

TWO EXHIBITIONS TO CATCH

A pixel touch

A Jaipur-based artist flies down with distorted, hand-painted photographs to show you how yesteryear studio portraits might translate in the 22nd century

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ON THURSDAY evening, if you drop in at Sakshi Gallery, you'll find yourself staring at 15 wooden frames holding obscure, pixelated artworks mounted on its walls. Look closer amidst the hand-painted and deconstructed layers of cubes and pixels and you will spot a number of vintage studio portraits. Captured sometime between 1940s and '50s, these photographs feature Indians from different social strata and communities. There's a Parsi gentleman seated in deep contemplation. Another frame holds a sari-clad Marwari woman, and in a corner, you will find a group of gentlemen dressed in black coats and hats — all with their faces blurred. These unique works are part of Jaipur-based artist Nandan Ghiya's solo, Studio Portraits From The 22nd Century, held in collaboration with Exhibit 320, New Delhi, and as part of the third edition of Focus Photography Festival, which commences on March 9. The artist returns to the city after presenting a solo back in 2006.

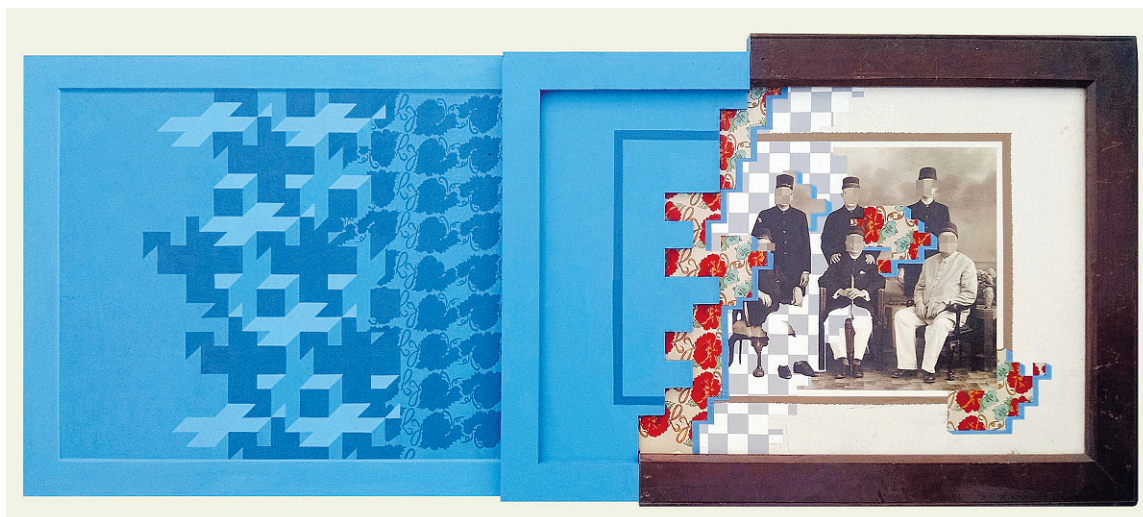


Nandan Ghiya

ements in the works with deliberate obliteration using pixels. The 36-year-old self-taught artist, who believes pixel is the atom of the 21st century, says, "The works are part of an ongoing project called deFacebook that I started in 2010. The idea came from looking at censored pixelated faces on TV news channels. Today, every image [including these portraits] is a collection of pixels merged together. These works are a reflection, homage and critique to what is becoming of us," shares Ghiya, who grew up in a family of studio photographers and hence, decided to use portraits in his oeuvre.

The artist sourced the portraits from many cities. "I found them at pawn shops, vintage shops and flea markets. The idea is to ensure that these portraits, which are remnants of our heritage, don't just become museum pieces or redundant junk. However pixelated or distorted they may seem, we still retain some of our older, indigenous selves," he sums up.

FROM March 9 (6.30 pm to 9.30 pm) to April 8 **TIME** 11 am to 7 pm **AT** Sakshi Gallery, 6/19, Grants Building, Arthur Bunder Road, Colaba. **CALL** 66103424



A group of gentlemen in a state of metamorphosis, circa 2175 AD

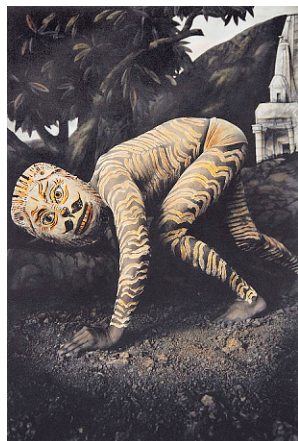


(Left) A Marwari lady camouflaged on a bluescreen, circa 2148; a couple meeting/separating on a photoshop screen, circa 2102



Smile, please

Check out the works of famed American Waswo X Waswo, whose chemical process sepia-toned photos evoke nostalgia of the photo studios of yore



(Clockwise from above) The flower seller; Waswo X Waswo and Night Prowl

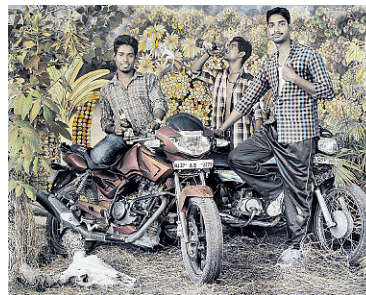
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AT FIRST glance, the photographs look like they date back several years, emanating a photo studio feel. On closer inspection, though, you realise there's something modern about them. It's this surreal quality that makes Waswo X Waswo's work so intriguing. TARQ, in association with Tasveer, is bringing some of Waswo's pieces to the city as part of the Focus Photography Festival.

The US-born photographer and writer first visited India in 1993; after several trips in the intervening years, he decided to settle in Udaipur, where he rented a home and built a studio in 2006. Over the years, he has created a stunning body of work, using this studio as his playground.

His photography walks the line between the ethnographic photograph-as-document that is linked to the colonial era, and the fantasy-inspired make-believe that emanated from traditional Indian portrait studios in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ranging from shots of single figures to theatrically-arranged tableaux, these photographs feature everyone from Gauri dancers to flower sellers, the incarnations of mythological figures, farmers and schoolchildren. After the photo-



Bike boys. PICS COURTESY/TASVEER

graphs have been printed, they have been tinted by a hand-colourist and Waswo's longtime collaborator, Rajesh Soni.

Waswo says, "I embrace a certain element of nostalgia in my work, which is quite a daring thing to do when the very word 'nostalgia' is thought of as negative in the world of contemporary art. But for me, we must always look backwards as well as forwards, and nostalgia does play a role in helping us remember the positive in the past that we may have forgotten in our present, so we don't lose to total obliteration in our future. So, for me, nostalgia becomes just another tool for making contemporary art."

FROM March 10 to April 8, 11 am to 6 pm **AT** TARQ, F35/36, Dhanraj Mahal, CSM Marg, Apollo Bunder, Colaba. **CALL** 66150424

WORKSHOP

Guilt-free brekkie



2 PM TO 5 PM Attend a talk by holistic health coach Bhavna Kapoor to learn how food can help you lose weight, improve immunity and reverse lifestyle diseases. The session will be followed by a cooking workshop on gluten-, sugar- and dairy-free brekkie and munchies by Vinita Contractor. Learn to make Buckwheat Porridge, Five Lentil Dosa, Ragi Pancakes, Millet Crackers and Granola Bars.

ON March 10 **AT** Convent Avenue, Santacruz (W). **CALL** 9987192881 **COST** ₹2,100 (early bird discount till March 8) **LOG ON TO** insider.in