

# VANISHING LINE

A collaborative photography project under the aegis of Neel  
Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography (2018)  
by India Photo Archive Foundation





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**Publish under the**

Aegis of Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography  
by India Photo Archive Foundation

**Organized by** India Photo Archive Foundation

**Curated by** Aditya Arya and Parthiv Shah

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India Photo Archive Foundation

T 23/5 DLF Phase - 3, Gurgaon, Haryana - 122001, India

Ph- 0091 9810009099

[indiaphotoarchive@gmail.com](mailto:indiaphotoarchive@gmail.com)

[www.indiaphotoarchive.org](http://www.indiaphotoarchive.org)

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India Photo Archive Foundation  
presents

# VANISHING LINE

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Photography (2018) by India Photo Archive Foundation

The Foundation Presents A collaborative photography project by six photographers presenting  
different interpretation of vanishing line through distinctive artistic style

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**Curated by Aditya Arya and Parthiv Shah**

**Artist**

Amruta Dhavale, Arindam Thokder,  
Lokesh Dang, Siddharth Behl,  
Surabi Janardhanan, Syed Adnan Ahmed



# VANISHING LINE

“Just over one hundred years ago, a rural revenue official made an important visual distinction between the village lands that were used for habitation and those used for agriculture. He took a red pencil; on a map he simply drew the lines that delineated the boundaries between the two; this was the Lal Dora.

We now know them as the Urban Villages of India- The peculiar outcome of a swiftly evolving urban environment, with the lingering remnants of rustic or historical origins. ‘A mosaic of sub cultures’, as architect Christopher Alexander described them, these urban villages are the backdrop of parallel lives which are portraits of contrast.

Cramped narrow lanes leading to upmarket restaurants, Mom’n’Pop shops next to high-end boutiques, urban street art overlooking old architecture, and close quartered buildings brimming with migrant populations; in short, a motley of metamorphoses.

As various as these urban villages may be within their own confines, they also differ from colony to colony, city to city. On one hand, for example, there’s Hauz Khas Village and Khirkee Extension of Delhi, that were defined as ‘Lal Dora’ regions in the 1900s as village lands to be used for habitation purposes only, legally outside the purview of local municipalities. A century later, these ‘non-agricultural’ lands have transformed into fast emerging entertainment and art hubs. On the other hand there’s Mumbai’s Chuim or Pali that have still managed to retain some of the old world charm while being engulfed in the urban frenzy of a typical metropolitan city.

These melting pots of cultures have blurred the boundaries of ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ through an amalgamation of social networks, commercial utility and constantly evolving architecture. At the rate at which this transformation has happened, one might wonder what their future has in store.„



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.

# Curators and Jury



Parthiv Shah

Parthiv Shah 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. 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. 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 photography at the UCLA, USA.

He is the Founder-Director of Centre for Media and Alternative Communication (CMAC). He has been teaching photography and film as a visiting faculty at the National Institute of Design, Ambedkar University and Jamia Milia Islamia University in India. 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.



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. In addition to his wide-ranging Commercial and Travel portfolio, his work has been published widely in books and travel magazines around the world.

He divides his time between his photography archive and Museo Camera - the only Photography and Camera Museum in India. With more than 2000 rare and iconic cameras and other equipment, this museum traces the history of photography from the 1870s to the Digital Era.

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

He was most recently a mentor at Habitat Photosphere, a photography initiative by Visual Arts Galley, India Habitat Centre., and a Guest Fellow and Curator at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.



## Syed Adnan Ahmed



Syed Adnan Ahmed is a Documentary Photographer and Graphic Designer from Ajmer, Rajasthan. He did his Bachelors and Masters in Graphic Designing and Photography from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Adnan has been passionate about photography from his early student days and has dedicated himself to this particular art form.

He has received the NDMC Award for photography and has been a part of the travelling exhibition organized by the social campaign of the Government of India, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*. His work has also been exhibited in galleries like All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS) and the MF Husain Art Gallery, and his photographs published in magazines such as Better Photography.





# Coexistence in City

Doors open in neighbour's house, one can hear others door bell, you rise your head you can't see sky, small lane leads towards a corner shop, the web of inter linked streets, mingling of different working class, you can find it in urban villages.

The urban villages have developed in an unplanned manner over the period of time. These areas consist of the population of a homogeneous mixture of different working classes, language and caste or due to the historicity attached. Most urban area has developed in such an expansionist way that change the scenario of urban villages which till date stick to their identity of being villages but don't have anything other than their names to prove it.

With my photographs I tend out to showcase the mingling of urban and rural societies resulting in the elimination of the line of distance. My photographs, through the process of juxtaposition, also depicts the side by side co-existence of both the societies. Even the small houses getting developed are un-planned. This line has been present since ages in our society. Clear examples of this line getting vanished can be seen in urban villages.













## Amruta Dhavale



As a child, while travelling to many beautiful destinations in India, I felt like gathering an eyeful of the scenery and the people who adorned it! It was a feeling of trying to hold a fistful of sand and letting it slip away. I wondered whether I could capture them almost as beautifully as they were created. It led me to my passion - Photography! Although an MBA by profession, I unleashed the right side of my brain to capture priceless human emotions in their most precious moments to create memories of a lifetime.

Three of my photographs from The Portrait Series (An Era Gone by) were exhibited at Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa.





# Vanishing Lines

The city of Mumbai might appear to be extremely chaotic and fast paced for people not used to such living. However, with the onslaught of rapid development, we will soon miss out on some of the most beautiful places in Mumbai, and sadly remain unaware of their history. Even today, one can witness glimpses of Bombay in Mumbai. The old world charm of Portuguese style architecture and brightly painted wooden bungalows still exists in pockets. Here life is more relaxed and the narrow by lanes act as sound barriers to the chaotic world outside. Yes, the villages of Mumbai still survive. Once surrounded by huge trees and now by skyscrapers, people here, don't want to let go of the old world. Residents are happy with their personal space, away from the maddening rush, but still very much within the financial hub.

While walking through the lanes, one can see how many of these old structures are desperately in need of need repair, but ironically the residents cannot afford it. New construction activities have begun in these areas, as some of the owners have sold off their properties and moved elsewhere. Some Gaothans, such as 'Khotachi wadi,' have been given heritage status, which will help in restoring the original bungalows. However, other villages are fighting against new redevelopment laws. The number of original bungalows has been drastically reduced. Even though not much is left with us, whatever heritage one can observe, takes us back to Bombay's roots.

One cannot help but wonder in amazement at the marvelous history of these places. The beautiful structures range from chapels and churches to temples. We still find people of all religions living peacefully together. Isn't that what Bombay is all about in the end?

I covered areas like Vile Parle, Girgaon, Worli, Mazgaon, Chembur and Bandra and every village I went to was an exhilarating experience. Having lived in Mumbai all my life, I had not been to many of these places and found some of the most stunning places that I will keep visiting.....

I literally lived the quote " to go back to your roots"!!











## Arindam Thokdar



Arindam Thokder is a Bangalore based independent photographer with a keen sense for contrast and colour. His main interests are documenting social issues and conflicts, charitable aid, travel and cultures of various parts of India. His photo stories have been published in various online and print publications including Caravan, Scroll, Mint Lounge and Better Photography.





## Cow in the city

Long ago, before cow become a political weapon, it was a domestic animal. My childhood memory of my ancestor's village always has the humble cow and cattle's as a symbol of daily-life in the village. We could see houses in our village painted by cow-dung, which act as a repellent for mosquito and insects. Cow-dung was also used as a powerful fertilizer. The village scene in my drawing book always had a river beside the lush green field, where a cow would munch grass and the cattle-boy playing his flute.

Years later, I migrated from the village to the IT capital of India and so are the farmers for a recovering future. I found the cities are filled with urban wildlife, most prominently thousands of stray cows living on the streets. Cow might be gaining political importance but on the roads of the city, it is the same old story of abandonment. It's not unusual to see confused but unafraid cows in the middle of road where traffic comes to a standstill, sometime chewing wayside trash and plastics at garbage dumps. In the city, we see them surviving heat of summer, showers of rain and the chill of winters. Where do they come from? Male calves and cows that do not produce milk sometime is sold to the slaughterhouses, but there are religious objections in doing so. Most of the time, abandoning cows is considered the safer option. Sometime small dairies leave their cows to roam around in the city to feed themselves off garbage lying in the road side dustbins.

In my story, city-cows are the conflicting metaphor of the blurry lines between the urban and the village.



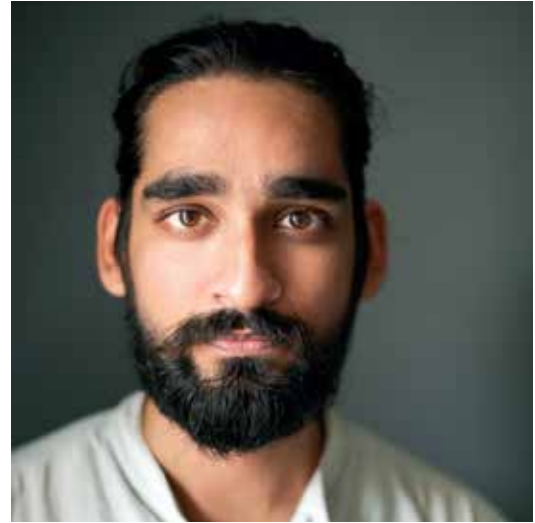








## Lokesh Dang



Lokesh Dang studied photography at the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Communication, Delhi. He lives in Gurugram and has been travelling throughout India on various work related projects. In 2015, he set out on a freelance career as a photographer. The focus of his work is Documentary Photography and Photojournalism. He received the NFI 2017 media award to help him fund Home Away from Home - his project on injustice faced by Northeast Community in Delhi, that spans two years. He also likes to experiment with Architecture Photography.





# Urban Spaces of Gurgaon

Urban villages are villages that were urbanized as the city expanded around them. Sixty percent of the Indian builtscape is built beyond the premise of formal architecture, away from parallel lines, right angles, and smooth surfaces.

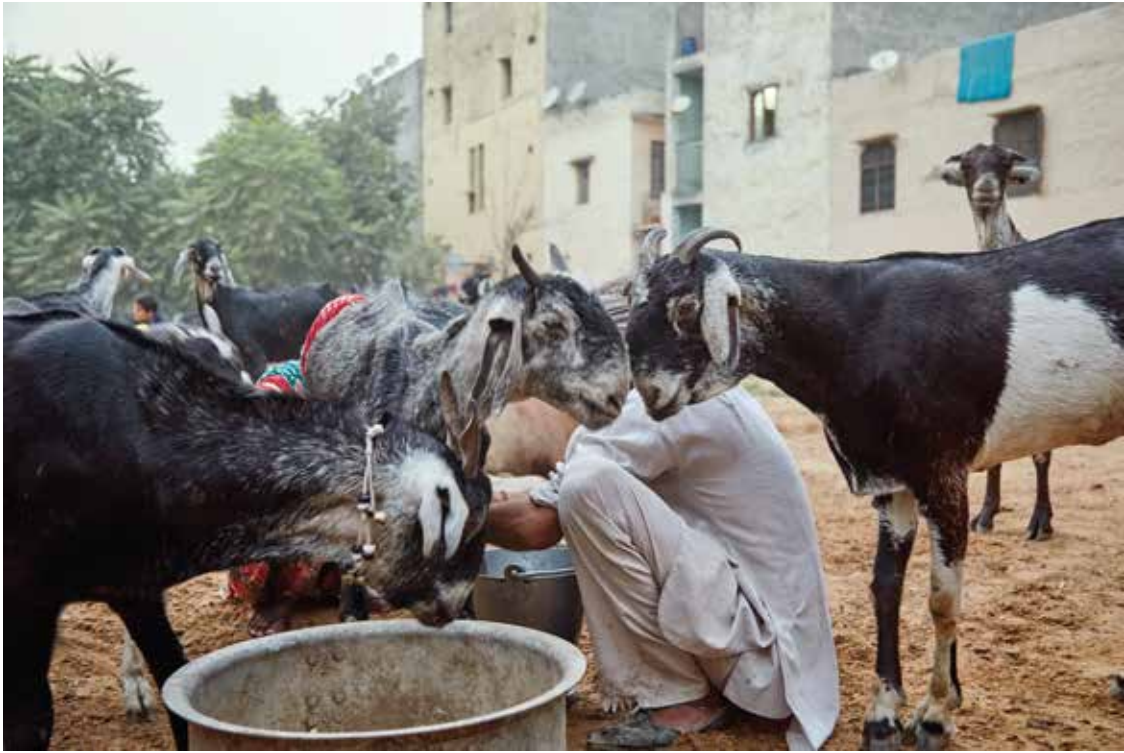
Gurugram is one of the fastest growing metro cities in the world with about million citizens. Its growth has doubled in just the last decade with more slick office complexes, highrise apartments, and shopping malls per square mile, than anywhere else in India. Unfortunately, the rapid growth happened much faster than the city could handle and now, infrastructure is nowhere near the standards required. The city is a glimpse into the future of India - Skyscrapers dominating the skyline.

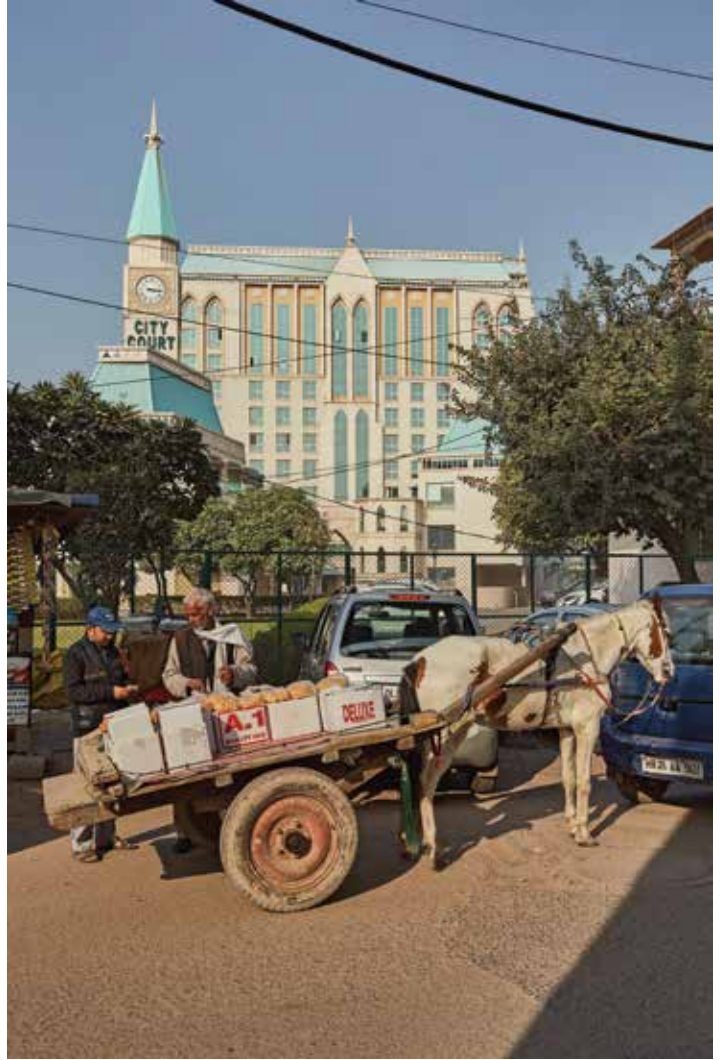
It is really amusing for me to see how the urban fabric changes because of such rapid urbanization of the city and its surroundings. With rapid urbanization a lot of small areas get developed and it is interesting to look at the history through architecture and spaces. The basic reasons behind this contrast are the government policies and the economic status of people who inhabit the space.

As people migrate from different states of India, they make these urban villages their home. I have been living and working in different urban villages of NCR from past few years and being a photographer I have always felt the need to capture it.











## Siddharth Behl



Siddharth is a Delhi based photographer. He has received his Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Amity University, and a Master's Degree in Photography and Visual Communications from the Jamia Millia Islamia University. His interest in photography has steered him towards a career in documentary photography combined with graphic designing. Siddharth has freelanced for many organizations including the Archaeological Survey of India. His work has been published in several newspapers and journals ranging from The Hindu, Hindustan Times, Hindustan Times Groundglass, Better Photography, The Creative Image Magazine, and Fountain Ink to Fairgaze. He has also been the recipient of the prestigious Neel Dongre Award for excellence in photography in 2015 and a recipient of the NFI Award in 2016. His work has been exhibited at Streetphoto San Francisco. He is currently associated with a humanitarian organization called SEEDS, where he covers stories on post calamities and disasters all across South Asia.





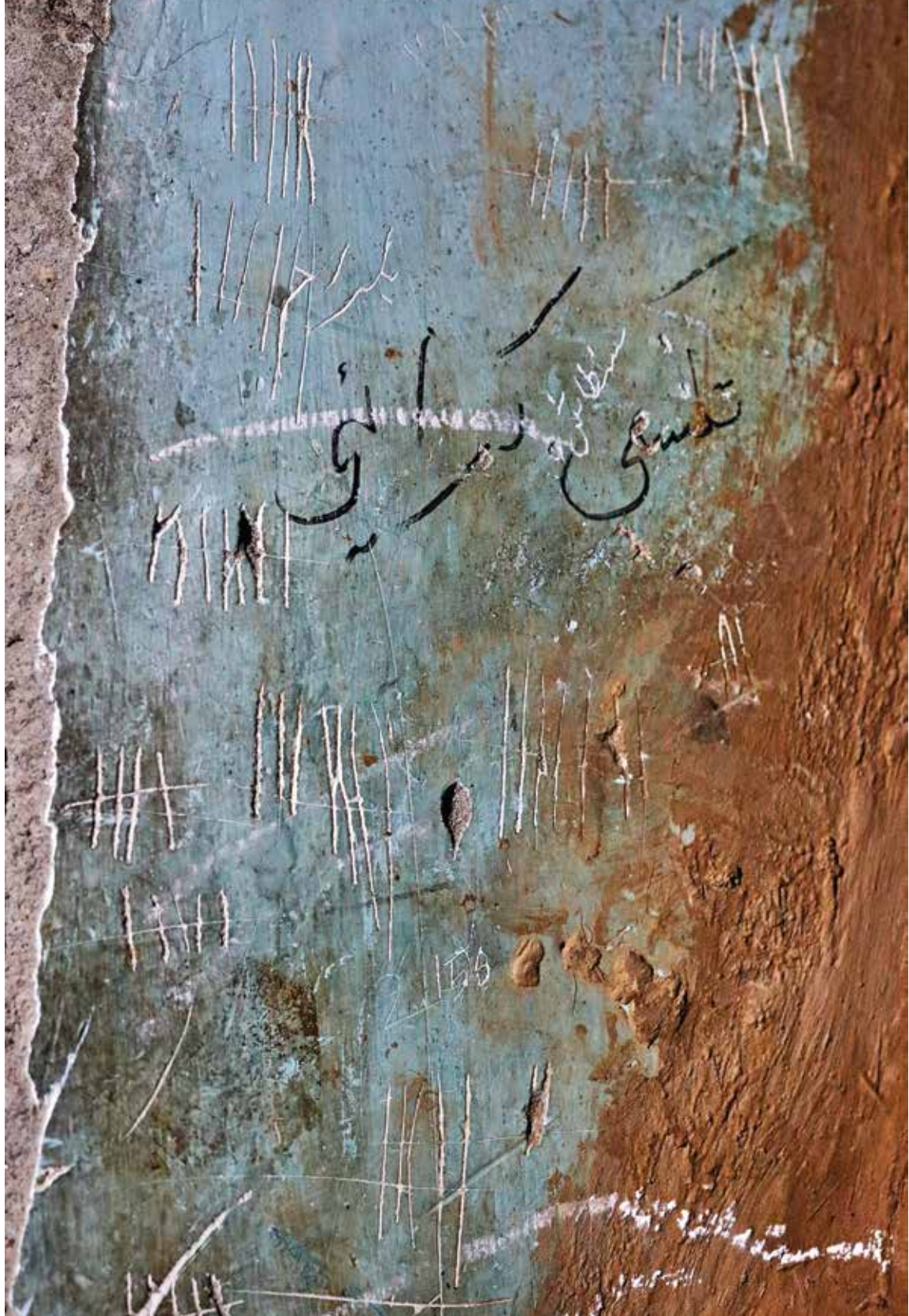
# Khirki: The 'Now' Afghan Village

The Khirki village, once a seat of rich medieval history now represents a vibrant confluence of cultures in the heart of South Delhi. With one of the biggest shopping malls in India on one side and the famous Khirki Mosque on the other, this area is teeming with people from all walks of life. It is now home to many foreigners, especially refugees from Afghanistan. The Afghan refugee colony lies nestled in the buildings along the winding passages of Khirki. The past decade has seen a drastic increase in the Afghan population along with small businesses that range from people selling local Afghan stuff, to bakeries, travel agencies and medicine stores. As a photographer and a local visitor, I have been witness to the growing alliance between the original residents of this urban village and the relatively new migrants, shaping a new conglomerate.

Khirki: The 'Now' Afghan Village project focuses on the socio cultural aspects of this settlement that is a blend of the present day inhabitants as well as the older residents and the history of the village. Being one of the oldest urban villages in the city, it has seen many transformations since the time it was declared as the Lal Dora region in 1900's. The journey of the immigrant Afghan community to this urban village has intrigued me as a photographer and this is an attempt to document it over a period of time.

The Neel Dongre Awards have given me an amazing platform to showcase this urban Village in its contemporary existence.





تفسیر سطور

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## Surabi Janardhanan



Surbhi is an artist by passion and a photographer by profession. Her interest in drawing and painting started at the very young age of five and she has graduated over the years from pencil drawings to oil on canvas paintings. Her love for painting steered her into the world of photography, where she unleashed her imagination onto real world stories and this has led to her own studio called the 'OVIYAR Art Studio'. 'Oviyar' is a Tamil word for 'Artist'. She is at present working as a 'Freelance Still-life and Architectural Photographer' based in Kerala and Goa. Surbhi is a seeker who wants to explore herself and her world.





# A JOURNEY OF A MILLION DREAMS

The last reminiscence of the Double Decker Bus saga in the capital city of Kerala, Trivandrum is the protagonist of my photo story “Vanishing Lines - The Urban Villages”. It is Trivandrum’s pride to say Kerala was the first state and Trivandrum the only city in Kerala, to own a Double Decker Bus. In the year 1938 the King of Travancore (earlier name for Trivandrum) commissioned the Double Decker Bus, which was imported from London and the first passengers of this bus, were the royal family themselves. Just as in London, double-decker buses have always been a part of Trivandrum’s landscape.

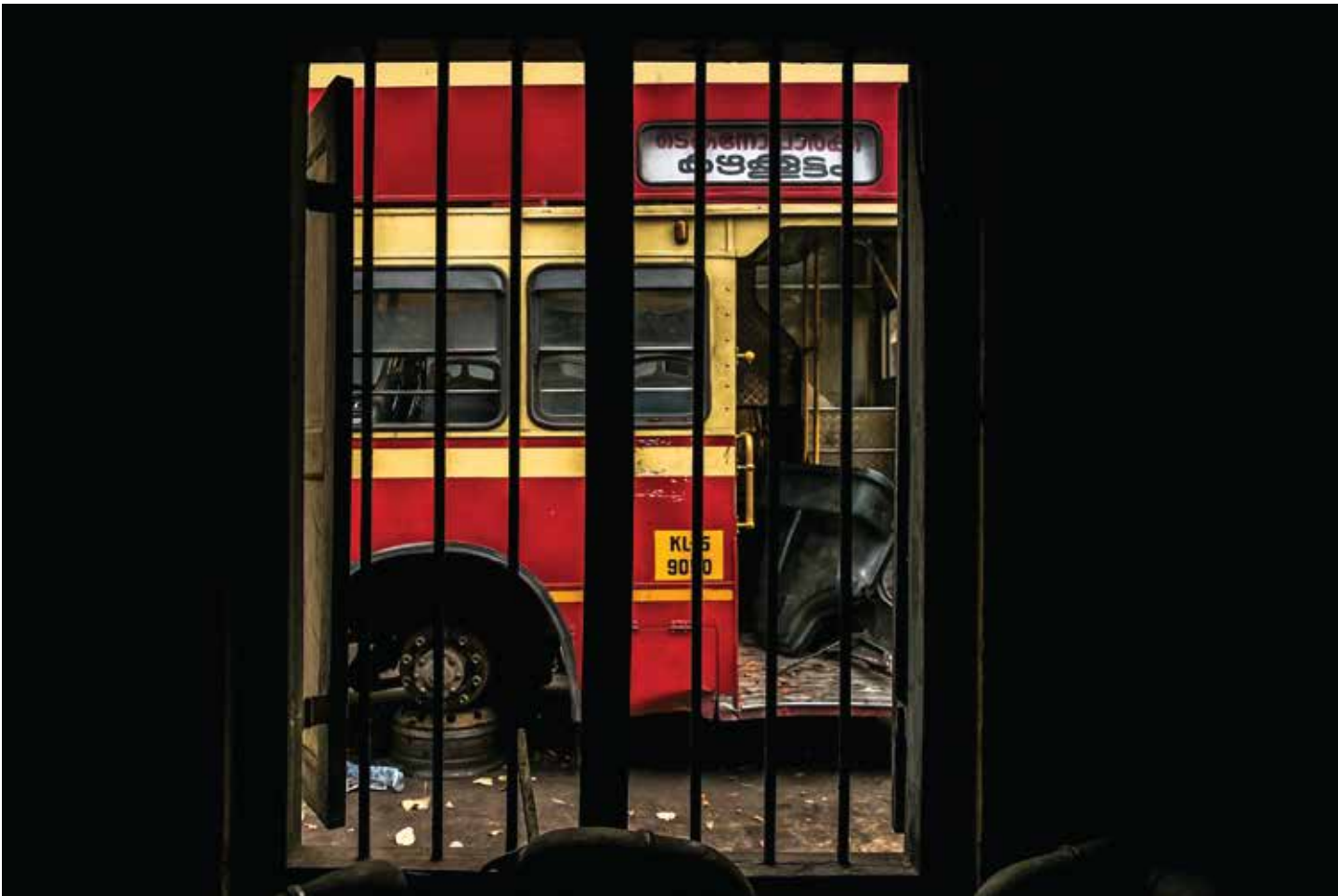
This project documents the last two Double Decker Buses running in the city; one that is used as the tourist bus for sightseeing and the other, that was part of public transportation system, but has gone off the road in recent times due to engine failure. However it is hoped that it will be back on the roads soon. This bus went for repair, many a times in the course of the shoot over six months. The idea of documenting the bus was based on the certainty that this bus, introduced 80 years ago as a part of urbanization and development of the city will sooner or later vanish. 25 years ago, the Double Decker Bus was sent for scrap but was reworked and brought back to life because of its heritage value and is a tourist attraction today.

As this bus traverses the city it gives its passengers a glimpse of Trivandrum’s cultural landscape that includes landmarks such as the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall, which was built to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria’s coronation in 1896; the Padmanabhaswamy temple, the richest temple in the world; St Joseph Cathedral, the Roman structure built in 1873; the Kerala Government Secretariat, a blend of Roman and Dutch architecture constructed about a century and a half ago; it’s much acclaimed sports stadium and the ornate walls of Trivandrum replete with mural art works.









# About Neel Dongre Awards

## Neel Dongre Awards/Grants 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 are administered by a Managing Committee consisting of Mrs. Urmilla Dongre, Parthiv Shah, Aditya Arya (Trustee), Premola Ghose, 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.
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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.



# Acknowledgements

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Centre for Media and Alternative  
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