

 NCPA

PIRAMAL
DILI

art
gallery

Message from Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook, Chairman, NCPA

The Piramal Art Gallery was established at a time when photography as an art form was yet to have a dedicated centre to it in Mumbai. Over the last three and a half decades, the gallery, under the direction of PC Patel and since 2009, Mukesh Parpiani, has hosted exhibitions on many well-known figures and those unknown to us. Shows have also been curated on unique, well-researched themes, appreciated by not only visitors but the photography community too.



The gallery, however, views its role as beyond organising exhibitions. Scholarly and practical engagement with photography has been made possible through seminars, talks and workshops with lensmen of international repute.

It is also a treasure house of photographs connected with the NCPA. The gallery plays a crucial role in the visual documentation of our endeavours. It indeed holds evidence of the importance of the performing arts in an enlightened society.

A pioneer then and a pioneer now, we are delighted that the gallery found an ardent supporter in Dilip Piramal since its inception. Thirty-six years later, he continues to stand by it in its renewed avatar as the state-of-the art Dilip Piramal Art Gallery.

We open with a three-part exhibition on the ongoing infrastructural projects in Mumbai—all of which we hope would help bring people closer to the arts centres of the city.

Message from Mr. Dilip Piramal

There is a sense of gratification and joy in being associated with an idea from its conception and see it grow and touch lives year after year. The Piramal Art Gallery came into being when a space dedicated to photography in the city, perhaps country, was unheard of. It seems implausible today considering how intertwined life is with the act of capturing every moment of it, but back in the late 1980s, the camera was a luxury and its fodder—the roll film—an expensive commodity. Photographs were processed in dark rooms and in the newsroom, roll film would be rationed to photojournalists.



It was the visionary Dr Jamshed Bhabha who saw a need for a photo gallery in Bombay. When he proposed to me a space above the Experimental Theatre, I considered it a privilege to be a part of this novel initiative. As you will see in the following pages, the gallery, since it opened in 1987, has done stellar work under PC Patel and Mukesh Parpiani.

Technology is ever evolving and for a gallery that has been a pioneer, it was time for it to undergo refurbishment and upgrade. When I was apprised of this plan at the NCPA—this time under the able leadership of Mr Khushroo N. Suntook—I knew I had to be a part of this exciting new innings.

The state-of-the-art Dilip Piramal Art Gallery is all set to write a new chapter in the world of photography in India, one that promises to be truly riveting.

About

Located in a quiet space above the Experimental Theatre, the Dilip Piramal Art Gallery started as part of the Centre for Photography as an Art Form (CPA) at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA). With the help of a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, the CPA was established in 1987 under the guidance of the NCPA's founding father Jamshed Bhabha, along with Jehangir C. Jehangir, to advance the understanding and practice of photography as an art form. A state-of-the-art darkroom and a colour processing unit were set up, facilities that were unmatched in the city at the time.

The Piramal Art Gallery was subsequently established with another grant from Dilip Piramal. Born out of a deficit of galleries dedicated to the art of photography, it served as a platform for emerging and established photographers to display their work. Some of these artistes happily donated their work to the NCPA's archives, adding to its permanent collection. The archives are preserved in a fully temperature-controlled room above the gallery space and displayed from time to time.

Veteran photographers Praful C. Patel, who ran the gallery for 18 years, and Mukesh Parpiani, who has been heading it since 2009, have greatly contributed to the success of the gallery. Mr. Parpiani also took the lead in organising virtual photo exhibitions amid the lockdowns imposed during the pandemic, which had a significant impact.

In these 36 pages, we attempt to cover the 36-year-long history of this gallery which has not only been a pioneer among photo galleries in the country but has also helped to launch the careers of successful Indian photographers. It has hosted more than 700 exhibitions, talks and workshops thus far. Renamed in honour of its kind donor, the new state-of-the-art Dilip Piramal Art Gallery will continue the rich legacy.



DILIP PIRAMAL
ART GALLERY





Piramal
art
gallery

A panorama of the
Piramal Art Gallery (1987-2022)



PIRAMAL
DILIP
art
gallery

The new state-of-the-art
Dilip Piramal Art Gallery, 2023

The NCPA announces the opening of the new Dilip Piramal Art Gallery

In its 36th year, the Piramal Art Gallery at the NCPA, a pioneer among photo galleries in India, reopens as a state-of-the-art venue for photography this March. Renamed in honour of its kind donor whose generous support enabled the refurbishment, the Dilip Piramal Art Gallery will continue the rich legacy of nurturing photography in India and showcasing the best from around the world through exhibitions, workshops and talks.

The inaugural exhibition is a three-part series on the ongoing mega infrastructural projects in Mumbai. ‘Connecting the Unconnected’, on the Mumbai Metro Line 3, chronicles the journey of the “New Lifeline of Mumbai” and has been curated in collaboration with the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (MMRC). It showcases a glimpse of the inner workings of this engineering marvel, before the project goes underground and away from the public eye.

Exhibitions on the Mumbai Coastal Road Project and the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, curated in collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) respectively, will follow soon. All three projects that are coming to life simultaneously are the result of will, resources and technological expertise. While they have been in the making for some time now, many Mumbaikars are unaware of the actual nature of work being carried out or the innovation and technological challenges of the projects. The exhibitions will showcase the behind-the-scenes journey of this infrastructural undertaking that will change the transportation dynamics of the city and the quality of life of the citizens of Mumbai.

The first exhibition, ‘Connecting the Unconnected’ on the Mumbai Metro Line 3, has been supported by MMRC and Tata Projects. These organisations, in addition to other key players, have been instrumental in making the new lifeline of the city a reality.



**The Dilip Piramal Art Gallery
reopens on 2nd March 2023 with**

**‘Connecting the Unconnected’
An exhibition on the Mumbai Metro Line 3
followed by exhibitions on the
Mumbai Coastal Road Project
and the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link**

Time: 12 noon to 8 pm





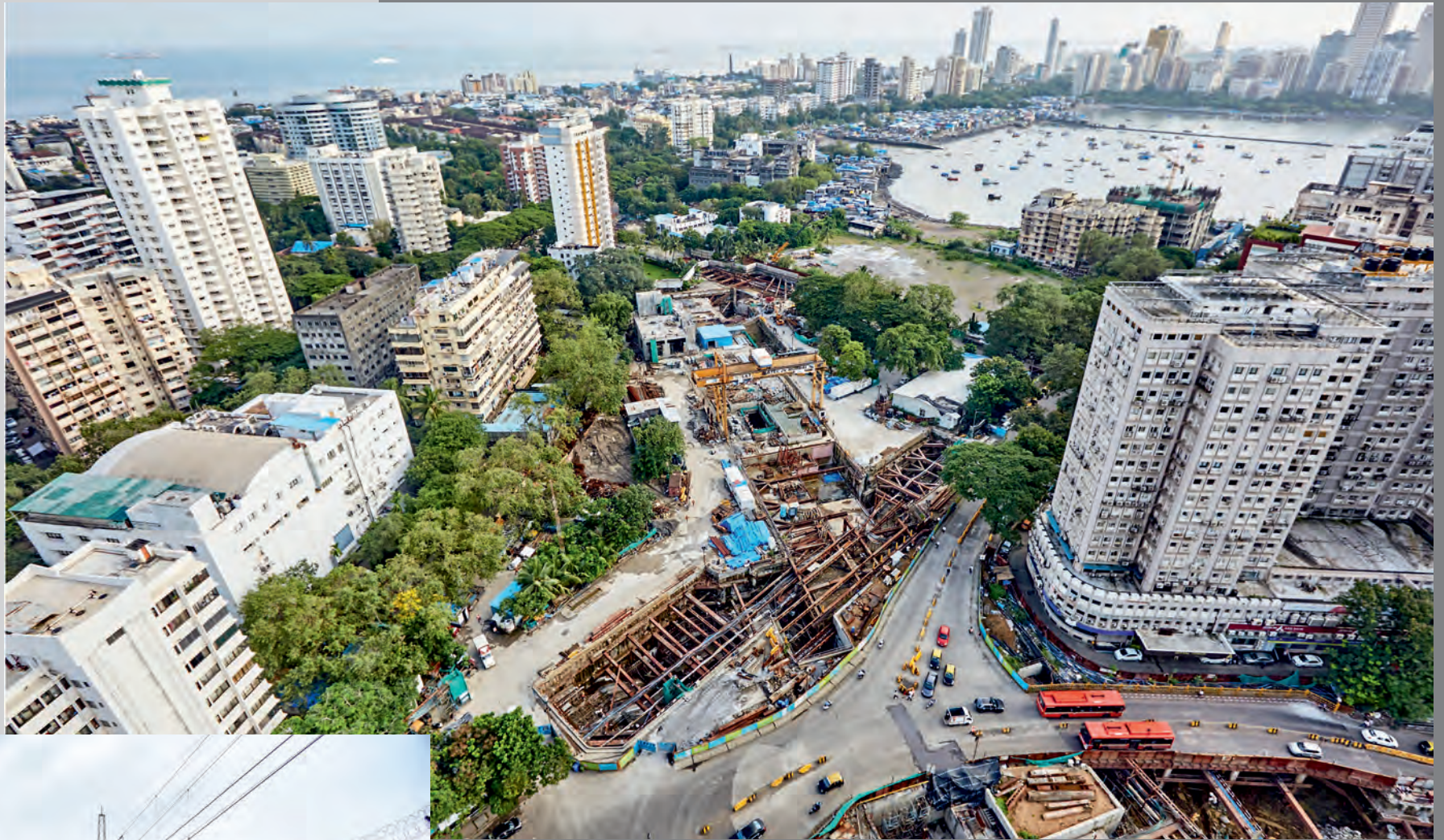
Exhibition No. 1:

Connecting the Unconnected

Exhibition on the Mumbai Metro Line 3

The Dilip Piramal Art Gallery's inaugural exhibition chronicles the journey of the "New Lifeline of Mumbai". In the city of over 2 crore people, the Mumbai Suburban Railway has served as a lifeline for 170 years, but not without its challenges. For the betterment of local travel, the Central Government, in tandem with the Government of Maharashtra, began the creation of a metro network within the city. Mumbai Metro Line 3 is a key component of this network. Operated by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRCL), this 33.5 km fully underground line will run along Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ.





Aerial View Of Work In Progress At Vidhan Bhavan Metro Station

The exhibition documents what went into the making of this engineering marvel, from the transportation of the gigantic tunnel boring machine (TBM) to tunnelling, utility management and trial runs. Before the exceptional project goes underground and away from the public eye, we showcase a glimpse of its inner workings.

Exhibition No. 2: **Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP)**

In the spirit of celebrating the developmental milestones of the city, the next exhibition is on the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) impressive undertaking: the Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP). With a 10.58 km expanse of roadway on reclamation, bridges, interchanges, tunnels under the sea as well as a hill, a seawall and more, this project aims to achieve the commendable feat of reducing the travel time from South Mumbai to North Mumbai by 70 percent!







Exhibition No. 3: **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link**

The last of the three-part series on the city's ongoing mega transportation projects will feature the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link. Connecting Sewri at one end to Nhava Sheva on the other, this bridge will help facilitate urban and industrial development in the southern half of Navi Mumbai. Once completed, this will be India's longest sea bridge and will improve connectivity between Mumbai and the mainland. These exhibitions aim to showcase the behind-the-scenes journey of the projects that will change the transportation dynamics of the city and the quality of life of the citizens of Mumbai.

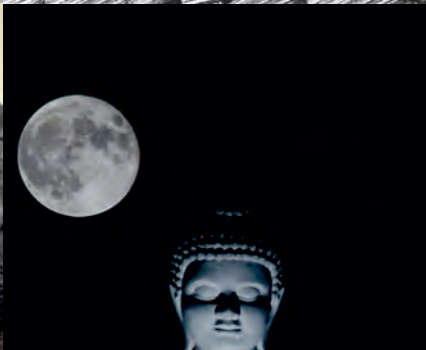




FROM THE ARCHIVES


1988 - 2008





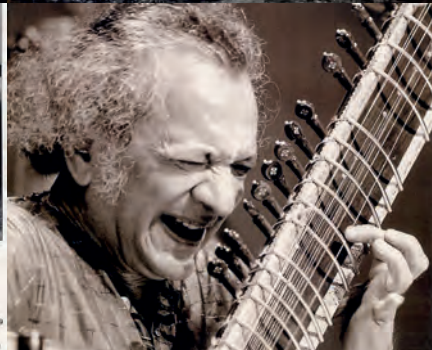
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
AS AN ART FORM

BOMBAY
AN EXHIBITION OF
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY
MUKESH PARPIANI



1 MARCH - 8 MARCH '99

Prasad Gallery, Experimental Theatre Building, 16 Floor, Bombay 400 021



NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
Centre for Photography as an Art Form

INDIAN EXPRESS

PICTURES ON A PAGE
1990

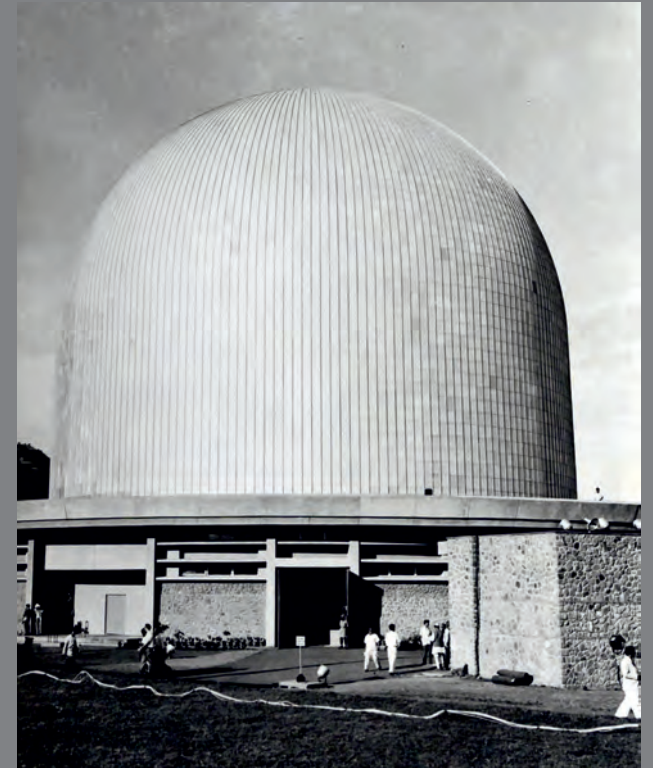
AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MUKESH PARPIANI, SANJAY PANDYANI, S.K. SINGH, RAJESH KAPUR, ANIL KOTIA,
VIVEK BHANDARI & HIRANMAY KUMAR

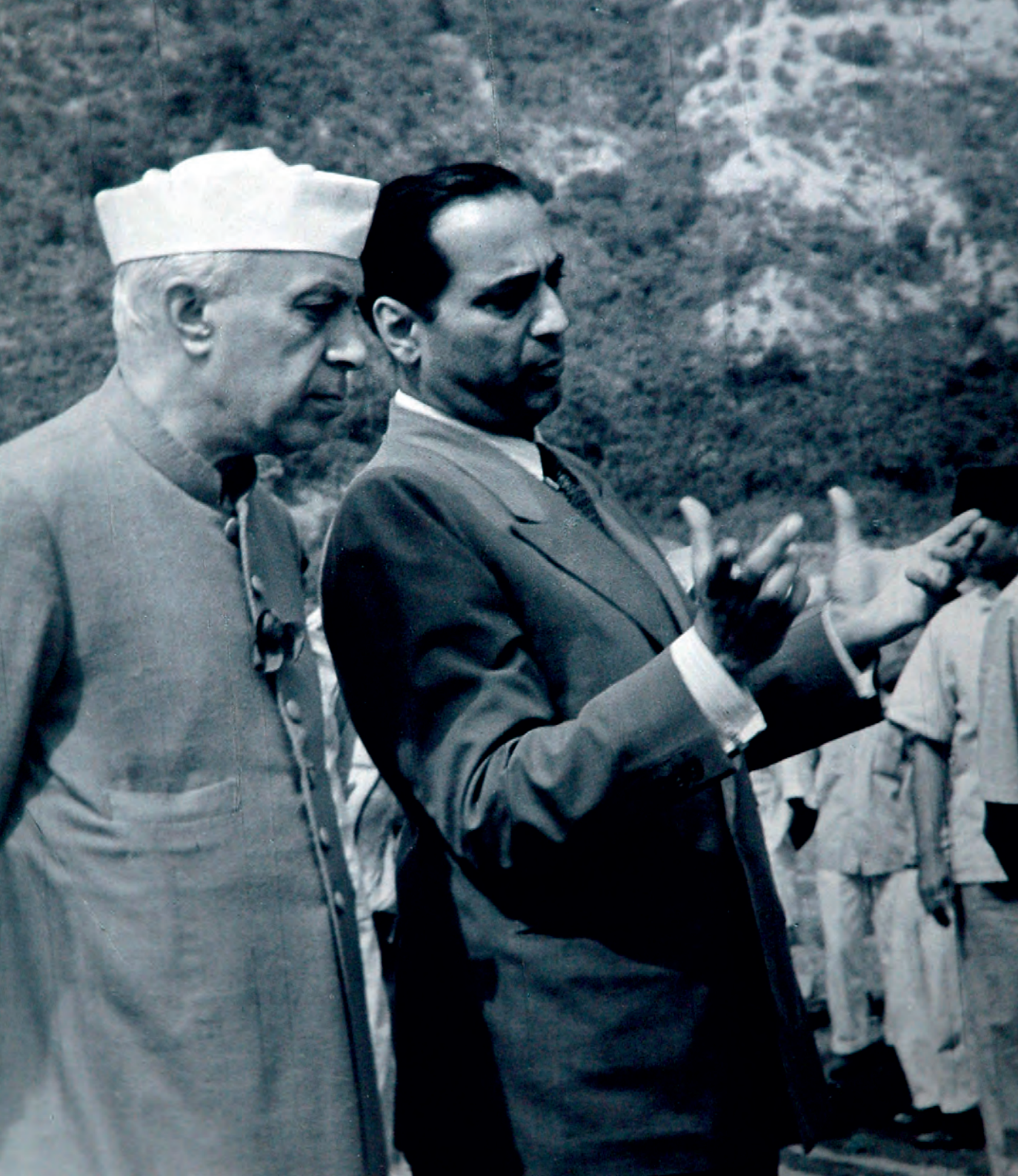



1990-1991

Prasad Gallery, Experimental Theatre Building, 16 Floor, Bombay 400 021







On an assignment from the Tata Group, P. C. Patel photographed the now called Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)—and India's first atomic reactor—under construction. In 1954, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Homi J. Bhabha inaugurated the facility (pictured). A little over a decade later, the NCPA was founded by his brother Dr. Jamshed Bhabha and Mr. Patel went on to be the first head of the Piraamal Art Gallery.



Much like the Piramal Art Gallery was a pioneer among photo galleries in India, Raja Deen Dayal was a pioneer in the field of photography in the subcontinent. In a period dominated by Western photographers, he became the first Indian to make his mark in the medium. He was appointed as the court photographer to the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad and went on to be the photographer to the Viceroy of India in 1885. He also received the Royal Warrant from Queen Victoria in 1897.



During his time as the court photographer to the Nizam, he was awarded the title Raja Bahadur Musavvir Jung ("Bold Warrior of Photography") and was thereafter known as Raja Deen Dayal. Images courtesy of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.



Known as India's first female photojournalist, Homai Vyarawalla's oeuvre featured significant political figures and events in India's independence movement. Being dismissed as an amateur for her appearance gave her unhindered access to her subjects, such as former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, pictured here with Thelma Tata and J.R.D. Tata.



Politics and industrialists aside, a photo gallery in Mumbai has its fair share of glamour too.

A 1992 exhibition, *Through the eyes of Smita*, aided in bringing to the fore actress Smita Patil's (left) talent behind the lens. This picture of Smita the photographer was also part of an exhibition from the archives organised in 2015.



Amitabh Bachchan inaugurated an exhibition at the gallery in 2000 (right), seen here pictured with Gayatri Sinha, an art critic and curator and Jehangir Nicholson, an early patron of modern art in India and former sheriff of Bombay.



Former model Pamella Bordes (now Pamela Singh Choudhary) while in town exhibiting her works at the gallery had to shield herself from the media glare as she went about photographing Bollywood—not from this press photographer, though, who received a tip-off about her shoot with actress Madhuri Dixit.

Renowned photographer Dayanita Singh photographs herself at an exhibition of her first book *Zakir Hussain* (1986), showcasing several of Hussain's tours from the 80s.



MAKING NEW STRIDES

2009 - 2022







Under veteran photojournalist and editor Mukesh Parpiani, who has headed it since 2009, the gallery has witnessed nearly 200 exhibitions, talks and workshops by well-known Indian and international photographers. It is an invaluable part of the NCPA, documenting the life of the organisation through pictures which form a vital part of its digital foray.

Noted journalists Anoop Babani and Savia Viegas presented their photo exhibition, *The Bicycle Diaries*, in 2019. NCPA Chairman Mr. Khushroo N. Suntook pictured here (left) at its inauguration.

As part of the NCPA's 50th anniversary ADD ART Festival in 2019, a cutout photo op of the iconic Hindustan Ambassador (bottom left) was on display in front of our iconic staircase at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre.

Zakir Hussain, who is on the NCPA council and has been associated with the organisation since the day of its inception, is seen pictured (bottom right) holding a photograph of his father Alla Rakha, which was a part of the *Tribute to Abbaji* exhibition in 2019.



Through Indian Eyes, the gallery's inaugural exhibition in 1988, showcased photographs taken across India between the 1850s and the 1920s, collected by American photo-historian Judith Mara Gutman.

She later donated the exhibits to the NCPA's archives, which included painted photographs from royal family albums (pictured below), thus also beginning its permanent collection. These photographs were later part of a retrospective in 2010, with Gutman in attendance (right).





Workshops on diverse themes are among the educational initiatives of the gallery. Among noted professionals who have shared their expertise with participants are (left) Dilip Yande who conducted a glamour photography workshop in 2014 and (below) noted professor of photography Dr P K M Pillai who trained budding lensmen with a model of Mahatma Gandhi in 2010. Talks by internationally renowned photographers have included visits of Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh), Fiorenzo Senese (Italy) and Magnum photographer Abbas (Iran; pictured here).





Every year on August 19th, the gallery joins in on the celebrations of World Photography Day. Past events included a traditional photo studio setup (left) where visitors could dress up and have their pictures taken.

In keeping with the aim to promote and develop the practice and understanding of photography, exhibitions of books (right) covering the A to Zs of photography is another regular feature of the gallery.





The gallery was not new to Mukesh Parpiani when he joined as its Head in 2009. He had covered the inauguration of the Tata Theatre by Indira Gandhi in 1982 and prior to joining the NCPA, had already exhibited his work thrice at the gallery since its inception in 1987. A glimpse of the exhibitions: JRD Tata, the only Indian industrialist to be conferred the Bharat Ratna; a safe haven during the Bombay riots of 1992; forty winks in the city





During the pandemic, the gallery organised virtual photo exhibitions under the aegis of the NCPA. One on the theme of birds saw participation by more than 200 photographers from across India and travelled far and wide in the online space.

When the lockdown was lifted, the gallery reopened with the exhibition, 'Birds as Global Ambassadors of Peace' in December 2021. It was inaugurated by Mr Khushroo N. Suntook.

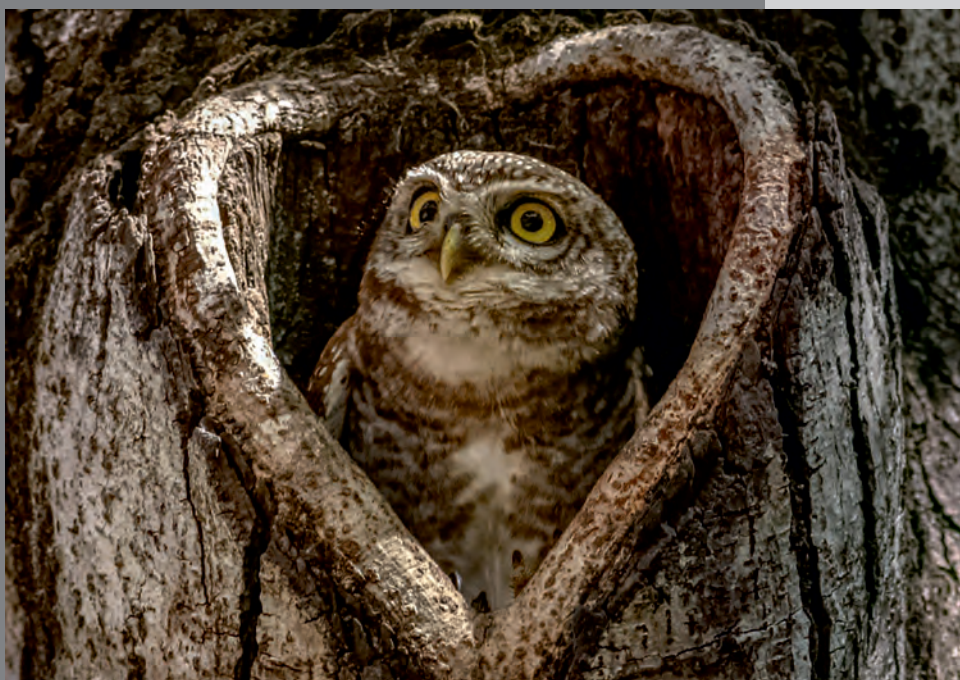








As a chronicler of the performing and visual arts, the gallery counts many noted personalities among its visitors. The culture of gallery-going resumed after it reopened with the avian exhibition. Artist Deepak Shinde with wife and photo historian Niyatee Shinde were seen (left) at an exhibition of works by veteran photographer Parmanand Dalwadi in April 2022. Both local and international flavours have found space here. From iconic Mexican film posters designed by Jose Renau to the vibrant state of Maharashtra (bottom right), there is never a dull moment at this haven for photography.



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Jagan Mehta
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Madhu Pandit
Mohan Bane
Mukesh Parpiani
Narendra Dangiya
Pashminu Mansukhani
Praful Patel
Pranlal Patel
R. R. Bharadwaj
Raja Deen Dayal (Courtesy-IGNCA, New Delhi)
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Santanu Chakraborty
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Vivek Bendre

Infrastructural Projects Photographs Courtesy



Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL)



Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)



Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)

Supported by



TATA Projects Limited



Larsen & Toubro



The Dilip Piramal Art Gallery includes new and improved amenities without losing the charm of its predecessor. Remote-controlled lighting and non-reflective walls will offer the best display for photographs. Movable partitions will make the gallery modular and help facilitate group shows. A state-of-the-art audio-visual system will aid in a variety of events, including more online workshops and film screenings. The adjoining fully covered terrace fitted with improved lighting will allow for year-round workshops and exhibitions in a more intimate setting.





**The all-new Dilip Piramal Art Gallery
is now available for bookings**

Contact:

+91 6622 3723 / 25 / 09
+91 81080 03311

Email ID:

marketing@ncpamumbai.com/
mukesh.ncpa@gmail.com

Website:

www.ncpamumbai.com



The Centre for Photography as an Art Form, now called The Dilip Piramal Art Gallery, was inaugurated in 1987 by the then Honorary Director of the NCPA P. L. Deshpande, then Chairman and Trustee-in-Charge Dr. Jamshed Bhabha and Founder Chairman J. R. D. Tata.



National Centre for the Performing Arts
NCPA Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021, India.
T: +91 22 6622 3737 | www.ncpamumbai.com