

SYMPOSIUM

THE AGE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH 2022

July 15 & 16, 2022

Durbar Hall, Kochi, Kerala

“...The age of the Photograph is also the age of revolutions, contestations, assassinations, explosions, in short, of impatiences, of everything which denies ripening.” This paradox, which Barthes describes in his book Camera Lucida, while looking at the mortality of the Photograph, puts in motion some important alarms: How can we look at this momentariness, captured through a physical apparatus, in these testing times of permanent loss? At what point in history or in the probable future, does the Image of the loss coincide with the loss of the Image?

By this, we are not implying just the physical loss, which is invariably certain in the context of the photograph, but also the contestation of its evidential force, its power of authentication, and its testimony on time. And if a photograph can be lost prior to its physical disintegration, can it be argued that a photograph negotiates multiple lives? Could these subsequent & numerous intermediary deaths, which a single photograph experiences, be a result of our intermittent trust in photography itself? And perhaps a reflection of our own contorted lives?

With this symposium, we intend to instigate dialogue around these very immediate issues around the various subjects of photography in the subcontinent, concerning both as a medium of message, and a medium of record. All through the day, we present a space to converse, share, and disseminate our thoughts and experiences around and about the state of photography in contemporary times from various lenses, such as the question of [mis]-representation, Non-Authored Images, Archiving and History-making, Morphed Images and Fake news, Patronage and other forms of support.

SUBJECTS & SPEAKERS*

1. The Idea of Loss & Visual [Mis]-Representation | RV Ramani, Filmmaker
2. Photography: Education Expression | Anita Khemka, The MurthyNAYAK Foundation/PhotoSouthAsia
3. Images in Translation | Nihaal Faizal and Sarasija Subramanian, Reliable Copy
4. Archive Building and Alternative Histories | NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati, Nepal Picture Library
5. Patronage, Pedagogy & Other Forms of Support | Rahaab Allana

SCHEDULE* | July 16, 2022

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| 09:30 – 10:00 am | Opening & Introduction |
| 10:00 – 10:30 am | The Idea of Loss & Visual [Mis]-Representation |
| 10:30 – 11:00 am | Photography: Education Expression |
| 20 mins | Break |
| 11:20 – 11:50am | Images in Translation |
| 11:50 – 12:20 pm | Archive Building and Alternative Histories |
| 12:15 – 12:40 pm | Patronage, Pedagogy & Other Forms of Support |
| 12:45 – 02:45 pm | **Break 20 mins, followed by Discussion in Groups with Lunch |
| 03:00 – 04:00 pm | Group Discussion Overview (7-10 mins each) |
| 04:00 – 04:30 pm | Q & A with Group Representatives |
| 04:30 – 05:00 pm | Closing & Tea |

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Post presentations, speakers and participants would breakout into smaller groups (7-8 members), and engage in intimate dialogue around various subjects earlier touched upon.

These groups may be looked at as experimental ponds to dive deeper into ideas, imaginations and thoughts. Groups may have diverse and creative approaches to discussions on their respective subjects.

FILM SCREENING

My Camera and Tsunami

RV Ramani | 90min | 2011 | English

July 14, 2022 | 05:00 pm

July 15, 2022 | 05:00 pm

IN COLLABORATION WITH

The Japan Foundation, New Delhi

Kerala Lalithakala Akademi, Kerala

Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Bengaluru

Limited seats available. Confirm participation at : contemporaryartsymposiums@gmail.com



SUBJECTS & SPEAKERS

The Idea of Loss & Visual [Mis]-Representation | RV Ramani, Filmmaker

'In documentary cinema practice, the notion of real is always in a state of flux and even elusive, often beyond grasp. What is constructed can always reveal other meanings and intentions, which was not intended. This is true to the fictional narratives too. Many Artists and writers have always negotiated this tricky area, bringing in new forms of narratives, perception, experiences, which allows more porosity or creating new breathing spaces of perspectives. RV Ramani speaks on aspects of representation, expression and experiences, beyond the realm.'

R.V. Ramani is an award-winning filmmaker, cinematographer and a teacher, presently based in Chennai. A graduate in Physics, from Mumbai University, his passion for photography, made him choose photojournalism as a career working in Mumbai. He later graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, specializing in Motion Picture Photography. His first short film, Saa, made in 1991, as Director/Cinematographer, was an experimental work, exploring his own rhythm, in the flux of rural and urban rhythms. Since then he has produced and directed many independent films, exploring aspects of expression. Ramani's films and his retrospectives have been presented in various platforms. He has served in the Jury at many International Film festivals, including National Film Awards. He regularly gets invited to conduct filmmaking workshops at many Institutions in India and was as a Visiting Professor at the Ambedkar University Delhi for 5 years, till 2020. Presently, Ramani is working on many feature documentaries.

Photography: Education Expression | Anita Khemka, The MurthyNAYAK Foundation/PhotoSouthAsia

PhotoSouthAsia is a medium to support documentary photography in its widest definition, using both traditional narratives as well as modern interpretations in the South Asian Region. It is promoting unique voices by encouraging vernacular expressions. It believes in the importance of supporting marginalised communities in expressing their concerns through the medium as well as providing a learning platform for skill development. On the other hand, it supports established institutions with a free hand in making the current in photography available and accessible to the masses.

Anita Khemka (b. 1972) studied English Literature from Delhi University and Visual Merchandizing from La Salle, Singapore before she decided to become a photographer in 1996. Her photographic praxis has since been a constant endeavor to find meaning in the relations with the people in her life and their identities as people, ideas or communities. As a result, she has closely followed the lives of socially marginalized and excluded groups and communities — _abandoned widows, people with intellectual disability, addictions, HIV and AIDS, political minorities, sexual and gender minorities. Khemka headed the photography department at the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Arts and Communication (SACAC) from August 2015 until February 2019 and is currently engaged with The MurthyNAYAK Foundation as a researcher to work on PhotoSouthAsia, a site depicted to South Asian Photography practices. https://photosouthasia.org/portfolio_page/about/. Anita Khemka lives in Nainital, Uttarakhand and is represented by PHOTOINK.

Images in Translation - Documents, Indexes, and Historical Markers | Nihaal Faizal and Sarasija Subramanian, Reliable Copy

For this presentation, Sarasija Subramanian will address the possibilities and challenges of image-publishing within Reliable Copy's artist-led editorial and publishing practice. The focus of this discussion will be on the circulation of images within artistic research and practice, and the role these images play as documents, guides, indexes, narratives, and historical markers. In exploring these aspects of image-publishing, the presentation will cover a range of our past projects, including those of a photobook around the demonetisation of Indian currency ('A Memorial for the New Economy' by Chinar Shah) and a bilingual essay around political flex banners in Bangalore ('Flexing Muscles' by Ravikumar Kashi), amongst other publications.

Reliable Copy is a publishing house and curatorial practice dedicated to the realisation and circulation of works, projects, and writing by artists. Reliable Copy publishes books and documents, curates exhibitions, undertakes research projects, organises workshops, and hosts a wide variety of programming. Reliable Copy is represented by the artists Nihaal Faizal and Sarasija Subramanian, is based in Bangalore, India, and was founded in 2018. Sarasija Subramanian is an artist and editor of Reliable Copy.

Patronage, Pedagogy & Other Forms of Support | Rahaab Allana, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts

Photography has broadened into the domain of image culture that draws upon both fixed and itinerant forms. Given the ways in which it has been accepted and challenged as a means of documentation, reportage and artistic expression, its support too needs to be seen as a dynamic way of changing perceptions and inviting new dialogue. The presentation opens a conversation about how para-institutional means are needed in order to create new spaces of engagement around how images may be deployed within media.

Rahaab Allana is Curator/Publisher, Alkazi Foundation for the Arts, New Delhi); founding editor of PIX, a digital platform with a themed focus on South Asian lens-based practices and production; and founder of ASAP (Alternative South Asia Photography/Art; the region's first app for presentation and discussion of creative/cultural work by young practitioners. A Charles Wallace awardee and Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, he received his MA in Art History from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London and was Honorary Research Associate in the Department of Visual Anthropology at University College, London. He works nationally and internationally with museums, archives, cultural initiatives and institutions, universities, festivals and galleries. Rahaab has curated, contributed to and edited several publications and exhibitions on South Asian photography and its transnational histories. He was Guest Editor for a Delhi-themed issue of Aperture (Summer 2021). He is the editorial board of Trans Asia Photography, and serves/has served on the Advisory Committee/Juries of various cultural forums, including the India-Europe Foundation for New Dialogue (FIND, Rome); the Prix Pictet Award (London/Switzerland/Paris); the Gabriele Basilico Prize in Architecture and Landscape Photography; and 6x6 Global Program (World Press Photo, 2020). His recent projects include editing a critical reader on traditional and contemporary image practices in South Asia (forthcoming).

Archive Building and Alternative Histories | NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati , Nepal Picture Library

How can archives be built to counter dominant histories? How can lived experiences of marginalized communities be archived, when there are scarce or no formal records to turn to? This presentation will share Nepal Picture Library's experience of looking towards family albums, photo studios, labor union records, and other unexpected sources. It will discuss the challenges and possibilities of reading and reappropriating photographs, to transform them into archives that call for an accounting of subjugated histories.

NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati lives in Kathmandu, Nepal and works at the intersections of visual storytelling, research, pedagogy, and collective action. She is the co-founder and Artistic Director of photo.circle, Nepal Picture Library and Photo Kathmandu –platforms and initiatives that contribute towards strengthening image-worlds, storytelling and actions that disrupt and resist but also work towards repair.



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