

# BIG ART

The art, artists and everything in between.



JUNE 9, 2017 · BY SHALMALI SHETTY

## FEMININE GAZE



The Alliance Francaise basement Galerie Romain Rolland seemed a calm enclosure away from the searing heat outside. The space is meditative and vast, where spending time with each picture internalizes the labor each woman photographer put into conceptualizing them. They range from landscapes to the human body and its relationship to the immediate surroundings, its transformation, memory and the various socio-political facets that govern it. This is the central theme underpinning the works of the eleven photographers selected from 785 applications received from 84 countries. It is hosted by Antidote art and design in collaboration with the International Women Photographers Association, MyArtSpy and Alliance Francaise, Dubai.

Florencia Trincheri brings to the fore personal narratives. Her photographs evolve as an observation of two persons from their birth. She documents them over time as they grow and strike a cordial relationship with the components of the environment and nature they play and struggle within. Her images pose the sole body of a contemplating child encountering the realities of the world as they are.



*Image by Florencia Trincheri*



*Image by Sumi Sadurni*

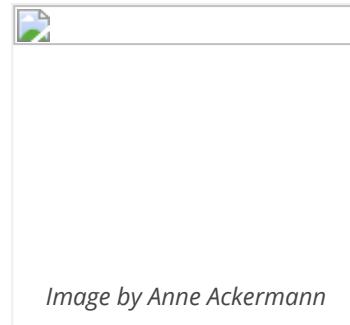
Sumy Sadurni on the contrary, takes up a political issue. A large number of South Sudanese refugees have been crossing over to Uganda without food or water for days on end in search of peace. But their migration and settlements in the new region is only causing more trouble with lack of funds or maintenance to sustain them.

Children are orphaned, families segregated, relationships strained as one and many escape to survive. Her photographs are rendered in

black and white to position the victims in a dignified light. The victims pose for the camera indifferent to the presence of the lens, against disrupted backdrops presenting life as it were in the abode of death.

similarly captures the lives of female refugees of Somalia living in exile all over the world awaiting resettlement in a country other than Africa, since twenty years of unending conflict. But "while they hold on to everything they believe to be Somali, exile is also a liberating experience," she writes. Through their hardships, they retain the memory of a past and develop a dream for a future.

The primary colors in her picture surfaces stand out emotionally and enormously. Delicate objects like shreds of paper with inscriptions and the recurring body of the woman along with minute details of their lives highlights their distant and distraught relationships across boundaries.



In a philosophical/conceptual take on life, Farah Salem the laureate of this award delves into body-mind and its relation to the society it inhabits. In her pictures she translates the experience of the limitations and restrictions the mind tends to make when encountering different landscapes: she contains the body in a box placed against beautiful

landscapes. "If one could only realize that outside of the box there is nothing, and it's a beautiful nothing to be enjoyed," she says.

"A home is a home because of the housewife," writes Ranita Roy who accompanies her grandmother Chhordima as she negotiates the everyday with a smile and inner strength. This series she says is a tribute to her grandmother who contains and releases inspiration in her confined state in a male-dominated society. The use of monochrome intensifies the boldness of the subject, it is like an inscription made in stone, never to be forgotten.



Algeria has and continues to suffer socially, politically and culturally, yet remains magical and mysterious. Torn between tradition and modernity, its future is uncertain and the present still undergoing political turmoil. A set of monochromes by Marcela Barrios-Hernandez emphasizes the enormity of things that surpasses mere understanding. Haruhi Fujii relives memory she recomposes and recaptures to discover and understand herself. "It is not of importance if despite my efforts, I cannot reach reality." The memory is staged and redesigned: with a pastel palette, subduing at the same

instant enhancing the composition, blurring as well as focusing-furnishing the landscape with a dreamy and surreal character.

Soheila Sanamno narrates the story of Roghayyeh, a rape-victim who is doomed for life in a society like that of Iran's. Though the perpetrators are on the verge of execution, the figure of the surviving woman bears the brunt for life. She faces discrimination not only from society but even within her immediate family who do not so much care for her well-being. The photographer follows Roghayyeh as she performs her daily chores, and makes apparent the solitary figure in the otherwise populated household.



Ana Alexandrescu makes an important self-discovery through her circus photography. She brings to it her personal experience of real and surreal whose dual aspects make a ghostly appearance in her pictures; she contains, maintains and relieves in the world of circus. Cecile Smetana Baudier retraces the settled African community

in Mexico using her camera.

In 2015 villages like Chacahua and El Azufre was finally recognized by the Mexican government. These citizens are generally not aware of their African past and receive any knowledge of it only from myths and stories. Her photographs are slightly tinged sepia, indeed foregrounding a "subtle drama and feeling of nostalgia within the story."

Neus Sola undertakes a documentary photography project "Poupees" with which she captures the lives of the young gypsy girls living in a patriarchy-driven social system in the suburbs of La Cite, Perpignan (France) as they leap from adolescence to adulthood. After the performance of the rites of passage done using "handkerchief testing", the young girls if found to be deprived of their virginity are pushed out into the real world to tend for themselves and stay independent. Her images are those caught in the transitional, where young girls wear fancy clothes, excessive make-up and pose as independent adults.

**Where:** At Alliance Française de Delhi, K. K. Birla Lane, 72, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi.

**When:** Till June 11th, 2017.

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