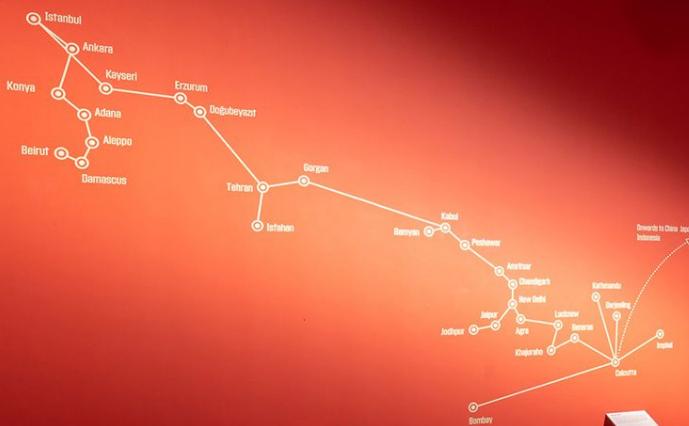
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Marc Riboud:
Visionary Realist



A man stands in the center of the gallery, looking at framed photographs on the wall. The floor is made of light-colored wood planks.





PHOTOGRAPHE
SUJET

PLANCHE N° 56.16.1 DATE



Riboud remarked that for him, 'looking is like breathing', and that he took photographs 'the way a musician hums'; he experienced his work as 'a sensual business', 'a passion closer to an obsession,' 'a mania, a virus' as strong as his instinct to be free. Taking pictures meant 'savouring life intensely, every 1/100th of a second'. A photograph is an 'encounter' for which the photographer has to always be ready. For Riboud, good photography was 'essentially a spontaneous reaction to a surprise'; and while he believed that photography could not change the world, he reiterated that it could authentically 'show the world, especially when it changes.' He advises photographers to 'forget about witnessing', and to consider 'photography a little everyday job.' He also recommends that practitioners nourish their passion by 'giving up as many ties as possible' to their home: 'ties make you worry, and when you worry, you don't see so well.'





Street of Calcutta at 5 a.m., showing hundreds of people sleeping on the pavement, especially during the summer (thousands of men are sleeping in the street. A statistic says that 200,000 people are sleeping in the streets in Calcutta); part of them are doing so because, with the heat, it is cooler to sleep outside, but most of them because they have nowhere else to sleep, especially for the last few years Calcutta is over populated, and refugees from East Pakistan are still arriving everyday, increasing the population of the town.

Max Haze, 1968







I could witness that they usually remained: this fear of destroying an intimacy by approaching it (the subject) and of losing him. The strong desire to photograph as silently as possible what my eye does not see...
Hans-Peter Feldman, *Memory and Autonomy*, 1984.

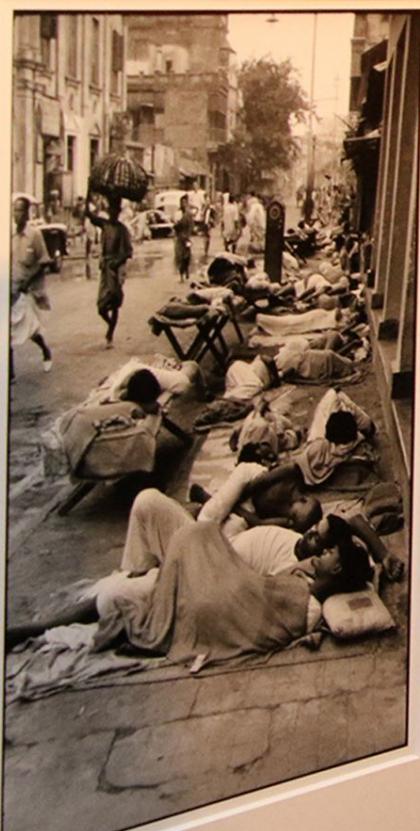
THIS YEAR commemorates the 150th anniversary year of first ever photograph taken, a heliograph (*View from the Window at Le Gras*, 1827) by French inventor Nicéphore Niépce (1765–1833). Until the mid-19th century, photography had expanded mainly in the portrait, cartes-de-visite, studio, postcard, and postcard album. A stark mutation occurred in the 1860s, when the Spanish conceptual artist Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923) produced the same painting twice, once in oil and once in watercolor. Montage, multiple exposure, and other electronic means were also used to produce revealing images. In the 1870s, the first cameras became portable, opening some of the doors to the field. Some of the recorded works from the 1870s include the first photo works from India, including the work of John Shapoorji Shapurji, a Parsi merchant, who explores the various methods of photography.

and concluding with the work of Bernard Pierre Wolff in the 1970s. The exhibition at *co* space also pays tribute, on the 100th year of Independence, to the remarkable photographer Marc Riboud (1923–2016) who was a member of Paris-based Magnum Photos from 1955–70. While Riboud and

several of his contemporaries were associated with the Magnum, an agency that was adept at preventing gritty photojournalism, they also expressed themselves through modes of pictorialism and realism, within an overall humanistic perspective.

Convergence therefore seeks to re-engage with the facets of time, space and individual particularities, and to return to the core of the photographic. As we accept that the life-spectrum of an image is apparently unpredictable, that it may pass through immeasurable unknown hands, and may be shared in ways beyond our personal control, the exhibition of French practitioners, interlinking with selected works/timelines from India and the US, will explore how technological change alters the essence of the original photograph, its aesthetic, discursive, as well as geo-political assumptions with reference to the contemporary photographic engagements, probing how collectors, curators, conservators, archivists, and historians of photography in general continue to explore the meaning of images, framed by compelling frames.





PAUL STRØM
Søndre Brygge (Street), 1920
Gode日子の風景、1920年
The NYPL Collection
The New York Public Library
Collection, The New York Public Library
Digital Collections

PAUL STRØM
Tyskebroen (Tysebroen) (Tysebroen)
1920
Gode日子の風景、1920年
The NYPL Collection
The New York Public Library
Collection, The New York Public Library
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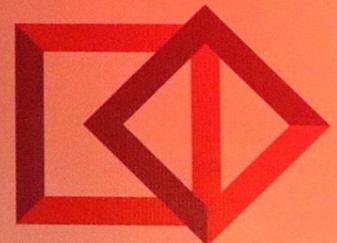
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A woman with long brown hair, wearing a black jacket over a pink and green patterned top, is looking towards the photographs on the wall. She has glasses perched on her head. The background shows a red wall with several framed photographs and their respective captions.

WE RETURN TO HUMAN FIGURATION
WITH FOUR NEW EXHIBITIONS...

KIRAN
NADAR
MUSEUM
OF ART



K RAVI NNUJAM SOMNATH HORE CONVERGENCE

into the Night Parade... Birth of a Whole New Panorama of Photography's French Connection in India

SANJAY SINGH CEO, RAJEEV SINGH INDIA	H. E. EMMANUEL LENAIN THE AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE IN INDIA	KIRAN NADAR CHAMPION KARMA	ROOBINA KARODE DIRECTOR & CHIEF CURATOR, KAMA	RAHAAB ALLANA CURATOR, ALKAID FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
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The panelists are seated at a long table with microphones and nameplates. The background features a large red banner with white text and logos.

TO HUMAN FIGURATION
OUR NEW EXHIBITIONS...

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NADAR
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[and often find they double because] the fear of destroying an intimacy by intersecting it [the subject] and at the same time, the strong desire to photograph as closely as possible what no one else can see.
—Rituals, PhotoArt India, Thiruvananthapuram, 1981

THIS YEAR commemorates the much anticipated birth anniversary of Salim, a lithograph (*View from the Window of a Room*) of the Indian communist Joseph Nicanor Wolfe (1895–1963). Our single-mast newspaper, born in the present, arrived in the past. It is a historical record of the stark struggle continuing from Nicanor Wolfe's days to the present, composed Ganeswaran's *Salim*, the result of a long-term project. The project is a testimony to the strength of our people, the strength of our culture, the strength of our language.

and concluding with the work of Ermal Pfeifer Wall in the 1920s. The exhibition of an even older print culture, on the 75th year of Independence, is the commemorative photograph Mary Elwood (1911–2004) who was a member of Paris-based Magnum Photos from 1953–56. While Elwood and

several of his contemporaries were associated with the Magnum, an agency that was adept at preventing gritty photographs from being also expressive through the mood and moodiness of particular subjects, she had an overall honest.

Conceptual photography is a genre that attempts to engage with the nature and meaning of the foundations of photography. It is a photographic style that attempts to explore the expressive potential of the medium. It may be considered as a form of postmodernism, with its focus on the concept of change, as well as the interrogative nature of photography itself.

artistic and technological practice oriented, aesthetic inquiry, contemporary photography, photo, cameras, and lenses, the art of imaging, frame by frame.



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—Rituals, PhotoArt India, Thornton Auctions, 1981

THIS YEAR commemorates the epoch anniversaries of both independence and Indian photography. View from the Window of a Cabin, of the Indian independence, Joseph Mather Weston (1895–1963). Our single moment in history is the present, reflected in the eyes of those who have witnessed it. This work attempts reuniting India. Separated by the British Raj, the two wings of the composite Ganges represent the results of a long history of division.

The picture is a historical record of a moment in history, a moment that is now past.

and concluding with the work of Eustace Phem Wall in the 1920s. The exhibition also pays tributes to the 75th year of Independence, as the celebrated photographer Marc Riboud (1923–2006) who was a member of Paris-based Magnum Photos from 1951–56. While Riboud and

several of his contemporaries were associated with the Magnum, an agency that was adept at preventing gritty photographers from they also expressed their views through studies of particular subjects, such as Indian life in overall history.

Contemporary Indian photographers are engaged with the same issues of space and memory, and the foundation of their work is rooted in the photographic tradition of the late twentieth century. Impressionistic, impressionistic, impressionistic, or even abstract, they may be more concerned with the process of perception than with the final product.

Consequently, they are



artistic and technological practice oriented, aesthetic contemporary photography, and its various forms, cameras, and lenses, and the language of images, from historical to contemporary.