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Journey of life through father-son's lens to be showcased in Kolkata on Aug 14

New Delhi : The country's art fraternity is all set to host award-winning photojournalist Pablo Bartholomew and his illustrious father, art critic, writer and lensman Richard Bartholomew, at the Harrington Street Art Centre in Kolkata Aug 14 in twin expositions, adjacent to one another.

'While son Pablo will exhibit a collection of travel and documentary photographs, 'A Tale of Three Cities', Richard Bartholomew's collection of photographs trace the growth of modern art in India under the title, 'A Critic's Eye', presenter Ina Puri told reporters.

'This is the first time, works of the father and son will be exhibited together. Most of the photographs by Pablo Bartholomew belong to the 1970s and 1980s,' she said.

Pablo won the World Press Photo award for his series on 'Morphine Addicts in India' in 1975 at the age of 19. In 1984, he won the 'Best Show of the Year' for the Bhopal gas tragedy.

His acclaimed photo essays include 'The Chinese in Kolkata', 'The Indians in America' and 'The Naga Tribes of Northeast India'. Born in 1955 in New Delhi, he was influenced by his father, Richard, an art critic and photographer, and decided to learn photography at home. 'The Tale of Three Cities' represents his earliest documentary photography.

'There is an acute absence of documentation of changing urban India in these two decades, particularly in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, the three cities referenced in the title. This body of photographs serves as a chronicle of the cities' shifting nature, character and function.'

'As testimony to the enduring value of his images, these records of urban life have immediacy, an ability to make the 'past' contemporary to the viewer,' Puri said.

The photographs are a body of urban testimonies that chronicle the societies of the three metropolitan centres, the social and cultural landscape through the personal filter of images of the artist's 'self-portraits, friends, family and social milieu'.

'The exhibition is the floating, nomadic world of Pablo's teens, of psychedelic lifestyles and of his presence within what he refers to as 'the first free-thinking generation after Independence' - a world he had personal exposure to as the son of art critic, curator and poet Richard Bartholomew and mother Rati Bartholomew, a well-known personality

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in the theatre and literary circles of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh,' Puri, who met the photographer in 1980 in Kolkata, said.

'The idea that I should present the father and the son together under one roof has been at the back of my mind,' she said. The photographs are accompanied by notes from Pablo's diary.

Richard Bartholomew was one of the first art critics in India to start a serious dialogue with artists of his time and explored the 'Progressive Art Movement' in India. His collection of photographs remained a more private introspection of life around him and was rarely exhibited.

Nearly 24 years after his death in 1986, the photographs stacked in his archive have opened a window into the beginning of modernism in Indian art during the early 1940s, after they were unlocked and presented to the world.

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