



**A collaborative photography project under the aegis
of Neel Dongre Awards/ Grants for Excellence in
Photography (2014) by India Photo Archive Foundation**

The Neel Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography

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 equipment, funds, scholarships, and relevant platforms to display and publish their work.

The Neel Dongre Awards for Excellence in Photography aims at creating such a visual platform, where they get an opportunity to show- case their work to a relevant audience and get noticed, receive funds to support their projects and afford the required equipment and study material for the growth of their passion.

These awards seek to encourage budding artists and documentary photo practitioners from various genres on a national level; thereby, not only creating a platform for aspiring photographers but also using it as a medium to encourage a visual dialogue in the field.

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 photographers who demonstrate talent and the passion to communicate with visuals.



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BAJAATEY RAHO

Published under the Aegis of Neel Dongre Awards/Grants
for Excellence in Photography by India Photo Archive Foundation
Organized by India Photo Archive Foundation

Curated by Aditya Arya

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India Photo Archive Foundation is grateful to Suresh Neotia

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

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India Photo Archive Foundation presents



A collaborative photography project under the aegis of Neel Dongre Awards/ Grants for Excellence in Photography (2014) by India Photo Archive Foundation

The Foundation presents a collaborative photographic project by six photographers presenting different interpretations of bandwallas/ musicians through distinctive artistic and documentary styles.

Curated by Aditya Arya

Photographer, historian
and archivist

Artists

Nirvair Singh Rai
Raj Lalwani
Richa Bhavanam
Sujata Khanna
Sujatro Ghosh
Vinit Gupta



Bajaatey Raho! ... celebrating the music makers of the Indian Wedding

Each year the Indian Wedding seems to get Bigger, Fatter, Greater. At the upper end it has billowed into an industry whose worth in October 2014 was estimated at Rs 2.5 lakh crore a year (around US \$40 billion) and growing at the rate of approximately 25 percent per annum. While these statistics inspire open-mouthed awe, the fine print tells you of sumptuous amounts spent on destination weddings, on florists, on wedding planners, on food and décor, on gold.

Do they shed identities with their brilliantly coloured uniforms and gilt epaulettes? How do they celebrate their own joys? Is there a hidden music behind their own “unsung lives”?

But other than the jingle of money, if there is one sound associated with weddings it is the faintly hoarse and brass-heavy music of the wedding band. Here is a group of musicians without whom a wedding remains incomplete. On particularly auspicious days more than ten thousand weddings take place in the city of Delhi alone. More than ten thousand weddings! That’s a lot of wedding bands!

But who are these musicians, whose job is to be perpetual celebrants on behalf of other people, and to stimulate the members of the baraat into frenzied dance with vibrant percussion and the latest film hits? Their duty stops at the entrance gate: what lies beyond – cold drinks or French champagne, marigolds or orchids from Thailand, budget or billionaire – are equally luxuries that they can never afford. Are they bitter

when they compare the vast amounts of money being flung around with the meager amounts they take home? What happens in between marriage “seasons”? Do they shed identities with their brilliantly coloured uniforms and gilt epaulettes? How do they celebrate their own joys? Is there a hidden music behind their own “unsung lives”?

In this photographic exhibition, “Bajaatey Raho”, the camera’s gaze turns to the men who make up the wedding band; from north to south, west to east, it looks within their lives in search of answers to these questions even as it asks others. The gaze is both deeply empathetic as well insightful. Perhaps all the questions cannot be answered; and perhaps many will be, through the human nuances and shades captured by the camera.

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 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

Photographer . Photo Historian . Curator

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 500 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 is a Director 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 and Curator at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.



Parthiv Shah

An alumnus of the National Institute of Design, India, 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 senior fellowship in Photography by Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Charles Wallace fellowship, UK and Fulbright Lectureship Award to teach Photography at the UCLA, USA. He has been teaching photography and film as a visiting faculty at the National Institute of Design in India.

He is 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 lead him into working

with communities which are finding a mainstream voice.

Photographs exhibited at
India, Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, South Africa, Thailand, Netherlands, Japan, Spain, Russia, U.K., U.S.A.

Photographs in the collection of
National Gallery of Modern Art, India, Lalit Kala Akademi, India, Minge Kan, Japan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, University of California, USA, Australian Arts Council, Australia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA, including some private collation such as Christo, New York, and Issye Miyake, Japan



Curator's Note

“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, *Photography Speaks II : 76 Photographers on Their Art* by Brooks Johnson (Editor), Chrysler Museum

I have always been fascinated with the ‘behind the scenes’ dramas of the life. Marriages and social events are a great occasion to observe and witness these dramas unfold, While the audience consist of invitees, the performance is led by the BANDWALLAHS employed to give a sense of celebration to the occasion.

Though Bandwallahs bring momentary joy to the life of the event, their lives represent contradictions on many levels.

The photographer can merely show the clock's hands, but he does choose his moments. “I was there, and this is what life was at the moment that I saw it.”

Henri Cartier-Bresson

The Mind's eye and writings on Photography Photographers

Behind their loud world of music lies a very quiet and unreal world.

These performers could be migrant laborers, rickshaw pullers, farm laborers or waiters. Essentially they have many avatars but they love making music. As the wedding season approaches, one can see them practicing in neighborhood parks in nondescript clothes. But come wedding day, and they dive into their colorful ill-fitting outfits.

As an archivist and a photo historian, I am a firm believer that an essential role of photography lies in the genre of photo documentaries. It is imperative and a social obligation for every photographer to document and share such bodies of work.

In today's digital world the speed at which lifestyles are changing, evolving and even disappearing, it is essential to document lives for posterity.

It is in this direction that I have been encouraging young photographers to work on collaborative documentary projects by extending them grants and showcasing their works.

“I would like to see photographers become responsible and photography realize its potential.”

Dorothea Lange

These Photo Documentary projects provide a platform for emerging

photographers to investigate, connect and engage on a long term basis with their subjects.

“We photographers deal in things that are continually vanishing, and when they have vanished, there is no contrivance on earth that can make them come back again.”

Henri Cartier-Bresson

The Mind's eye

Writings on Photography and Photographers

These projects are not about just being a photographer, but also understanding what it implies about being a photographer, understanding your subjects and exploring their lives. While many of these images are from their public performances, larger and more interesting body of work has emerged from their personal and private spaces. These six photographers have not only encapsulated a very intimate

relationship shared by these musicians and bandwallahs but also the ironies and lonely existence

“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 the participating photographers for their work and also encourage more aspiring photographers. I would also like to thank this opportunity to thanks Urmilla Dongre for initiating and supporting this grant, in memory of Neel, Also India international Centre new

Delhi for Collaborating and hosting this Exhibition .

Mrs Asharani Mathur and Premola Ghosh for providing us with direction and support.

Gopika Chowla and her design team for all the design inputs.

“A documentary photograph is not a factual photograph per se. It is a photograph which carries the full meaning of the episode.”

Dorothea Lange

Aditya Arya
Curator



Jury

I was always fascinated by the Brass Bandwalas in weddings I attended in my childhood. They looked like kings out of fairy tales in bright coloured costumes holding and playing musical instruments which one never saw in any performance one attended otherwise. All the elderly would leave their usual restraint and suddenly start dancing on road publically to the tune of these mofussil migrant low class musicians. They always grabbed attention and ears of not only senior family members but the young and children as well. The brass band when it appeared in the Indian wedding practice was in a sense evidence of the subcontinent's engagements with the global and with colonialism. Traditionally folk singers and dancers performed at the any social occasion in different parts of India it was barber who played dual role of being musician at the wedding or child birth. They only had two instruments one was Shehnai and other was drum, nagaada to go along with. Interestingly

this is the new avatar of wedding bands with trumpets, trombones, clarinets, drums and other brass band instruments the men who play in them is one of the India's most socially and musically isolated subcultures, far removed from reality of global phenomena of Indian classical or folk traditions.

Wedding brass band has been celebrated in Hindi popular films, which in turn feeds popular music to these bands and it's interesting to see that in recent times films such as "Dev D" and "Band Baja Baarat" were imitating the "band genre" of music into these films. Many artists and writers have used the imagery of the Indian wedding brass

The subject lends itself to photography which allows the camera to capture the entire drama of performance and the performer.

band but unfortunately in India we lack in documenting our contemporary history and living traditions. The Neel Dongre award and grant for excellence in photography awarded six young photographers to carry out a body of work on these Bandwala's. The subject lends itself to photography which allows the camera to capture the entire drama of performance and the performer. More so it also takes a peep into ethnography of the performer and his life. The all men band has many layered stories which unfold in front of camera for the photographer and ultimately through their eyes to the viewer. The work produced by these enthusiastic photographers is amazing, each of them are looking at different aspects of the bands and people who play in them. According to one study as many as 250,000 musicians work part and full time in the wedding band trade in the northern part of India. Most of these men are migrant workers coming from

To me personally "Bajaatey Raho" is a holistic endeavor, the ways in which visual representation are connected to the rest of culture and society we live in.

small villages, 10 to 12 men living in small rooms in the outskirts of any large town or city in poor neighborhood.

These photographers have embarked on the journey of documenting them in both their music practice profession and also their life beyond their performance. In each case study one can witness a visual narrative, which has been built with socio-economic background as a backdrop. And since this phenomenon is not only restricted to North India one of the study's has taken place in Goa where one sees the Band not only at wedding but also at death rituals. The contrast becomes even starker between the band men and the affluent patrons

in some of the black and white images. Typically these have been taken in the night when usually weddings take place. Through some in-depth work in this body of images one can see study of human vision, the relationship of visual form and function, and applied collaborative uses of visual representations. To me personally "Bajaatey Raho" is a holistic endeavor, the ways in which visual representation are connected to the rest of culture and society we live in.

I would like to applaud the effort of India Photo Archive Foundation first, for giving the opportunity to six photographers and then also to create this seminal documentation of a peculiar performance practice which is so much a part of our social and cultural life ironically quietly.

Parthiv Shah
03/03/2015



Nirvair Singh Rai

Nirvair Singh Rai hails from Bathinda, Punjab, India and is currently studying photography in the South Asian Media Academy – Pathshala, Dhaka, Bangladesh. He grew up watching his father pursue making pictures with a film camera. And gradually, photography became his partner in moments of solitude. He went on to intern with World Press Photo award-winning photographer, Pablo Bartholomew, who further honed his ways of seeing and capturing the world. He has always been very inspired by nature and spends a lot of time documenting the natural world around him. However, photographing cultures, people and their ways of life have also become an intrinsic part of him. He has previously shot for National Geographic Traveller, India and Drik News agency, Bangladesh, along with working on a commissioned project by Fabrica, an Italian publication.



“

The moment I saw the bandwallahs of Bathinda, there was this instant feeling of happiness and well-being. The colours of their uniforms and the very fact that they're associated with so much dancing and cheer, is enough to put a smile on anyone's face.

“Playing for the band is not my passion, my passion is agriculture,” said Shubhash, hiding his face as I made his photograph. Rahul, the youngest of the lot, sat silently for a while when asked about his opinion on bandwallah. “Ji, I have been doing all sorts of chores since I was a kid. Sometimes, I was a waiter, sometimes, a teaseller, and now I am settled as a bandwallah. I have varied characters.”

Ranjeet, burning a beedi, talks about the mandir (temple), which he has built along with his friend and wants us to visit. The other bandwallahs, too are scattered here and there, smoking beedis, sipping hot coffees, waiting for the baraat to be taken to the gurudwara and then finally back to Sirki Bazar in Bathinda.

This is where they all change into normal clothes and go to their respective dens.

A regular day for them starts with the entire band piling into tempos. Their manager then counts heads, and if there is one less, they all shout at each other good-naturedly, get on to the tempo again, and make their way to the venue.

The moment they start playing, everyone gets out on to the street and starts dancing, people stare from rooftops and children have a great deal of raucous fun. Depending on who has hired them, they either get invited to dine with wedding guests and are greatly revered and appreciated, or relegated to a corner. This is more a classist tendency than a reflection of how they are generally treated.

Most of them hail from Haryana, and some are from Punjab. Their area in the market in Bathinda is situated next to the area where people can hire DJs. Over the last three years, business has quite naturally declined since anyone can take

their pick of both choices. And so, I see them whiling away their time around the market.

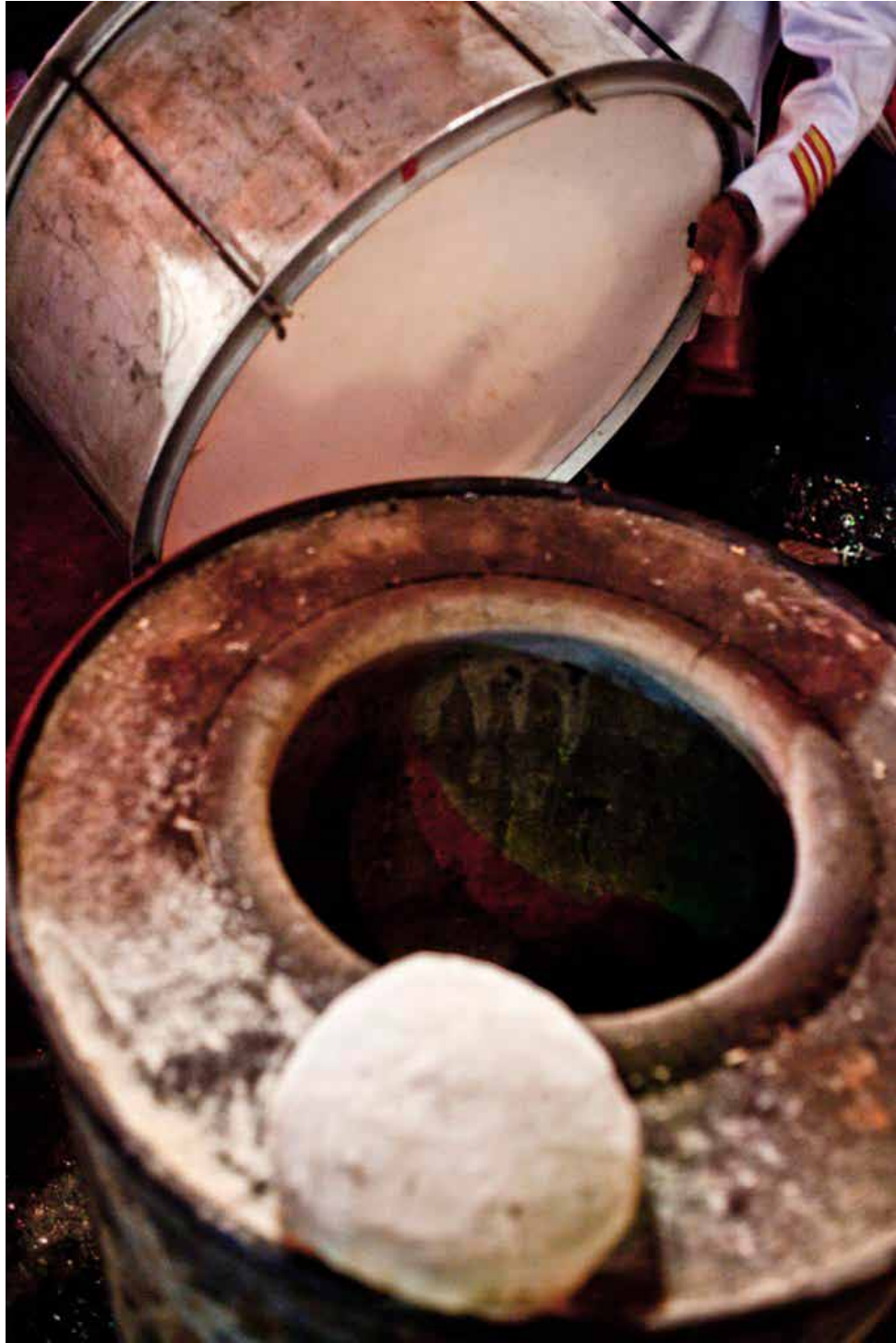
They are a varied bunch. One has been a conductor in Delhi for 15 years, while another was in the police at Sirsa, Haryana. Some of them are such masters of their craft that they can be called us tads.

In these few days, I've learnt a few things about them, listened to music with them, smoked beedis and fielded phone calls every morning that ask me whether I will be visiting them today, but the most important thing I've found with them, is a measure of unbridled happiness. These are men who are truly at peace with their aspirations and dreams, and their little pegs of daaru at night.

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Raj Lalwani

Raj Lalwani describes himself as a work in progress, for whom, photography is a little like a cup of tea—brewed with time.

A former Features Editor at Better Photography magazine, he was awarded the Grand Prize in the Seeing the Light competition, judged by Joel Meyerowitz. Recently named as the only photographer in the Young Turk Awards: 30 Achievers Under 30, conducted by the DNA newspaper, he was also a part of the 2014 Shortlist of the APA/Lucie Foundation Scholarship.

Whilst trying to find and pursue individualistic ways of seeing, he is also working on a tumultuously personal body of work in black and white, called Nowhere. According to him, inspiration lies in the fantastic, the ordinary and in love. Raj lives in Bombay, not Mumbai.



“

Everyday Words and Love Songs

The room belongs to Rui Lobo's cat, Ceul. She creates music by walking over the keyboard and produces a single note by biting off a guitar string. She sleeps on sheet music, eats sheet music and of course, plays with sheet music. Tom, on the other hand, perches himself on Francis Avezado's shoulder as he tries to make sense of the seven brass instruments that are strewn around. His personal favourite is the piccolo. It is as small as him and he is not scared of it. Tom is Avezado's pet crow.

These fringe characters are often as important as the ones in the lead, in the

Marquegian world of the Goan brass band. "The word is musician," I was corrected by one of them as he looked out of the window and tuned his tenor saxophone, "not bandwallah."

Maybe it's a matter of semantics. But for the brass musicians of Goa, their identity testifies to the essence of their practice—faith. Faith, surrounding the reverie of the local village feast and faith underlying the loss and contemplation at a funeral, mirrored in their faith towards their music. Their performance is not about the theatre that seems to accompany brass players from elsewhere; it's a silent call of longing, of remembrances of a time gone by.

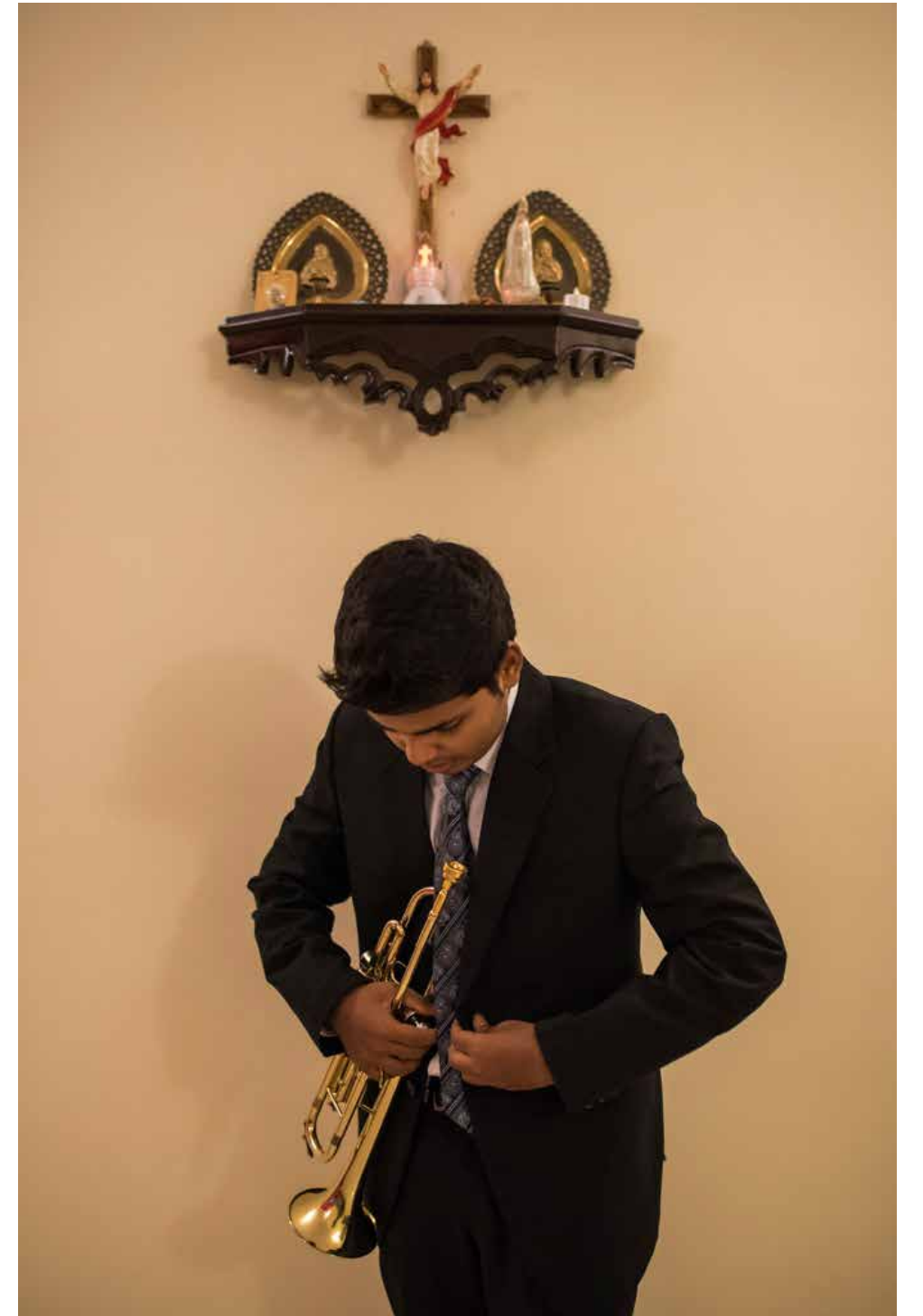
It is a dying art, their music of everyday words and songs of love and loss. All of Goa has only one trombone player, and a few scores that play the trumpet and the sax. But like hopeless lovers trying to keep a memory alive, they prefer to look at their world with rose-tinted glasses. As he finishes playing La Vie En Rose, David Pereira introduces me to his cat, called Seventy Five. "You see, her screw is slightly off. She is not a hundred percent sane. So, you know, Seventy Five."

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Richa Bhavanam

Richa Bhavanam is a Philosophy graduate who is now pursuing her love for Photography.

Always having been fascinated by the art of taking pictures, her interest saw a more structured form of learning when she worked with the medium of black & white film photography under the mentorship of photographer Diba Siddiqi in 2010.

Carrying the influences of the darkroom and film into digital photography, she explores a spectrum of subjects- including insects and reptiles, people and their environment, landscapes and cityscapes, or anything else that her viewfinder fancies.

She is now a freelancer in Bangalore, working towards finding her feet in the world of photography and hoping to always tell stories through photographs.



“

The concept of 'Band Baaja' takes on a different hue in South India, where neither dance nor the baarat are traditionally a part of the string of events that constitute a wedding.

Here, wedding musicians are most often seated on a platform in the hall, where they play for the entire duration of the given event.

Although there are striking differences between the North Indian and South Indian variants of wedding bands, I wanted my photographic series to be rooted in the place where it is taken (Bangalore). The questions that are raised by the theme of 'Band, Baaja and Baarat' are relevant to the musicians I have photographed in this series, through which I hope to portray their

lives beyond the wedding hall, find the people who form the fabric of their lives and capture the smaller rituals or habits that constitute their everyday life in its vividness and quietness.

”





Sujata Khanna

Sujata Khanna is a social documentary photographer from Delhi, India. In 2013 she earned a Professional Certificate in Photography from Maine Media College. As a student she was awarded the Arnold Newman Scholarship.

Prior to immersing herself into photography, Sujata worked for eight years in India and other international locations for organizations including the British Red Cross and Save the Children UK. Her work for these non-profits focused on children's rights issues and child protection.

Sujata's love for photography stems from her passion for capturing moments, narrating human stories, and sharing her experience of the world. Intuition guides her craft. She continues to meld these interests of photography and advocacy in her work.



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Unsung Lives

The wedding season in Delhi lasts for about four winter months and no wedding is complete without the traditional brass bands or “bandwallahs” leading vibrant processions, announcing the arrival of the bridegroom. I followed Sohan Band on the streets of Delhi adding joy, music, and vibrancy to Hindu

family’s most auspicious ceremony – wedding Baraat. Yet, the disparity I witnessed, at these celebrations, reminded me of the divided society we live in.

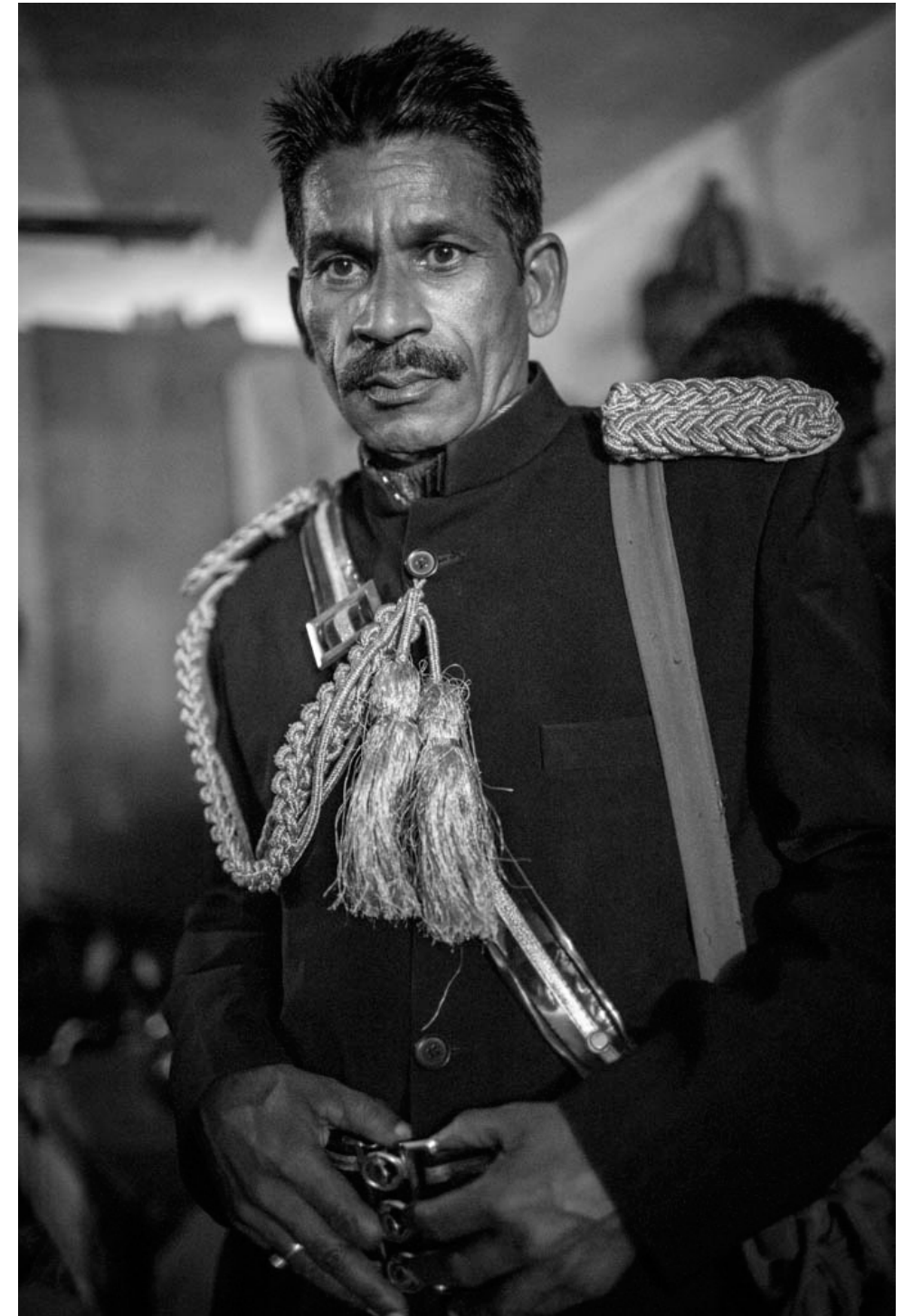
Away from the bright lights of the wedding procession is a very different life for these musicians. These artists, from the villages of Uttar Pradesh, receive poor

wages, have irregular working hours, and live in cramped housing. This series of photographs captures the economic inequality and the stark distinction between their lives and those who they work for. *Unsung Lives* is a hope that these images offer some visibility to these artists’ unsung lives.

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Sujatro Ghosh

I am born and brought up in Kolkata and currently studying Still Photography & Visual Communication in Jamia Millia Islamia , New Delhi. I do have more than just one hobby to which I religiously devote as much time as I can. I am an avid Numismatist and Philatelist. Photography, a hobby once upon a time is now a profession. I am very passionate about what I do and I love challenges. I believe in helping to make a difference and contributing as much as possible in helping to heal the world. I am a man of principles.



“

Kolkata - The City of Joy is referred to as the Cultural Hub of the country for its rich cultural and historic relevance. Ranging from the field of poetry to the field of politics, everything out here has its own charm. Kolkata, formerly referred to as “Calcutta” by the Britishers was the Capital of British Ruled India before the Capital shifted to Delhi. It was the commercial hub of British India as well. The heart of British India to be precise. So the rich culture and heritage of Kolkata can be traced from the preceding hundreds of years before independence. Therefore, certain old customs and traditional practices are handed down from generation to generation.

Band parties were established during the British Regime. This old traditional practice is almost a dying art nowadays mainly because of the rules and regulations prevailing in the city. They are harassed by the local policemen

at times. North Calcutta is mainly where these band party shops are situated. The most famous shop among the lot is that of the “Mehboob Band”. This shop is now divided into 7 shops respectively owned by the 7 Mehboob brothers. The band parties consist of musicians who hail from various backgrounds and walks of life ranging from farmers to cobblers and so on. A part of their income comes from playing in these bands. They are trained by their Instructor who also happens to be the leader of the pack. Their sole motive is to entertain the common mass and make people happy but the irony being that the people rendering happiness to others are the ones leading a very tough and pathetic life. A family of 15 end up living in a one room thatched hut because they are so poor that they cannot even afford a respectable accommodation. The costumes they wear during the performance weighs approximately

1.5 kgs because of the heavy “zaari” decorations. They usually wear it over the clothes they are already wearing because the material is so coarse and uncomfortable that it pricks and causes skin irritation if worn directly. Not only that, they are not really treated well by their employers and the salary they receive is minimal. They are made to wait for hours and sometimes they have to perform for the really long duration. For this reason a band has 3-4 wings. If they have back to back shows, then they have to carry two or three more of those heavy costumes along with them because they have to change according to the demands of what color costumes their clients want them to wear while performing. Working with these wonderful kindhearted people was a fantastic experience. They might be poor financially but they are rich emotionally.

”





Vinit Gupta

Vinit Gupta is Documentary Photographer based in Delhi, have interest in Visual Anthropology and Portraiture. He received Master Degree in Business Economics from Kurukshetra University and currently perusing his Masters in Anthropology from School of Social Sciences (SOSS) IGNOU. Before working as a freelance Photographer, he worked in Investment banking for more than five years. In 2011 he left his job and start working with Non profit Sector as visual researcher.



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Wedding Musicians

These portraits focus on seasonal musicians who perform in weddings and rituals. These Musicians are basically farmers and wage labours

from different part of country. I made these Portraits of wedding musician with their instruments in their private spaces. With this Portrait series, I try to create a seemingly private moment when they dislocated from their work

environment and set in a casual setting at home and street. Objective is to record a scene where there is a mixture of direct information and enigmas and in which there are visual contrasts between Private and public spaces.

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About Neel Dongre Awards

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. Dongre, 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.



Acknowledgments

Suresh Neotia

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Seema Bhatt

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Ishaan Arya

Mohit Agrawal

Meenakshi Sachdev Verma

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India Photo Archive Foundation

A Trust for Creation of awareness of contemporary and historical photographs, creation of archives, and highlighting the historical value of photographic archives and collections and to encourage the dissemination, access and use of such archives for academic, institutional and cultural purposes

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. Images of the Indian struggle for independence. The early years as a free nation. The dawn of industrial India. Personal collections of royalty and the Raj. Pictures of the common people, of travel and leisure, events and festivities. Scintillating moments in sports. Records of marriage, births, deaths, mourning and celebration. These are not just testimonies of their times, they are invaluable sources of knowledge, an essential part of our cultural heritage, a gateway to understanding the past and acquiring a perspective on the present.

The India Photo Archive Foundation has been established with a view to identify, preserve and document such photographic legacies. Towards this end, it aims to restore original photographs and negatives, digitise their contents, preserve, annotate and document them. The Foundation will encourage the use of such archives in educational, institutional and cultural endeavours. It will work to disseminate the works through exhibitions, publishing and the internet. In doing so, the India Photo Archive Foundation hopes to aid the development of a platform for amateur and professional photography over the ages. Encourage a wider discourse on the content, politics and aesthetics of photography. And contribute towards creating a culture of dialogue on diverse narratives of photographic archives that are treasured as documentary and artistic works, and as markers of the history of photographic technologies and processes over time.



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