

Ronny Sen's Solo Exhibition Sees The Coal Mining Town Of Jharia

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The works were first published in a book titled End of Time in 2016 for which Ronny Sen went on to win Getty Images Instagram Grant



When you have extracted everything from the world, what remains? — that is the question Ronny Sen has been trying to answer with his photographic exploration of Jharia, the coal mining town in east India, that has been literally burning for 100 years. The works were first published in a book titled End of Time in 2016 for which Sen went on to win Getty Images Instagram Grant. Now, 40 of those works, all shot on his iPhone, are being exhibited at Tarq gallery.

In 2014, the 31-year-old photographer was accompanying two French filmmakers who were shooting a documentary in Jharia. "I was assisting

them with production, while taking photos on my phone, on the side. I did that for a month and then realised they could develop into a body of work," says Sen. He stayed in Jharia for three months making pictures. "We don't see landscapes in the vertical format, traditionally. Be it in photos or drawings, horizontal seems to be the way to go. When you see things from a phone, the whole world becomes vertical. And it was a new way for me to look at things."



Sen recalls Jharia as a "tough place". "Historically, all institutions have failed there, so you're seeing a story of failure. And since the landscape is ever evolving due to the constant fire and the blasting, no two pictures are ever the same," he says. Aside from 37 photos, he has three grids, one showing the fire, one, the blast and the third one, the buildings and factories. While he has not used Instagram filters on them, Sen says, "I am a sucker for aesthetics."



Ronny Sen

For any kind of work of art, craft is of supreme importance to me. In this project, however, I am interested in the mystery more than the truth. This is not a documentary evidence of what is going on in Jharia. I am not telling viewers anything they don't know already. More than issues of environment and poverty, this is my exploration of Jharia, in a post-apocalyptic vein. What remains after the destruction — the fire, the smoke and the dust.

When: 11 am to 6.30 pm, till September 29

Where: Tarq, ground floor, Dhanraj Mahal, Apollo Bunder, Colaba

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