



WORLD OF **RECYCLE**

A collaborative photography project under the aegis of Neel Dongre Awards/ Grants for Excellence in Photography (2016) by India Photo Archive Foundation

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by India Photo Archive Foundation**

Organized by India Photo Archive Foundation

Curated by Aditya Arya

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The images in the catalogue are only a representative selection of
the photographic works from the project.

India Photo Archive Foundation
T 23/5 DLF Phase - 3, Gurgaon
Haryana - 122001, India
Ph - 0091 9810009099
indiaphotoarchive@gmail.com
www.indiaphotoarchive.org



India Photo Archive Foundation presents

WORLD OF **RECYCLE**

**A collaborative photography project under the aegis of Neel Dongre Awards/ Grants
for Excellence in Photography (2016) by India Photo Archive Foundation**

The Foundation presents a collaborative photographic project by nine photographers presenting
different interpretation of Recycle through distinctive artistic styles

Curated by ADITYA ARYA

PHOTOGRAPHER, HISTORIAN AND ARCHIVIST

Artists

CHEENA KAPOOR, MONICA TIWARI, MANU YADAV, RAHUL SHARMA,
SAUMYA KHANDELWAL, SHWETA PANDEY, SIDDHARTH BEHL, SREDEEP, SWARAT GHOSH,

Supported by





Environmental Infrastructure & Services Ltd.

IL&FS Environmental Infrastructure & Services Ltd. (IEISL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS), has set several benchmarks in Integrated Waste Management (IWM) sector. The IWM model established by IEISL scientifically processes biodegradable waste into organic fertilizer, construction & demolition waste into recycled building products and inerts to green power. With over 12000 tons per day (TPD) of waste management mandates across 26 sites in 9 States, the Company is amongst the first to mainstream Carbon financing in Waste Management. The showcase projects in Delhi based on IWM model are: Waste to Composting Plant, Okhla; Construction & Demolition Waste processing facility, Burari and Waste to Energy Plant, Ghazipur.

As the social arm of IL&FS, the Social Inclusion Group helped in establishing Gulmeher, a waste-pickers' collective, in Ghazipur, Delhi. Gulmeher provides alternative incomes to women waste-pickers, training them to make handicrafts using wounded/discarded flowers from the whole sale market and recycled paper. Supporting programs like crèche for young children, education and sports programs for the community children, financial inclusion, health care, are also anchored at the Gulmeher centre to enhance the social development of the community.

**Two of the projects in this years
Grants have been supported by ILFS**

WORLD OF RECYCLE



Long before recycling became an environmental buzzword it was part of our DNA, something we practised on an everyday basis. The concept of throwing away was an alien one – there was always someone, somewhere, who could find a use for discarded objects, whether they were given away as donations or sold for further process and sale. What we now know as ‘recycling’ was not so much an environmental choice as it was part of a much larger economic churn, and very often, an economic necessity.

Perhaps there is a connection with another quintessentially Indian idea—that of *jugaad*, the art and science of improvising within limited resources, which calls for an innovative re-use of materials and parts. *Jugaad* is also ‘making do’; but at its core lies the idea of thinking up new ways to use old objects or parts using an inventive and acute state of mind.

But now in India recycling has become an imperative environmental concern. It is estimated that our country of well over a billion people produces more than 55m

tonnes of solid waste annually. Naturally our landfills are overstretched—there is too much garbage from too much consumption by an ever-increasing number of people. Adding to the problem are technological advances which speed up obsolescence and accelerate the rate of consumption. Ironically, most of those who have to deal with its worst effects are the poorest, who cannot themselves afford consumption.

Almost all across the nation the massive job of waste sorting is done to a large degree not by municipal workers but by ragpickers: unhappily, they themselves live, as if to echo occupation, in makeshift homes created from throwaway materials like plastic or bits of corrugated sheets. And while there are no statistics about how many ragpickers work in our cities, it is estimated that in Delhi alone there are over 300,000. Many of them are children who are rural immigrants. They mostly pick out materials such as glass, metal and plastic, which can be sold to scrap dealers, who then process the waste and sell it on, either to be recycled or to be used directly in industry. But the sub-stories carry their own social implications of acute health risks: the

young ragpickers develop a host of respiratory and other problems because of their unprotected work and handling of toxic wastes.

A lot of this is expressed in this body of work by ten young photographers. We see the world of recycling from different perspectives, from the organized industry at Burari to bleak open landfills of muck and filth where ragpickers work even as scores of predatory birds circle overhead. From Mayapuri, India's largest metal junk trade yard, emerge colour diptychs of corpses of dismembered cars, and rusted skeletons of car doors hanging on walls. Images of machine parts translate into an art form in crisp black-and-white. One image looks as if a worker is wrestling with a vehicle ripe for the plucking: a marginalized object for a marginalized buyer.

Many photographers have chosen to show the desolation of recycling in their portrayals of landfills and ragpickers. In one group of pictures, dust erupts in the frames like a toxic monochromatic cloud wrapping humans and landscapes in its foggy embrace. And Damnation shows us the darkest and lowest side of human scavenging with its depiction of people who escape the terrible reality of their lives with the use of drugs. Their body language in these stark images is a condemnation of the society in which they live.

And yet ... being human is hoping. We are offered alternative glimpses: the neatness of organized recycling at Burari where C & D (construction and demolition) materials from buildings are tidily and professionally recycled, with gloves for handling hazardous materials. A project in Gulmeher uses waste flowers from the Gazipur market to create beautiful objects like cards and candles with dried flowers and, importantly, draws women into a community that can create together with dignity. Such industrial scale shows that organized recycling has a place.

And then we see some special moments: a child sitting in the clothes market blowing magic bubbles through a pipe; the little ragpicker clutching the teddy bear; the faces of the men, women and children imprinted on newspapers or splashed with colour. The sparkles of mischief seen in the kids of Jangpura, the wrinkles on the ageing faces of men and women, often thousands of miles away from home, sorting through your rubbish and mine ... it's these that transform the disparate images into a continuing documentary of humans engaged in often inhuman practices

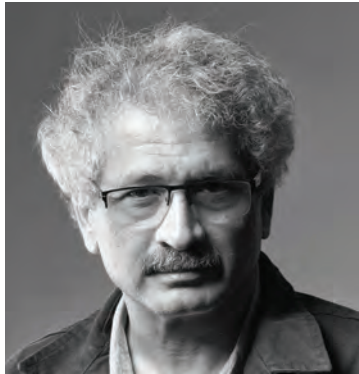
AshaRani Mathur





AshaRani Mathur

AshaRani Mathur is a freelance writer and editor who has edited and produced books on aspects of Indian life and culture as well as art catalogues for the Festivals of India – for which she was Director, Publications and Publicity – and also edited the inflight magazines of Air India and the former Indian Airlines. She has scripted documentaries for television and authored books on textiles, jewellery and shawls (among others) and written on subjects as far apart as restaurant food, travel and ancient India. She was a music producer for the label Music Today, and served for a year with INTACH as Director Cultural Affairs. Currently a Trustee on the Prem Bhatia Memorial Trust, a media-related Trust.



Aditya Arya

An eminent commercial and travel photographer, Aditya Arya began professional photography in 1980 after graduating in History from the St. Stephen's College, Delhi University. After a brief stint in the Mumbai Film Industry where he did the stills for some of the leading directors, he shifted back to Delhi. In addition to his wide-ranging commercial and travel portfolio, his work has been published widely in travel magazines and books. He is known for his expertise in the field of advertising and corporate photography specialising in the field of Products, Interiors and Food.

Over the last few years, he has been completely immersed in the subject and practice of photographic conservation. He has honed his skills and knowledge on preservation, restoration and archiving particularly through the documentation of historic photographic works from the famous Kulwant Roy Collection. He has played a pivotal role in the formation of India Photo Archive Foundation.

At present, while also actively pursuing his professional advertising and commercial assignments, he divides his time between his photography archive and the only Photography and Camera Museum in India with more than 1000 rare and iconic cameras and other equipment tracing the history of photography from the 1870s to the Digital Era.

He has also been on the Jury of the National Art Exhibition 2014 organized by Lalit Kala Akademi besides many other national shows. He has curated several shows of archival and contemporary visual works, both nationally and internationally. These include the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and the National Museum, New Delhi.

He was also a Director(2012-2015) at the Academy for Photographic Excellence (APEX), one of the India's leading photography academies based in New Delhi. He is also a guest faculty at the Jamia Millia Islamia University's Institute of Mass Communication and a Guest Fellow(2012-2014) and Curator at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. Presently he is one of the mentors of the year-long celebration of photography titled 'India Habitat Photosphere' at the Visual Art Gallery by INDIA HABITAT CENTRE, NEW DELHI.



Parthiv Shah

An alumnus of the National Institute of Design, India, he was invited as visiting scholar at the SOAS, London University and at the University of California, Davis. Parthiv is a photographer, film maker and a graphic designer. He has made several documentary films, curated exhibitions and has several photo-books to his credit. Growing up in a family of artists and through his own professional training, he brings an interesting intersection of art, photography and design to his work. He has been awarded a senior fellowship in Photography by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Charles Wallace Fellowship, UK and Fulbright Lectureship award to teach at the UCLA, USA. He has been teaching photography and film as a visiting faculty at the National Institute of Design and Jamia Milia Islmia University in India.

He is the Founder-Director of Centre for Media and Alternative Communication (CMAC). Lately Parthiv has been particularly interested and engaged in working on the issue of image perception and representation. His visual journeys have led him into working with communities which are finding a mainstream voice.

Photographs exhibited at

India, Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand, Netherlands, Japan, Spain, Russia, U.K. and U.S.A

Photographs in the collection of

National Gallery of Modern Art, India, Lalit Kala Akademi, India, Eames Design Office, USA, Philip and Phyllis Morrison, USA, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, University of California, Davis, USA, Minge Kan, Tokyo, Japan, Australian Arts Council, Sydney, Australia, Smithsonian Institute, Washington. DC. USA including some private collection such as Christo, USA, Issye Miyake, Japan.



Curator's Note

We proudly celebrate our Fourth edition of Neel Dongre Awards and Grants with the launch of this collaborative show entitled, 'WORLD OF RECYCLE' featuring nine photographers. In our journey since 2011, we continue to re-focus the gaze of emerging photographers in the 'Documentary' genre on a wide range of subjects and provide them with a platform to showcase their work and encourage dialogue.

"The whole point of taking pictures is so that you don't have to explain things with words."
-Elliott Erwitt W Eugene Smith

I firmly believe that photography in general and photographers, in particular play a seminal role in shifting the scrutiny of society by showcasing and highlighting critical issues. The India Photo Archive Foundation has been facilitating this very process by providing photographers a forum for visual expression.

As a young boy growing up in Delhi one voice which always excited me was that of the Kabadiwallah and one place

which always thrilled me was the Sunday Kabadi Bazar at Jama Masjid.

This benefit of seeing... can come only if you pause a while, extricate yourself from the maddening mob of quick impressions ceaselessly battering our lives, and look thoughtfully at a quiet image...the viewer must be willing to pause, to look again, to meditate." -Dorothea Lange

India has traditionally had a culture of recycling, orchestrated by the quintessential Kabadiwallahs. However the magnitude and diversity of new urban waste creates new threats and the age-old custom of recycling seems to be fast fading. We are producing more and more with the mantra of the day being, 'Ye Dil Maange More', leaving behind a huge imprint in the form of ever mushrooming land fills and other dumping sites. It is predicted that India is going to be the fastest producer of waste by the year 2050. Judging from the pace of urbanization, we may well achieve this figure in the next ten years. Solid waste is mostly an urban phenomenon. A city resident generates twice as much waste as its rural counterpart and as urbanization increases, so will the generation of solid waste.

As photographers, we turn our attention to the familiarities of which we are a part. So turning, we in our work can speak more than of our subject – we can speak with them; we can more than speak about our subjects – we can speak for them. They, given tongue, will be able to speak with and for us. And in this language will be proposed to the lens that with which, in the end, photography must be concerned – time, and place, and the works of man. - Dorothea Lange

Isn't it time we focus on the mess we are creating?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Urmilla Dongre, Asharani Mathur, Parthiv Shah, Premola Ghose and Anurag Kashyap of ILFS and many others who have contributed in making this initiative possible.

...it is not a factual photograph per se. The documentary photograph carries with it another thing, a quality in the subject that the artist responds to. It is a photograph which carries the full meaning of the episode or the circumstance or the situation that can only be revealed – because you can't really recapture it – by this other quality. There is no real warfare between the artist and the documentary photographer. He has to be both. - Dorothea Lange, Mary Ellen Mark : 25 Years by Marianne Fulton

I would like to thank all the participating grantees. Special mention must be made of Shweta and Rahul who stepped out of the conventional methodology and the comfort of the 'Digital Zone'. While the world is celebrating the speed of digital photography, both Shweta and Rahul's unconventional and creative approach slowed them down, protracting their engagement with their subject. The subjectivity and the objectivity in Shweta's images have been converged by using the vintage photographic process of Cynotype. Images printed on old newspaper give a special meaning to her project by embedding the faces of her subjects on the very rags they collect. Rahul's age-old technique of hand colored

images, bridge the gap between fine art and documentary photography.

“Photography for me is not looking, it's feeling. If you can't feel what you're looking at, then you're never going to get others to feel anything when they look at your pictures.”
-Don McCullin

Aditya Arya





Jury

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पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पुर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णभयं पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावभिश्यते

Om.

*That is the whole, this is the whole;
from the whole, the whole becomes manifest;
taking away the whole from the whole,
the whole remains.*

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!.

Recycling is a western term which was made popular sometimes in late 60's. Humans thought that the earth has enormous resources but soon they realized that this will all go away very soon! Interestingly in our part of world we had very little material resources and our ancient culture always believed in reincarnation and that we brought in day to day practice. In India even now a Saree becomes a cradle which becomes a quilt and turns in to a mop and sometime even a wick of lamp!

Recycling is not new to us but when western technology and material has taken over our lifestyle it is but natural that we have to think differently. One can see in local haat (weekly bazaar) of village bags and spice boxes made out of oil containers, hand-fans made out of tobacco gutaka pouches, rubber chappals made of truck tires etc.

Recycling is a hard and dirty job, mostly carried out by the lowest strata of society. To document these people and their work in camera is a real daunting task. This year nine young photographers have approached this subject in a very unique

way. Some have concentrated on the human aspect while some have captured the visual play.

Exploring 'the second hand cloth market' and the exhaustive daily routines of the Gujarat's Waghari tribe, Cheena Kapoor's photographs reveal a world of congestion and disarray, but one that solves a crisis of recycle as well as necessity. It is through the stark colours of a variety of clothing set amidst a background of temporariness that the camera captures the noise and bustle of the market.

Manu Yadav's visual account of rag-pickers at Connaught Place, is a call to confront and notice. In one of Delhi's most posh areas, a community of scavengers lives a life of depravity induced by destitution. On the other hand there are initiatives like 'Gulmeher' that have brought together a community of women rag-pickers to recycle waste from 'Gazipur Flower market' into handmade crafts. While the two series offer a visual commentary on two separate setups, the contrast in terms of theme also unfolds the affects of abandonment and support.

Monica Tiwari's *Dust* is work of irony, the candidness captured by the camera stands in striking contrast to the harsh realities of the occupational hazards, the lack of basic infrastructure and education. The children at the landfill occupy the frames, and the sentiment that plays out in its characteristic loud refrain is that of a practiced indifference. Landfills and garbage dumps have been shot by hundreds of photographers across the world and it is quite a challenge for any photographer to humanise this landscape. Children in all her frames remind in a way of the unfairness of policy measures that turn these landscapes of 'dust and garbage' into compromising means of survival.

The 'Kabadiwallas of Jungpura' by Rahul Sharma brings to the fore the idea of agency, the inherent bias of a photographic dialogue with the underprivileged. The hand painted portraits in a range of formats from 35mm, 4x5, digital, to 8x10 using a combination of film and paper negatives, surprise with their colours and the choice of eliminating the background setting.

The Mayapuri Junkyard by Saumya Khandelwal documents the cycle of the process. We do not see the so much the people involved but the omnipresence of scrap is overwhelming. Each diptych denotes a visual quirk, and the juxtapositions narrate the lack of organised support and the will to 'make-do' with what is available. In a similar vein, Siddharth Behl captures the lives of workers at a construction and demolition recycle firm in Burari. The mechanical landscapes sweep over the efforts and hardships of labor. The children with their jugaad paraphernalia playing amidst a deserted field ironically underline the priorities of gentrification, and the cost of the same on the lower strata of society. The desolation of the setting subtly invokes the marginalisation faced by working classes. Shweta Pandey's series on 'rag-pickers' in Gurgaon dispenses with the habitus, focussing instead on the portrait photography. The attempt invokes the ethical contradictions of such close encounters: how apt the portraits are to capture their social existence? Form and content blend together interestingly in her use of old-dailies as a print medium.

Sreedeep's visual foray into the automobile Junk Market delineates the 'every day rituals' among the scrap dealers. Between rest and work, the community unfolds through its routines. Sreedeep's camera not only brings out the mundane but also manages to capture the compassion within the community. Beginning with the sprawling landfills, Swarat Ghosh's focus shifts to more personalised narratives within the living quarters of 'rag-picking' community' in Bholakpur and BK Guda Basti. From the households to the neighbour, the photographs offer subtle hints into the affects of marginalisation.

The present series is a testimony to the idea of 'Public Secret'- something that is known, but fails meaningful articulation. The stories of waste recycling in India do not constitute a narrative that is new but a narrative that has been abandoned to a culture of compromise. The photographs in the series provide for a humane exposition of the issues concerning waste management in India. Covering multiple stories - scrap-dealers, construction waste, rag-pickers, recycled handicrafts and second hand markets - these works highlight the marginalisation faced by the disadvantaged and the layered narratives within.

It is good to know that the platform through this series is contributing to the mainstreaming of a marginal public issue which we as a community have been dedicated to over the years.

These photographs shall hopefully bring more voices and greater interest to the discourse that is mostly limited to closed circles. In their own ways they are attempts at articulation, of these many encounters with the 'invisible', that are generally avoided.

Parthiv Shah







CHEENA KAPOOR

An Engineer turned photojournalist, Cheena Kapoor hails from Delhi, India and recently completed her Diploma in Photojournalism from the Ateneo De Manila University, Philippines. Photography caught her interest when she started enjoying capturing her travel moments. Her hobby slowly became her passion and she started freelancing for Music groups while continue working in IT. She has always been a traveler and her love for photography and travel finally made her quit IT and be a full time photojournalist in 2015. She now works for The Indian Express as a photojournalist.



Sheetal, 20, wakes up at 3:30am every morning, gets ready and reaches the 'Kapda Mandi' by 4am to grab the best spot there. From early wee hours till noon, among a hundred other sellers, she shouts out loud to make herself heard by the customers. Her days are long- starting early and ending later in the night. After the daily loud cries at the market, she takes her bundle of old clothes home and sort them out for the next day.

'Turning one person's waste into another person's resource'- The old clothes' wholesale markets in various parts of Delhi work as 'Walmarts' for people who cannot afford new clothes and set a sustainable mindset

in people. Manoj visits the market twice every week, buys old denims for Rs.20/piece, mends and washes them and sells them for Rs.40-50/ piece.

The Waghari tribals from Gujarat have been in the profession of recycling clothes for decades now. The old clothes are collected using the barter system. The Waghari ladies move from door to door to exchange shiny utensils for old clothes. Daily around 500 kgs of old clothes come into this early morning market in West Delhi. The clothes are segregated based on their quality and sold to merchants who further finishes them before selling them to the retailers.

Textile industry is the most polluting industry as it takes many gallons of water and pesticides to raise 1kg of cotton for a pair of denim. The disposal of textiles is problematic too. There is a dire need to judiciously use our current resources without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

"It's one of those industries whose positive impacts on world trade is unknown. It adheres to principles of fair trade, supports many small businesses, and operates without government aid or help," says Schapiro, president of Whitehouse and Schapiro Llc, an old-clothing business based in the US.









Ragpickers C.P Damnation



MANU YADAV

Trained as a photographer, Manu Yadav, is an engineering graduate, belongs to Haryana. He works as a freelancer & lives in Delhi. He feels that the *world* rotates on a tripod.



Damnation

When we talk about recycling, we automatically associate it with greenery and animals and sustainability and what not. We never spare a thought about the people who are the actual feet on the ground and have made it their livelihood.

Through this project of mine, I would take you on a journey to the dark side of human garbage scavenging. I got intrigued by this topic on a visit to Connaught Place, seeing these people in tattered clothes, often sleeping at odd hours and in odd positions. Spiked my curiosity and helped made my mind to pursue it further.

Upon investigation, I found out the reason for their abnormal affinity to sleep (unconscious). Most of these rag pickers are in some way or other are connected to drugs. Some have addiction and some might sell to make a living. The way they finance their addiction is by selling their day's picking and buying narcotics at the end of the day and staying unconscious all night and even in the day.

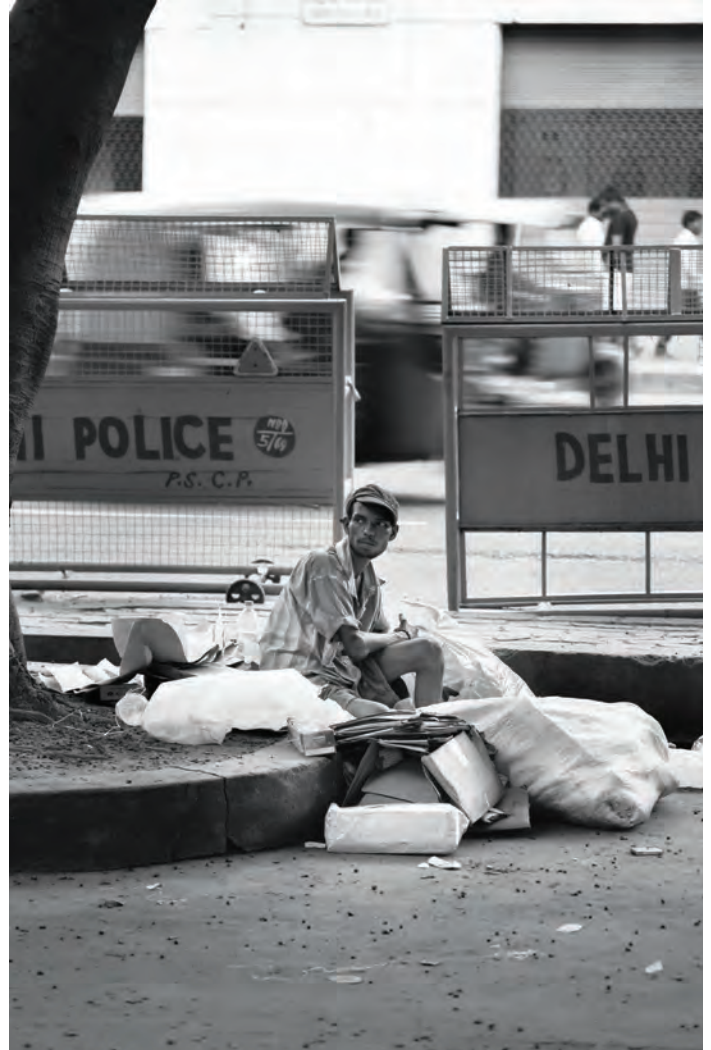
These addicts live a life of servitude to drugs with their lives revolving around drugs and syringes and rags. So strong is their addiction that on the days they are unable to make any money, they don't

hesitate from robbing anybody and in worst case scenario hurting somebody else. There have been cases in which innocent people have been hurt by these addicts. And the worst part is that their women and kids are also falling prey to this menace which effectively ends any chance of recovery for these people.

Through this photo-log, I would like to attract everybody's attention towards something which we all have seen but are too busy to even acknowledge its existence. In the hall ways of Connaught Place and definitely in other parts of the country, everybody sees them yet they remain invisible.













Gulmeher, Gazipur

Elevation

The wastepicking women associated with Gulmeher have been turning their life around. These women pick waste flower from Gazipur market every morning and turn them into beautiful objects. Their hardwork and perseverance is what I have tried to focus on. They bring their collective artistic ability to create beauty out of

thrown away flowers. The community sense and common background tie these women together which instills a sense of purpose in these women.

Women coming from a myriad of backgrounds connected through ragpicking. These women working hard mustering all their strength to

make something of their lives. Their quest kept aflame by their desire to give a better future to their kids.

Dedicated to the women who make something out of nothing.















SIDDHARTH BEHL

Siddharth received his graduation in Journalism and Mass Communication from Amity University, Noida. Having developed a passion for photography, he pursued his masters in Photography and Visual Communications from Jamia University, Delhi. He further honed his photographic prowess, under the aegis of the renowned photographer Raghu Rai. Since then he has been on his journey working as a documentary photographer in Delhi, and has also freelanced for many organizations including the Archaeological Survey of India. Siddharth is currently based in Delhi and is working with a humanitarian organisation SEEDS India, covering stories on disasters all across India and South Asia. He is passionate about his profession as a photographer and working much on humanitarian and documentary stories.



The rapid development in our modern life, has led to the need for new infrastructure. Even the homes we reside in are getting a new definition in style. Multistory buildings appealing to our aesthetic tastes provide residence to the ever growing population of this megacity. So where does these raw materials come from? Or do we stop to question about what happens to the scraps of an old building which has been brought down in the neighbourhood? And

most importantly, who are the people whose painstaking labor goes into the making of the urban development a marvel.

Such is an example of Il&FS: A leading environmental infrastructure services company that collaborated with North Delhi Municipal Corporation to provide a solution to all the C&D waste (Construction and demolition) from all over Delhi. The recycle plant, set up in Burari, North Delhi, manages to

recycle 5000 tons of waste construction material everyday with heavy recycling machines maneuvered by skilled laborers. These labors are almost always scattered and invisible in the industrial hullabaloo. Working diligently in the megacity like Delhi, they nonetheless, remain hidden, as silhouettes. It's the mechanical eye of the camera and the light of the prestigious Neel Dongre grant 2016 that renders a defined visibility to this recycle plant and its workers.











RAHUL SHARMA

Rahul Sharma was born in Jammu, and is currently based out of Delhi, after living in the hills outside Pune, and in the potato fields of Idaho for most of the last decade. He is currently working towards his Masters Thesis in technical imaging and art conservation from the National Museum Institute. While studying in Idaho, he discovered the joys of large format and early photography, and started taking photos of the night landscapes. This led to interest in photographing the interaction between humans and the environment, which has continued till date. The current work is another tangent into his interest of documenting urbanism and its discontents. Rahul's work has been shown in the Kiernan Gallery in Virginia, the Rosenthal Gallery in College of Idaho, and the Boise State University Visual Arts Centre. In his free time, he plays the banjo and experiments in his kitchen cum chemistry lab.



The Kabadiwallahs of Jangpura

Having a portrait taken is a luxury. Photos suffice for ID and documents, but a portrait is for those with time and money to sit for them. A portrait is proof not only of existing, but of having someone willing to take the time and effort to create the portrait. In India, handcoloured portraits were taken of royalty, and the richer merchants. Others would have to satisfy themselves with monochromatic images, while the powers that be had portraits in their finery, coloured in by miniature painters using pigments as exotic as crushed lapis lazuli and resins specially imported from Cambodia.

While I heard a young kabadiwallah explain to another that I was photographing them so “that when they die, they can be identified, and their parents have something to

remember them by”, I was at loss for words. How does one cope with such a macabre responsibility? And from one who had not even passed his first decade on earth?

Slowly, this series emerged, where I photographed the children caught up in this industry, who spend their days walking and cycling around Jangpura and Ashram in New Delhi, collecting refuse. Their parents all live in Assam. And at 4 every day, I would wait for them with my camera on my big tripod, and they would circle around me, their “camera walla uncle”, and I would photograph them. They would offer to pay me for copies of the photos, so they could send them to their families. I would pass them around for free. And I would see more and more. My reputation had spread.

I continued taking photos and being their Camera Wallah Uncle.

I decided at the culmination of this project that I would choose the best photos, and treat them just like the portrait of royals, colouring them in by hand. These would go to the kids who had by then become almost like family. The photos presented here are scans of these hand coloured photos, and are here not only to bring these children with nothing into prominence, but also to bring about dialogue about the toxic system which makes it so that these children keep on doing what they do, while those whose rubbish they collect live in luxury, paying scant heed to those who make their lifestyle possible.











SHWETA PANDEY

“Shweta hails from Raipur, capital of the newly created state of Chhattisgarh. She currently resides in Gurgaon and works as freelance photographer taking up projects in the fields of Documentary, Architecture and Conceptual photography. She is among those few who choose to pursue their passion as their profession. Photography for Shweta was a natural corollary to her love for travelling which had its roots in the fact that her father was in a transferable job moving places as frequently as every six months. She started capturing beautiful memories in photos of all the places she lived. And she continued it when she moved to Delhi / NCR expanding her array of genre to include portraits from the streets and bylanes of walled city of Old Delhi. Shweta has previously shot for Namaskar India. When not engaged in her professional commitments, she loves to travel to different places capturing landscapes and local cultures.”

With the “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” or “Clean India Mission” becoming one of the most important nationwide campaigns of our times, I decided to contribute in my own way. And it was not just restricted to a pledge to keep my surroundings clean but to bring forth the story of the unsung heroes who will keep the wheels rolling of this ambitious mission. And to do it I choose a medium that emphasises on the concept of recycling.

The “Rag pickers” of Gurgaon are people coming from distant lands, as far as eastern parts of India. Most of them come to NCR for better opportunities of earning livelihoods in few cases leaving their families behind. And not many come with the remotest thought of becoming a rag picker. Neither there is a minimum age for eligibility nor an age for retirement; one will find men rag pickers and women rag pickers alike.

The lives of Rag pickers are so full of contradictions. They are the people who contribute the most to recycling in India despite contributing least to the consumption resulting in wastes. These are the people who strive in the heat of the day to keep our streets clean but their own dwellings lack basic amenities like sanitation. Despite this, on my one request of a photo they willingly flashed a smile so content that may envy some of the richest.

The typical day of Rag pickers starts at 6 in the morning. Some of them have been able to associate themselves with some housing societies or a municipal corporation. It results in a more fixed daily routine and a more certain daily earnings. There are others who are not so lucky to have a fixed work and fend for themselves on a daily basis. Raju, one of the rag picker, told he had come to assist another person from his village working as a plumber. However he has

ended up as a rag picker. But hopes one day will go back to plumbing, the occupation of his interest.

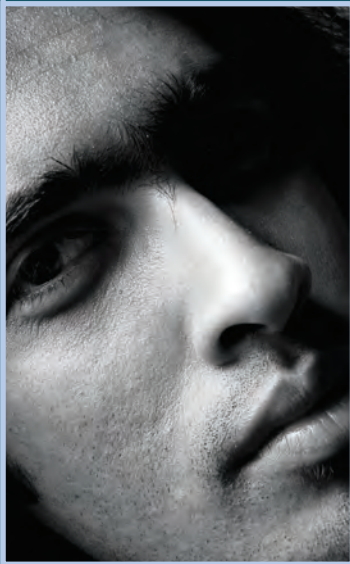
Spending time with these rag pickers while clicking their photographs made me realise that I am amongst the fortunate few who get to do in life what we want to. And it also taught me an important lesson that shall stay with me for life. And that is to be happy in embracing whatever life throws at you but never lose hope and keep striving for what we want.

Through my work I decided to take up the concept of recycling and extend it to photography. Here I have used old newspapers as a medium of printing for my work and tried to capture rag pickers from our daily walks of life. Cyanotype process was the only bridge to combine my subject and the medium and come up with a stimulating image that communicated the message I intended to.









SREEDEEP

Sreedeeep is an independent photographer with a wide range of visual interests. He is particularly involved with documenting Indian cities in transition. His photographs and essays have been published in Himal, OPEN, The Wire, The Sunday Guardian, Mint, Kindle, Better Photography, Outlook Traveler and journals like Mass Context and Society and Culture in South Asia. He completed his doctoral studies in Sociology from JNU. He is currently a Fellow with the C-PACT, Shiv Nadar University. Recently he was involved in drafting a crucial report submitted to Reserve Bank of India on Rural Distress and Farmers' Suicide and shooting a 22 hour-extensive interview with Prof. Romila Thapar.



INORGANIC TRANSPLANTS - the afterlife of the lifeless

Mayapuri – the automobile junkyard in West Delhi, adjacent to Delhi Cantonment, is the hub of thousands of retail units selling junk or (re)usable machine parts. It is the largest metal-junk-trade-yard in Asia. Starkly contradicting with our imagined notion of the ‘world-class’ or the ‘global’, this space is an assemble-of-clutter that reeks of technological morbidity – untouched by the bulldozers of beautification.

The images capture the afterlife of the lifeless in a space where one is surrounded by the jumble of skeletons of machinery or its parts that once had life, or it was once a part of a functioning and performing whole. One witnesses and walks through the after-life of assets or once-active cogs-in-the-wheel that lay out there in the open waiting to be fragmented, assembled, re-assembled, resold, reused further. It is an inexhaustive cycle of use-repair-sale-resale-re-use. It is futile to trace their defined source, state of ownership, date of expiry

and the ultimate scrambled-fate of these abandoned yet useful parts. The visual documentation illustrates this perennial cycle of reuse.

Machinery and vehicles that meet with accidents, or the ones which remain unclaimed, or the ones that expire are brought in from various parts of the country and dumped in Mayapuri. The extracted parts act as vital replacements substituting the ‘bruised-original’ or the ‘damaged-new’ through the indigenus/temporary/quick-fix tendency – the tradition of jugaad.

Refusal to dispose or do-away with a commodity by beating it into dust is imperative for the existence and operation of low cost urban infrastructures that encourage, support and withhold parallel, informal and compromised channels of production, distribution, circulation and consumption. It bypasses, negates and subverts the plethora of legalized structures of righteous arrangements of

trade. It caters to the marginal or those who are unable or unwilling to afford the branded, the original or the new.

Conversation with the retailers in the market reveals the twin processes of displacement of the unplanned and the assimilation of the displaced. The interviews also throw light on the making of the market, several problems that bother the retailers, their relation with the civic bodies, the current slump in scrap-market worldwide, and most importantly how imposed norms on obsolescence, rapid technological shifts and paradigm shifts in market economics impose drastic transitions on systems of exchange and principles of transactions in any market space. Possibilities of financing new vehicles in installments and rules that compel old vehicles to go off the roads have reduced buyers strolling and searching used parts for reuse. The project produces a pool of images and sonic experience that validates ‘no natural death’ of machines, not even in its grand graveyard.















SWARAT GHOSH

Swarat Ghosh, a member of That's Life, the premier Indian street photography collective is a visual designer by profession. He started pursuing photography as a hobby since 2010 from Hyderabad. His work has been published in several national and international magazines including National Geographic Traveller and International Street Photographer. For him, photography is all about the timing and the capacity to observe. He loves shooting photographs that are complex in composition and layered with multiple descriptive and conceptual elements, depicting stories from everyday life. His work is exhibited in many prestigious platforms including "Pondy Photo Fest 2014". He was the runner-up in "Metiers du Monde" an international photography contest organized by the "Foundation Alliance Française, 2013". One of his photo essays has been shortlisted in the final round of the Photographer of the Year Competition from "Better Photography magazine, 2012". The essay has been shortlisted under the Photoessay: A Different Kind of Family Album category.



The Secret Environmentalist

Ever wondered where does your daily garbage go? Ask one of the rag pickers in modern day India and he would be able to tell you every nook and corner of the city where this trash gets accumulated. The country generates 62 million tonnes of waste annually. This is expected to increase to 165 million tonnes by 2030 and 450 million tonnes by 2050. More than 90 percent of India doesn't have a proper waste disposal system, so the whole responsibility of the garbage dumping relies on the shoulders of rag pickers – one of India's poorest and most marginalized groups. They are not paid by the state; they rely on meagre salaries received from the communities they serve and on meagre profits from the sale of discarded items.

As per official records, the city of Hyderabad generates close to 4,000 tonnes of garbage per day. There is a large workforce of rag-pickers in Bholakpur and BK Guda Basti, which

segregate garbage. People assume that municipalities are responsible for waste management, but these rag-pickers have a prominent role when it comes to managing waste in every city. Rag picking is effectively the primary recycling system in India. But the work is by no means environmentally friendly, and very far from being secure. While the rag pickers offer invaluable services to the city, they have few rights. Every day, they are exposed to deadly poisons. Anjali 16, and her mother — Shakshi, 60, and 12-year-sister Rupa — spent their days at a garbage dump yard in BK Guda Basti, in Hyderabad. On other days they would sit outside their single-room shanty and sort the trash into metal, plastic, paper etc. The family earns just INR 3007.35 per month. Rent is INR 534.64 and electricity bill comes to INR 1069.28. So, there is hardly any saving for them at the end of the month. Meenakshi, a 6 year old and her mother Rohini, 24, sort human hair, used for wig- making and sell

them for INR 2004.90/kg, which often takes more than a month to collect. They are the secret environmentalist. They may not be aware of it or may not even understand the term, but they are the few among 300,000 ragpickers who perform a vital role for the city.

The government's initiatives to get these people out of this life that they are a part of haven't really created an impact. Some serious thoughts need to be put into this by the government for this concerning the futures of lakhs of Rag-pickers including children. The government needs to invest in new waste disposing technologies so that these issues can be dealt with efficiently. As individuals, we need to make sure that we minimize our waste. In all the name of modernity and development, let us not ignore the harsh realities that are a part of our society and do affect us in some way or the other.











MONICA TIWARI

Monica Tiwari is a freelance documentary photographer based out of New Delhi. Previously working at 'The Hindu' as a News Photographer, she has received formal training in Photography and Visual Arts from MCRC, Jamia Millia Islamia and is mentored by documentary and commercial photographer, Mr. Amit Mehra.



The overpowering impression I get of the Ghazipur landfill, where I am documenting the lives of ragpickers, is that of dust. An omnipresent, almost opaque dust, hovering in the air, settling on everything, engulfing the entire landfill.

The children at the landfill are at ease with the dust. Not seeming to care, not even noticing or taking cover from it, rolling and playing in it - spending

about 10-12 hours everyday, in the same endless routine of segregating trash, picking what will fetch them the day's money, and descending to their shanties situated right below the landfill.

That such an environment is toxic to health, is obvious, but the most unfortunate part is the harm it does to these young minds. These children, who have no access to a world outside the landfill, are mostly school drop-outs,

having no idea of careers and ambitions outside their immediate surroundings. Also, there is the satisfaction of earning the precious Rs. 200 - 300, which they get by selling the valuables from the day's work.

Their worldview is limited, hazy, monochromatic - just like the all consuming, suffocating dust.











SAUMYA KHANDELWAL

Saumya Khandelwal is a photojournalist with a national daily Hindustan Times. She has been published in Huffington Post (digital), Time (digital), Bloomberg (digital), The Sunday Guardian, Outlook Magazine, Catch News etc. Khandelwal's work, Water – A dying Lifeline has been exhibited at Goa Photo Festival. She is mentored by senior Documentary and Commercial Photographer, Amit Mehra. Having studied photography formally at AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, she continues to pursue her personal projects based out of New Delhi.



Biography of Scrap

A truck perched on a terrace, a Maruti 800 sitting on top of a Tata Sumo; terrace after terrace covered with vehicle doors and bonnets, roads and invisible pavements encroached with greasy machine parts, and a public park devoid of grass or people and occupied with machines and scrap instead. The constant murmur of machines never stops. The hammering of a vehicle to be dismantled, the movement of metal tyres on stone laden passages, the groaning of the JCB which moves around the engines, and the clunk of the parts when they are thrown at each other one after the other. These are the sensual identifications of a vehicular scrap market.

Mayapuri junk market is India's largest. Vehicles brought in retail or from auctions travel to Mayapuri to be dismantled in its muddy lanes. A truck

can be dismantled in an hour and a half and a car will take lesser. The parts to be re-sold are extracted and are moved to second hand shops and the remaining is left for the metal scrap dealers. They collect the metal from the remains. The seats, rubber and plastics are gathered by yet smaller scrap dealers. And the last bit of scavenging is done by women and children who use magnets to gather the little metal that falls down on the roads and burn the plastic and wires that are collected at the market for their metal contents.

The scrap is then pressed into bales which travel to other parts of the country like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal and Haryana for further processing in furnaces. Furnaces melt the scrap at temperatures around 1650 degrees Celsius and convert them into pig iron. Pig iron then can take

any shape. The cycle has now been completed. A truck or a vehicle is now recycled and has acquired a new form.

India recycles 20-25% of its metal waste which is way too insufficient for its requirements. An unorganized industry, it runs in the hands of private players with little intervention or help from the government.

I have spent days in Mayapuri to understand and document the processes and the market. The documentation became complete at a furnace in Baddi, Himachal Pradesh where the scrap was processed into pig iron.







About Neel Dongre Awards

Neel Dongre Awards for excellence in Photography
India Photo Archive Foundation

India Photo Archive Foundation

In an age when digital information is all around, it's easy to forget that great volumes of historical images of India—journalistic, political, personal, developmental and social—languish in neglect in institutions and homes. These photographic archives form an essential part of our cultural heritage and The India Photo Archive Foundation has been established with a view to identify, preserve and document such photographic legacies, highlighting the historical value of photographic archives and collections and to encourage their dissemination, access and use for academic, institutional and cultural purposes.

The Foundation also aims at encouraging a visual dialogue in the field of photography through various initiatives and to aid the development of a platform for amateur and professional photographers, over the ages.

With the coming of the digital age, we have witnessed the rise of a visual culture where photography as a

profession and art has evolved giving rise to a plethora of genres, attracting talented minds. However, many of these budding visual artists go unnoticed due to the lack of support in the form of institutes with adequate equipment, funds, scholarships, and relevant platforms to display and publish their work. The Neel Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography is an initiative aimed at bridging this gap.

Neel Dongre Awards for Excellence in Photography Year of establishment: 1st January 2012

Neel Dongre (1944-2009) was one of the most successful entrepreneurs in the country who took a keen interest in mentoring young people, encouraged them to dream, and helped them fulfill their ambitions. These awards are aimed at recognizing young and emerging and active photo practitioners who demonstrate talent and the passion to communicate with visuals.

A Corpus Fund, Rs. 50 Lacs.

These Awards/Grants are meant for professional/non-

professional photographers who have produced an ongoing/ finished body of work in any genre of photography; Social Documentary, Photojournalism, Fine Art etc. The applicants are required to submit a written proposal for their project, accompanied by images that demonstrate their skill and visually translates the project.

Managing Committee for the Awards/Grants

The awards will be administered by a Managing Committee consisting of Mrs. Urmilla Dongre, Parthiv Shah, Aditya Arya (Trustee), Premola Ghosh, Asha Rani Mathur, Gopika Chowfla, and artists and designers invited to be on the committee for a period of two years.

The rules for submission are as follows:

1. The submission form (CV/Bio Data) to be filled should include a written proposal attached with any supporting visual material of low-resolution.
2. Awards/Grants are strictly for a body of work and not for individual images/photographs. More than one body of work can be submitted. A body of work is constituted by at least 20 images/photographs.
3. Photographer must hold the copyright and all required legal rights to submit, publish and exhibit the same.
4. The managing committee reserves the right to choose from the submissions or invite submissions for the Awards/ Grants.
5. The India Photo Archive Foundation reserves the right to five sets of such works and the usage rights in publications including the web auction sale etc. with all due credits to the photographer.

6. The copyright of this work shall remain with the photographer.

7. The prints for the above-mentioned exhibits will be paid for by the India Photo Archive Foundation.

8. The decision of the managing committee is irrevocable and final in all matters pertaining to the awards/grants.

9. The submissions are open to all Indian Nationals above 18 years of age.

10. The Submissions will not be returned so please do not send original material.



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