

The 'I' is coming of age. We are now building it as an interface, a hub of ideas, of confluences and as a constant source of interaction. This issue is far more interactive with more interviews with those who have partnered and worked with the Visual Arts Gallery and those who by their sheer excellence have edged themselves into the textual space of the quarterly.

With the introduction of new ideas and the showcasing of our activities we retain a thread of continuity. The focus on digital art, public art, and popular culture still remain a vital element of our vocabulary. We

Lens as Guru : learning to appreciate a photographers Art

“...to hold infinity
in the palm Of
your hand....”



Life is the ultimate teacher. Our experiences and the people within this, create circumstances to learn from. For Amit Pasricha, this translates into the "lens as guru", where "the camera becomes an instrument of meditation snatching moments out of the divine drama of life, freezing images of grace and wisdom". The recent exhibition mounted at the Visual Arts Gallery, presented images that have been captured over some 15 to 20 years, across the length and breadth of India.

I have always been wary of photos that seem to romanticize and glorify the quaint and rustic images of India, which have been touted ad nauseum worldwide. I had the same sense of misgiving

when I first glanced at the photographs exhibited. Subsequently however, I felt chided by the very idea and was reminded that "it is one of the commonest mistakes to consider that the limit of our



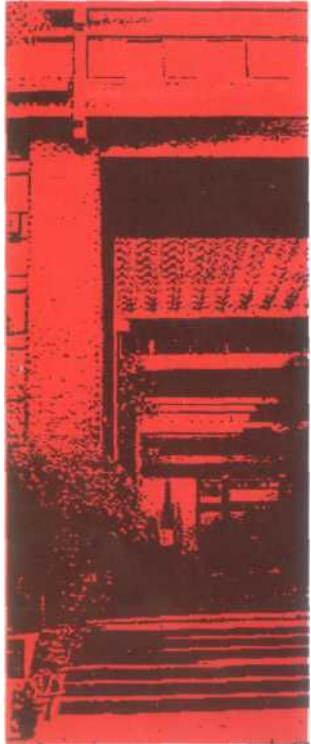
And if you are Amit Pasricha you stop to capture two camels behind the bars of their zoological home in Bikaner, and see it as a 'prison term of 3-5 years', probably passed by a 'jury of camels', in accordance with their own sense of justice. Or for that matter, a goat and an old woman share the space of his camera's frame to be likened to 'two women gossiping.' He goes on to say that when he walked into that scene, he felt as though he was being looked over with a disdainful gaze for daring to interrupt their natter. The one that I found the most enjoyable is an image of a cow's face peering into a *Sadhu's* ears, at the *Kumbh Mela* in 1986. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of a *mela*, Amit is able to see this, from both the visual and sense perception, as the grand old dame of life, seasoned with her years of experience, stoically telling the *Sadhu* a joke. If you look carefully, the smirk on the *Sadhu's* face is unmistakable, as is the impression that the cow is actually whispering something into his ear. The humour is subtle. Amit's imagination is wild.

Today everyone and their aunt are able to take photographs. Technology has given us this boon. Look through a lens, click the button and it is all recorded on light sensitive film. To be able to use this technology to present images that convey the kind of individual sense of aesthetic that Amit does, makes photography a high art, beyond skilfully capturing a visually pleasing moment. This was something, I had not been able to consider until I talked to Amit at length.

are delighted with the channels of communication, which have opened within the pages of the 'I'.

DR. ALKA PANDE

Curator, Art Advisor and Consultant, Visual Arts Gallery



what endears is the human quality of a depth of perception that for the most part, we seem to disregard in our daily living.



perceptions is also the limit of all there is to perceive", because viewing this photographers art is in itself more about perception than expression. An artist has the skills and also tools that can manipulate forms by virtue of drawing and adding colour etc., to convey what is felt and sensed. Images can be juxtaposed, a mood created and much more, by virtue of imagination. The photographer it seems, is much more restricted, in this sense. With this medium, the expression, the perception and skill represent altogether, quite another kettle of fish. If Amit had not been such a patient and gracious guide, I would not have had the privilege of being led into the subtle nuances captured by the lens of his camera, nor then would I have shared the wisdom of his guru that changed my perception and allayed the earlier misgivings.

To be able to view, rather than intercede with what you think you ought to see; to be able to delve into a moment with depth and sensitivity and find the unusual in the seemingly known, mundane and prosaic, is indeed an art. And it is this dimension that Amit Pasricha brings to the fore, to remind us of the philosophy of Krishnamurti when he said "to see what is without yesterday, is the now. The now is the silence of yesterday." This is also supposed to be the essence of deep meditation where one is able "to see a World in a grain of sand, And a Heaven in a wild flower..."

In the context that I now see these images, I see the humour, the irony, the meditative quality, but more than that, what endears is the human quality of a depth of perception that for the most part, we seem to disregard in our daily living. It is this, that makes one appreciate the images all the more, for they reveal what the average person would perhaps not be able to see nor dare to say, for fear of being ridiculed as neurotic. I think if applied in our everyday interactions this quality would be enriching on a personal level too, for if one has the gift of this kind of sensitivity and the depth afforded by its intensity, then seeing a "heaven in a wild flower" must also extend to being able "to hold infinity in the palm of your hand..." This would give the wisdom and fortitude, patience, forbearance and quietitude of mind to withstand the rigours of life, like a supple reed of bamboo withstands the stormy lashes of wind and rain.

Through the lens as guru, we have been initiated into appreciating those that have the courage to think beyond the obvious, who dare to be different, albeit in a quiet and unobtrusive way.



GOPIKA NATH

