



Manjit Bawa, New Delhi, 1970

Krishnan, Jehangir Sabavala, Biren De, New Delhi, 1960

A Critic's Eye will be on view till March 6, at Chatterjee and Lal, at Colaba.

People in pictures

Richard Bartholomew's photographs recall the Indian art scene as captured by the master photographer

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Richard Bartholomew who passed away in 1985 at the age of 59, was a photographer, art critic, painter, poet and writer. He keenly documented the artistic course of now legendary artists and life around him, from the 1950s to the 70s. He ardently worked towards bringing a change in the then Indian art scene.

Richard Bartholomew's son, Pablo Bartholomew, a photographer himself, has put together this exhibition, *A Critic's Eye*.

Rarely displayed, Richard Bartholomew's photographs remained more of a private observation of his life — around his family and friends.

Around 40 photographs in this show feature images of streets of New York, family moments and Indian artists — contemporaries of Richard Bartholomew. Among them are M F Hussain, Manjit Bawa, F N Souza, V S Gaitonde, Nasreen Mohamedi and Jehangir Sabavala.

Pablo Bartholomew explains, "The thrust is mainly on artists — early representation of the way of life of artists, as well as to historically show the kind of photography that was done."

Pablo is most awed with the simplicity of life and living that his father's photographs captured. "They give you a slice of that period— from the 50s to the 70s, the socio-economic state of that era, the Nehruvian era and the era of Russian Socialism," says Pablo, as he points out specifically to a photograph of his mother sleeping on the floor of their house.

The exhibition is part of the show earlier exhibited in New York. Space is an issue, so viewers in Mumbai get to see only around 40.

Pablo talks about the way photography is received in both the countries: "These photographs are better received in India, perhaps because of the images of the Indian artists. I showed them in New York because I had a chance to show both— my father's and my photographs together in two galleries in the same area."



F N Souza at his apartment, New York, 1960

Talking about the technological advancements in the field of photography, Pablo says, "Photographs are a visual history and it depends on who is looking at it with what interest." He feels the difference is not always to do with technology, but with the idea and eye of the photographer.

"It's like often musicians end up copying from others. Then there are those who try and do something new. It's all in the way one thinks," says Pablo.

Many years ago, he locked

the dark room that his father used to use. He soon might go back to using the dark room again. "There's something about using your hands and working on the photograph," he says.

Among Pablo's projects in the near future is an exhibition, in August, in Kolkata, where he will be displaying photographs by his father and himself in the same show. He also plans to put together a show featuring only Indian artists and the Indian art scene that his father captured.

For now, Mumbai viewers get to see a small part of the wealth of Bartholomew's archive. As a remembrance and to mark the occasion of his first major exhibition, a book titled, *A Critic's Eye*, released in 2009, is accompanying the exhibition.