

OCTOBER 2022

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DIGITAL MAGAZINE



KUMORTULI

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S HEAVEN!
by Shekhar Roy

DURGA POOJA FESTIVAL 2022

by Rajendra Waghmare

Homage to Late Shri Hari Mahidharji

Past President, PSI



The passing away of our dear past President Hari Mahidhar was a shock to all of us at the Photographic Society of India.

Haribhai, as he was known in the photographic fraternity had tremendous knowledge of photography, which he was always happy to share with one and all. He was a gentleman and a very kind soul. His passing away is a loss to all of us.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in the articles published in this magazine are those of the authors and are not necessarily of the editorial team, PSI or the Managing Committee.



EDITORIAL

Earlier this month we lost one of the stalwarts of photography, Shri Hari Mahidharji. He was our past president. Haribhai was a fine teacher of the art of photography. He had taken many workshops on studio photography for PSI members. Just a few days before his passing away, he expressed his intention to take more workshops in the near future. This is a great loss for all of us at PSI.

There were great festivities all over the country in October when Durga Pooja was celebrated. But you have to visit Kolkata where this festival was originated to really experience the true grandeur of the festival.

Our member, Shekhar Roy visited and documented the idol-making in Kumortuli in Kolkata a few years back. I have also been there during this year's festivities and captured many aspects of this grand festival. Shri Palashranjan Bhoomik, a very senior photojournalist was kind enough to give us his insights of Durga Pooja.

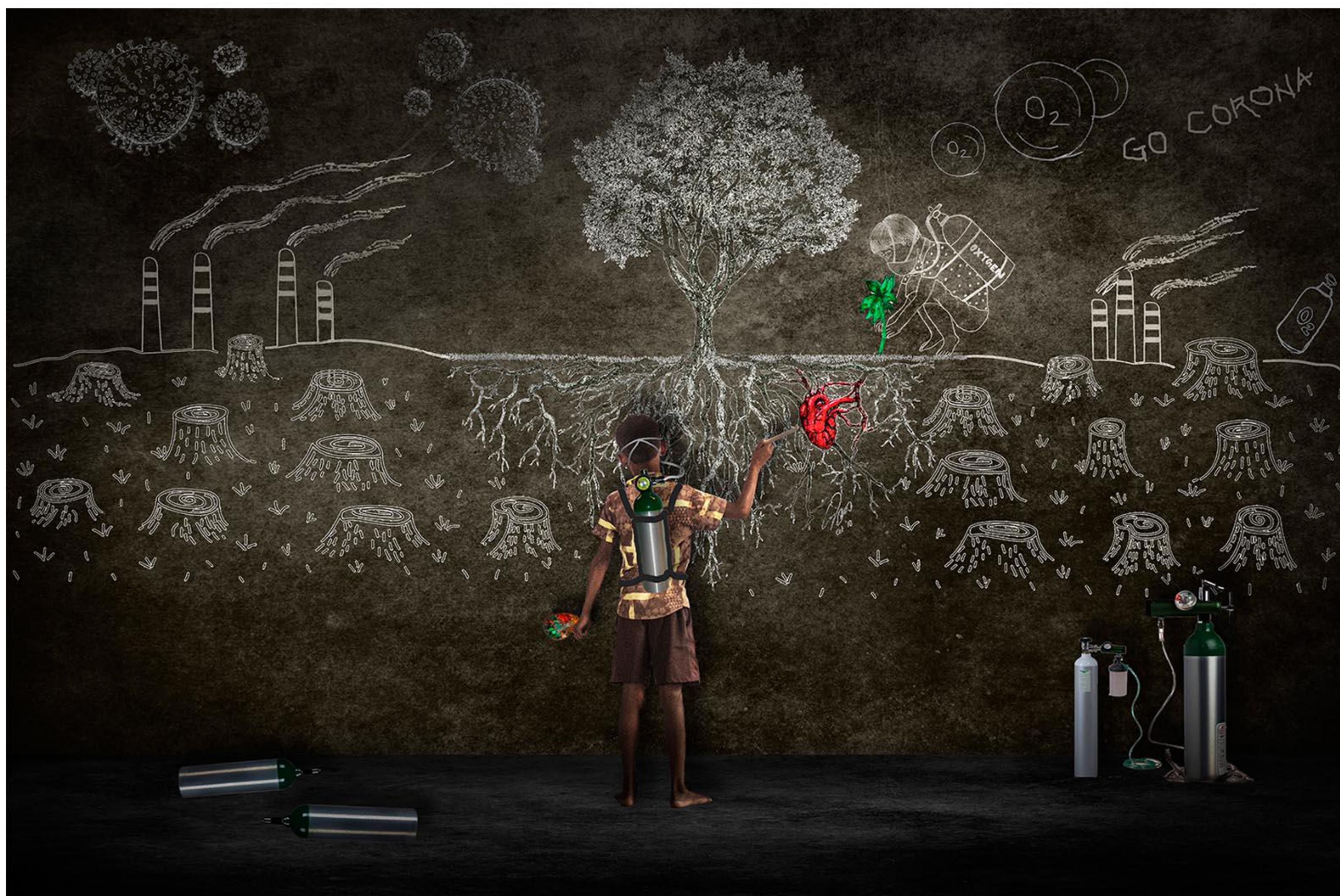
A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Rajendra Waghmare".

Rajendra Waghmare
Chief Editor

RESULT OF MONTHLY COMPETITION : SEPTEMBER 2022
JUDGE : SHRI PRAKASH DUDHALKAR
MEMBERS (COLOUR)



YELLOW EGG
PRASAD MANRI



CORONA PAINTING
NIKHIL PANCHAL

MEMBERS (COLOUR)



MOTHER
NIKHIL PANCHAL

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (COLOUR)



GANPATI BAPPA
MAHESH AMBARE

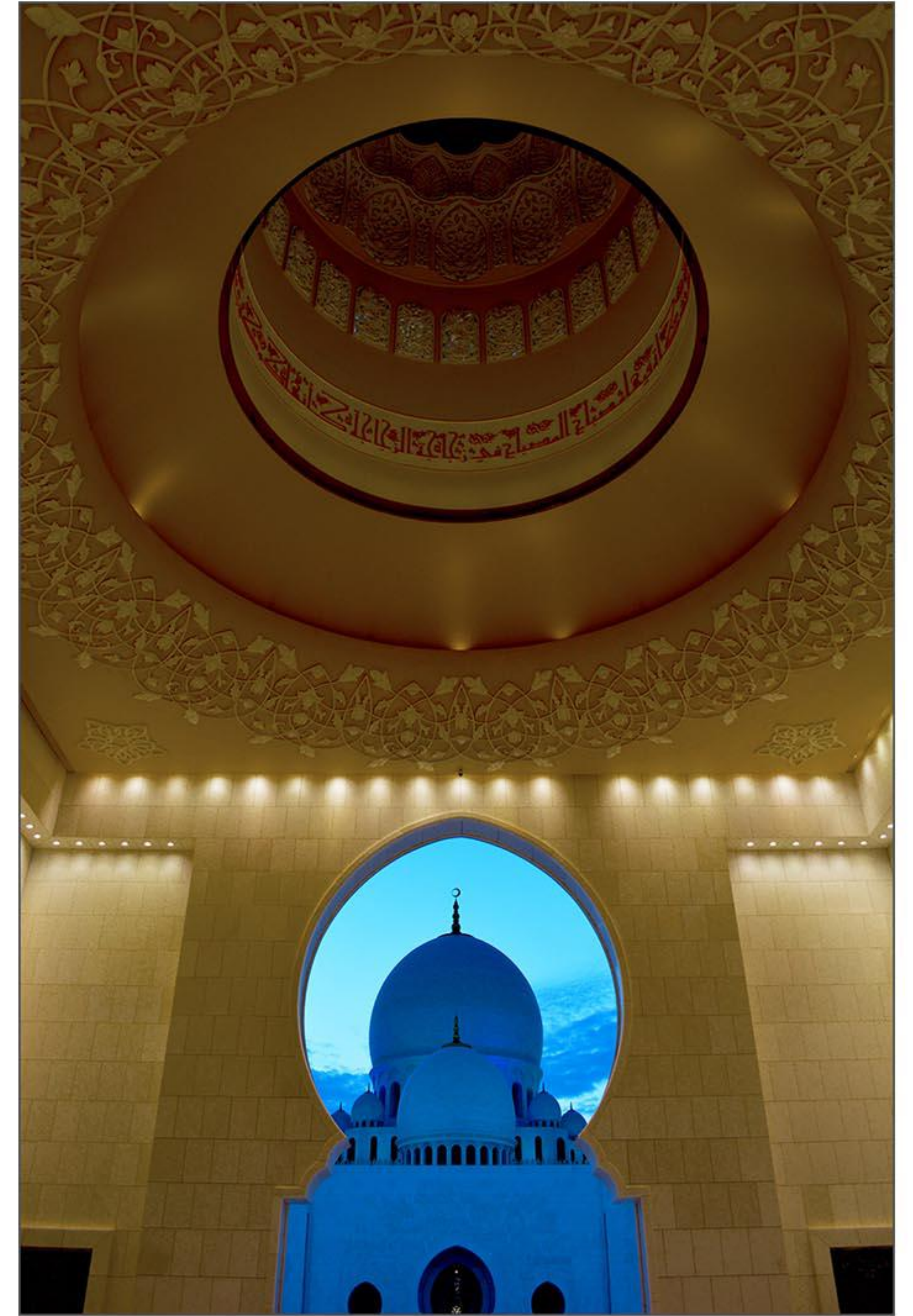


DANCERS
PRASAD MANTRI

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (COLOUR)



SALT PAN
SHATRUGHAN SINGH



GOLD AND BLUE
SAMAR KHAN



BLACK ART SMOKE
VIVEK JOSHI



WATERMELON
VIVEK JOSHI

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (COLOUR)



VIBRANT SKY
SMITA SAMEL

MEMBERS (MONOCHROME)



NIBS
PRASAD MANTRI

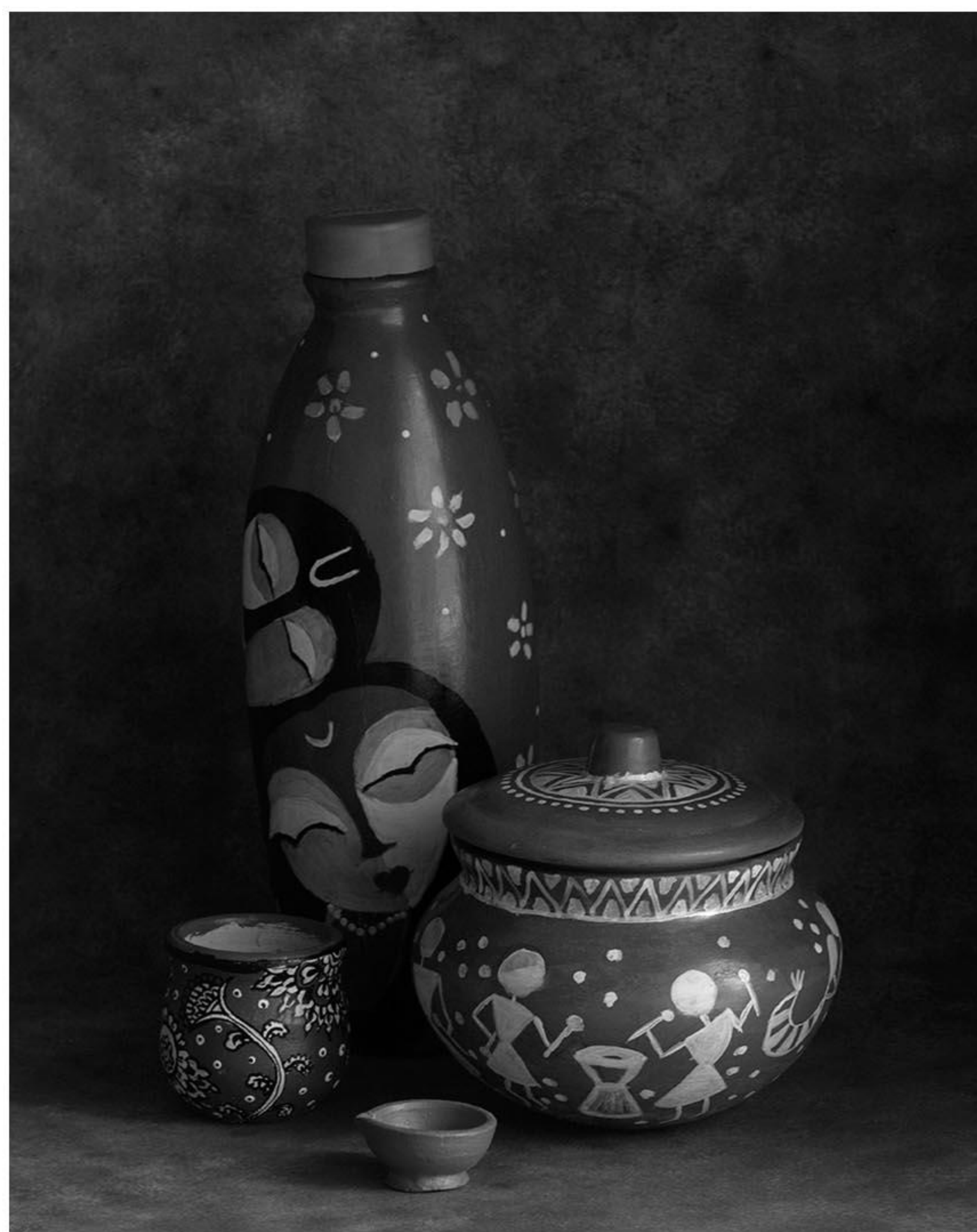


MEMBERS (MONOCHROME)

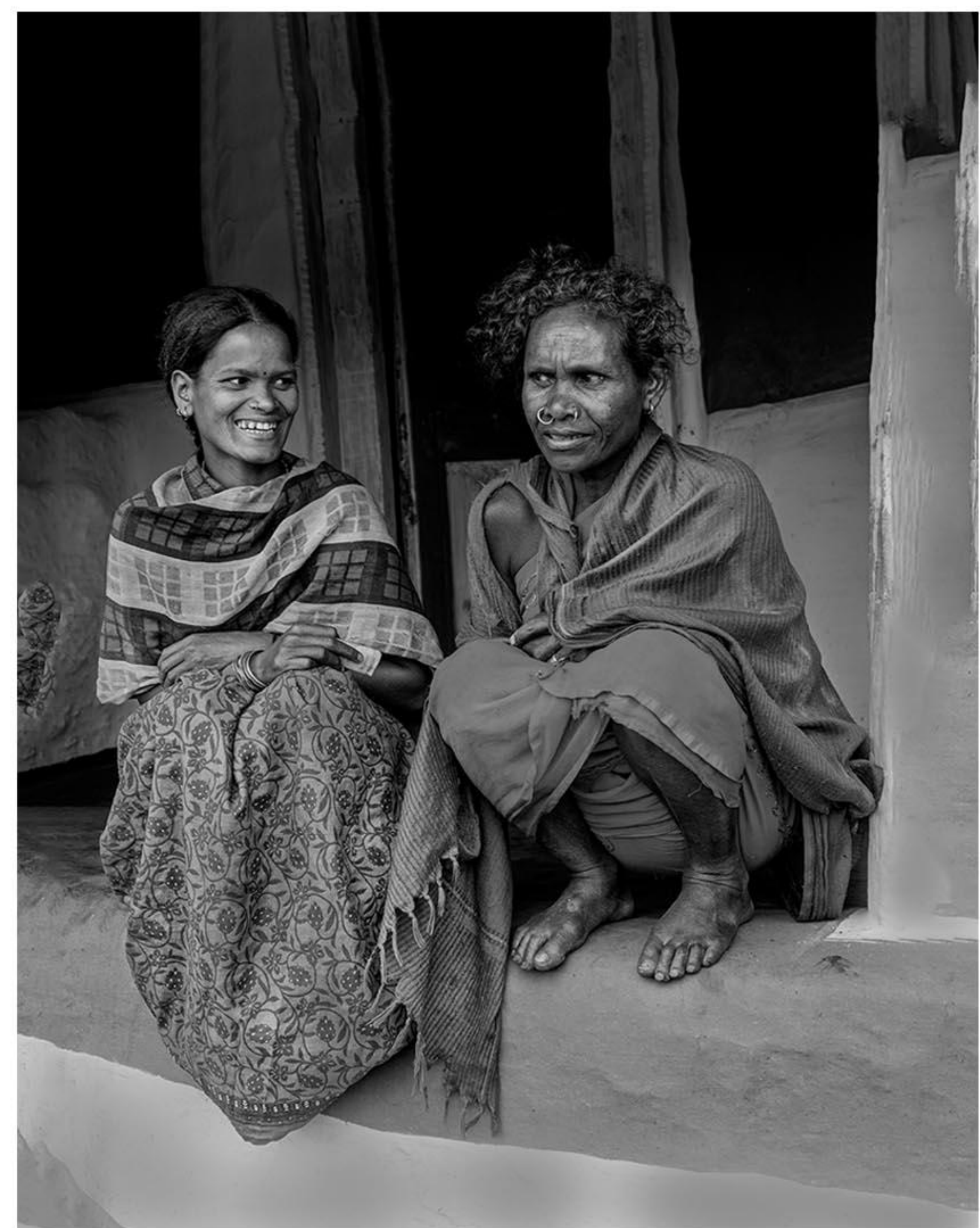


PHOTO FRAMES
SHATRUGHAN SINGH

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (MONOCHROME)



ART WORK
VIVEK JOSHI



HAPPY
SMITA SAMEL

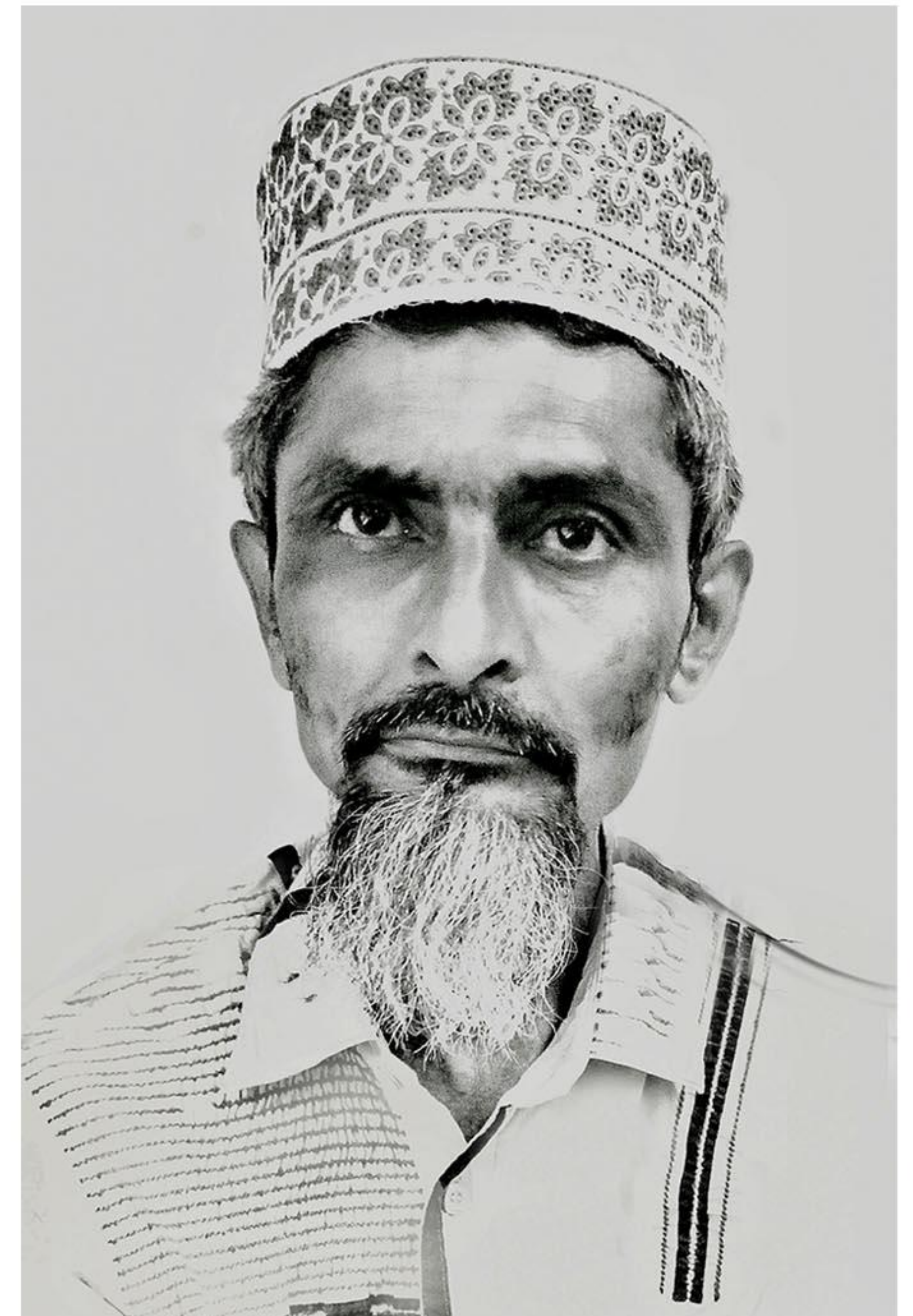
MEMBERS (MONOCHROME)



**GOING HOME
SAMAR KHAN**



**SMOKING KILLS
NIKHIL PANCHAL**



**SULEMAN
MAHESH AMBARE**

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (MONOCHROME)



TAJ
PRASAD MANRI



READY
RAVINDRA DEODHAR



HIGH ANGLE ARCHITECTURE
NIKHIL PANCHAL

BEGINNERS (COLOUR)



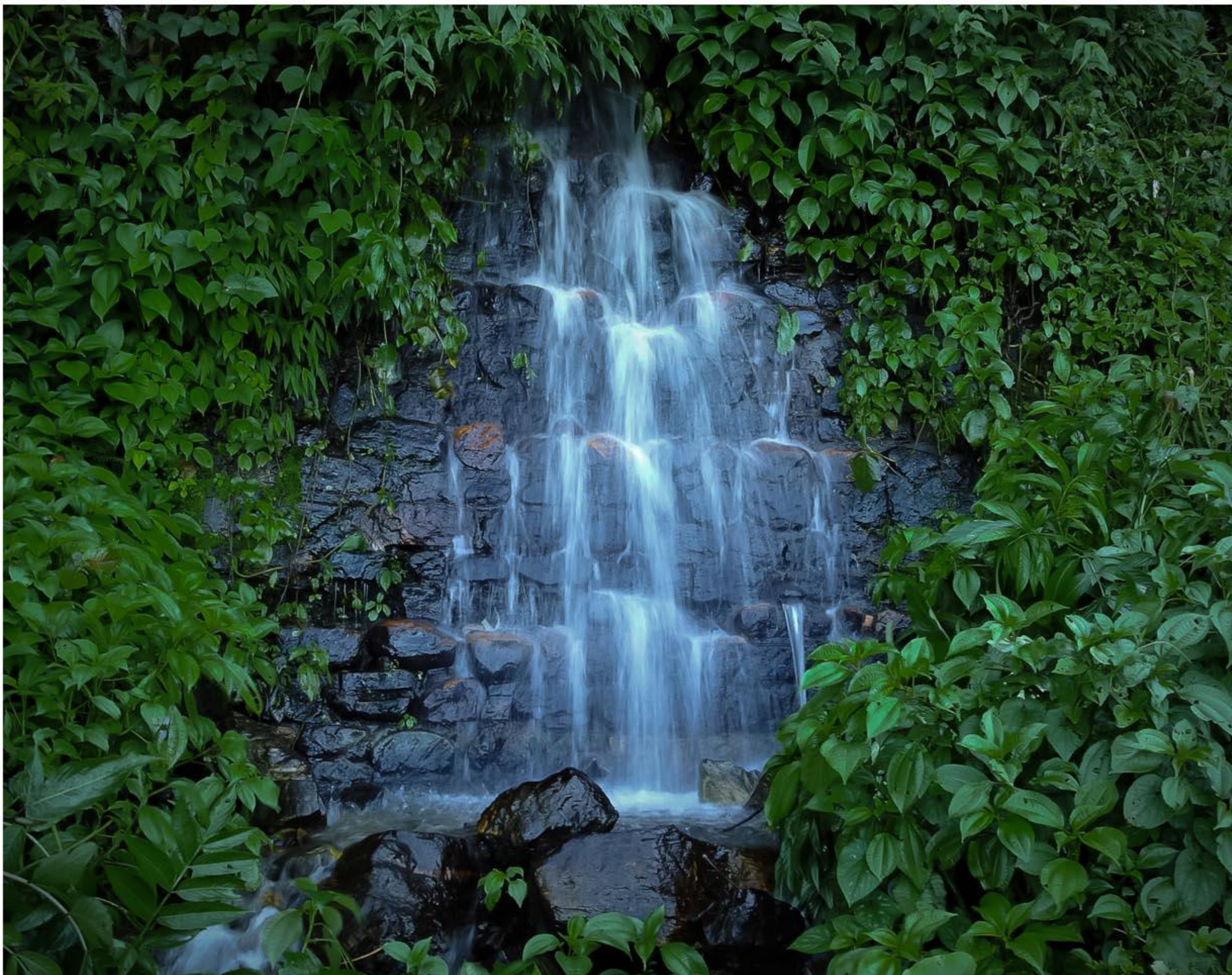
**SIBLING LOVE
ATUL DESHPANDE**



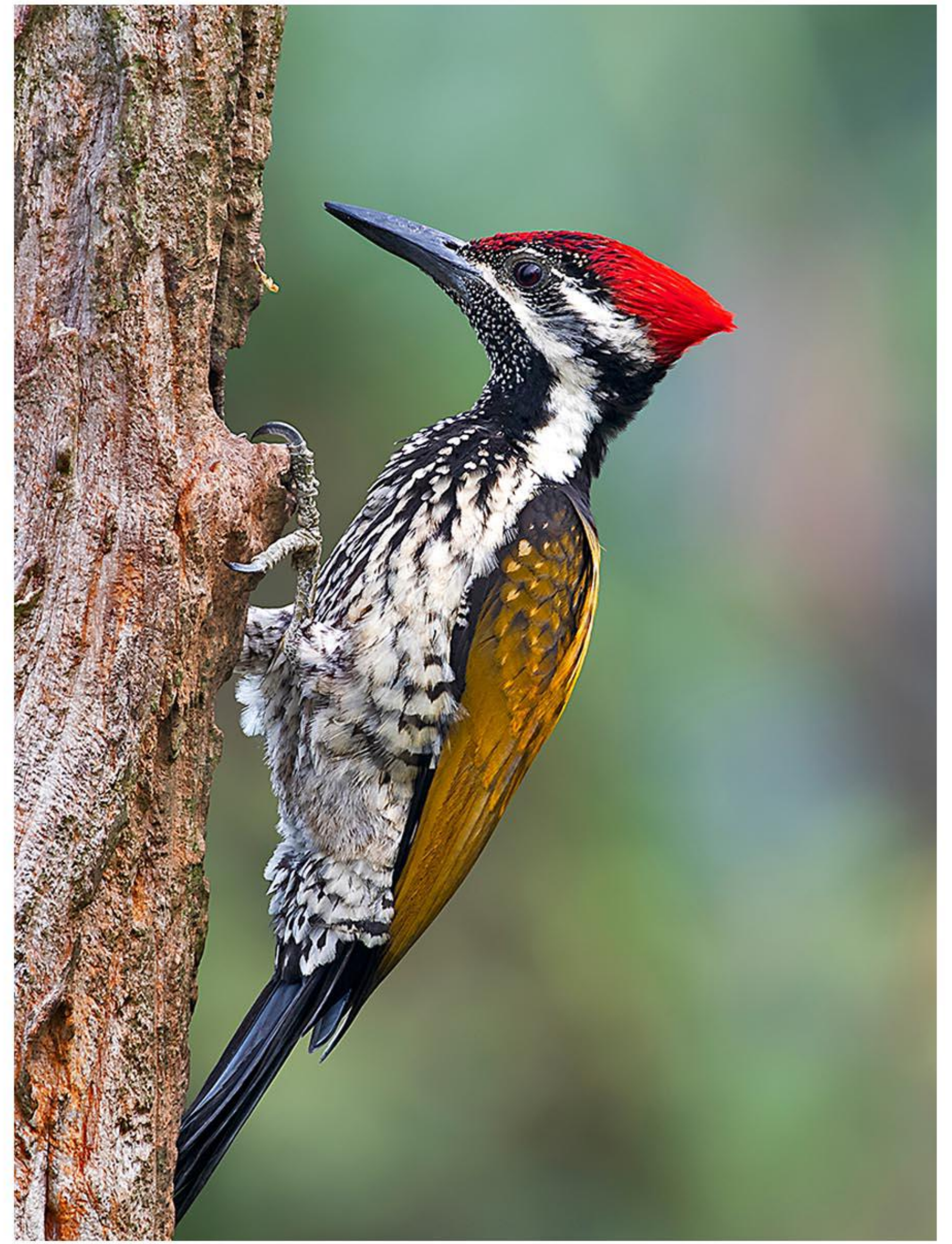
**ANCIENT PENCIL
SWAPNA KORDE PHATAK**



BEGINNERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES(COLOUR)



**WATERFALL
VRINDA NADKARNI**



**STREAK THROATED WOODPECKER
ATUL DESHPANDE**



**WELCOME HOME
ATUL DESHPANDE**

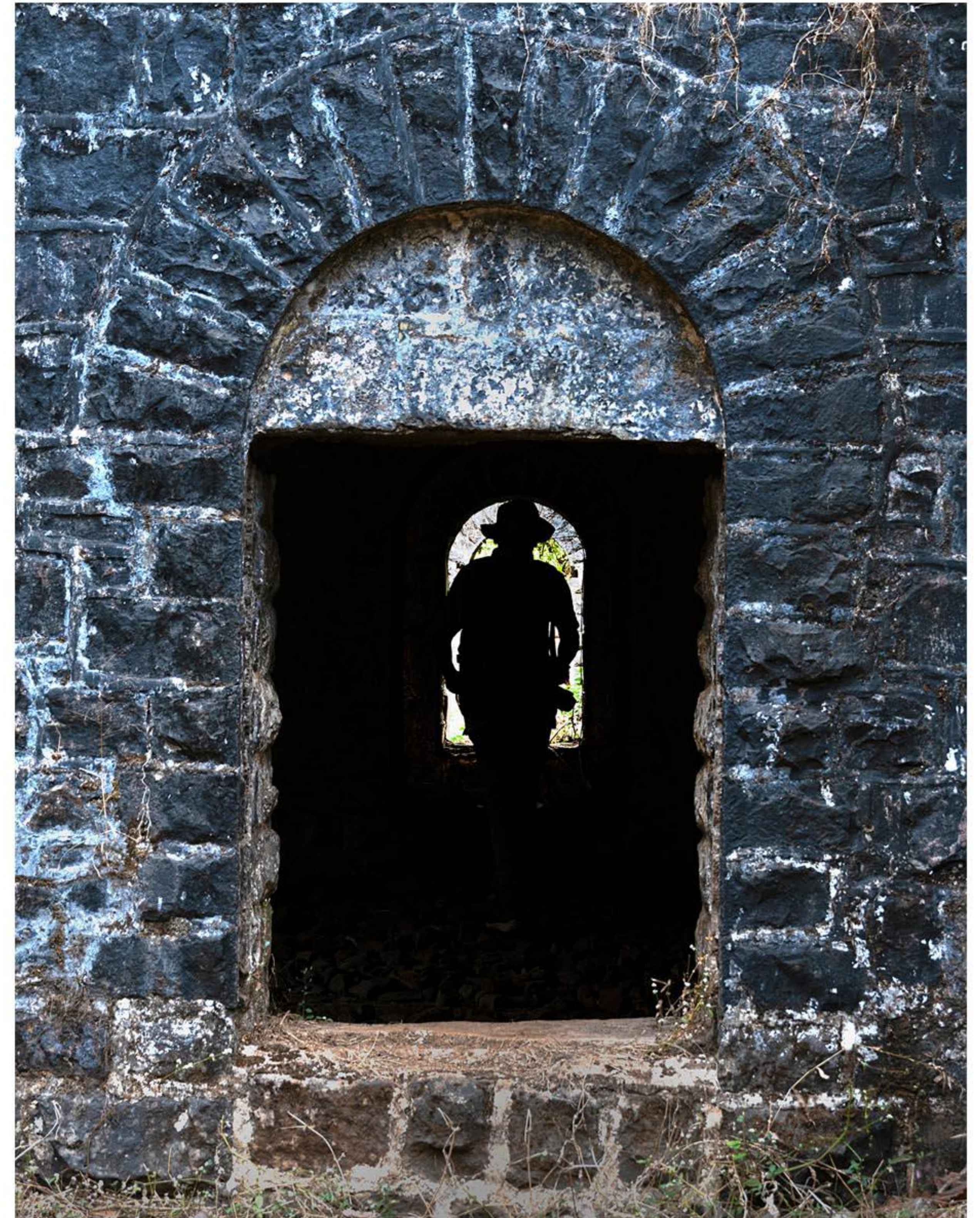


**COMMON CROW
ASHWINI K CHHABRA**

BEGINNERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES(COLOUR)



GANESHA
CHANDAN NAIK GAONKAR



SHADOW MAN
PRADIP PATIL



SUIT MAN
SWAPNA KORDE PHATAK



LOCKDOWN RELAX CELEBRATION
CHETAN DODWAD

BEGINNERS (MONOCHROME)



SETUP
HARISH CHANDORKAR

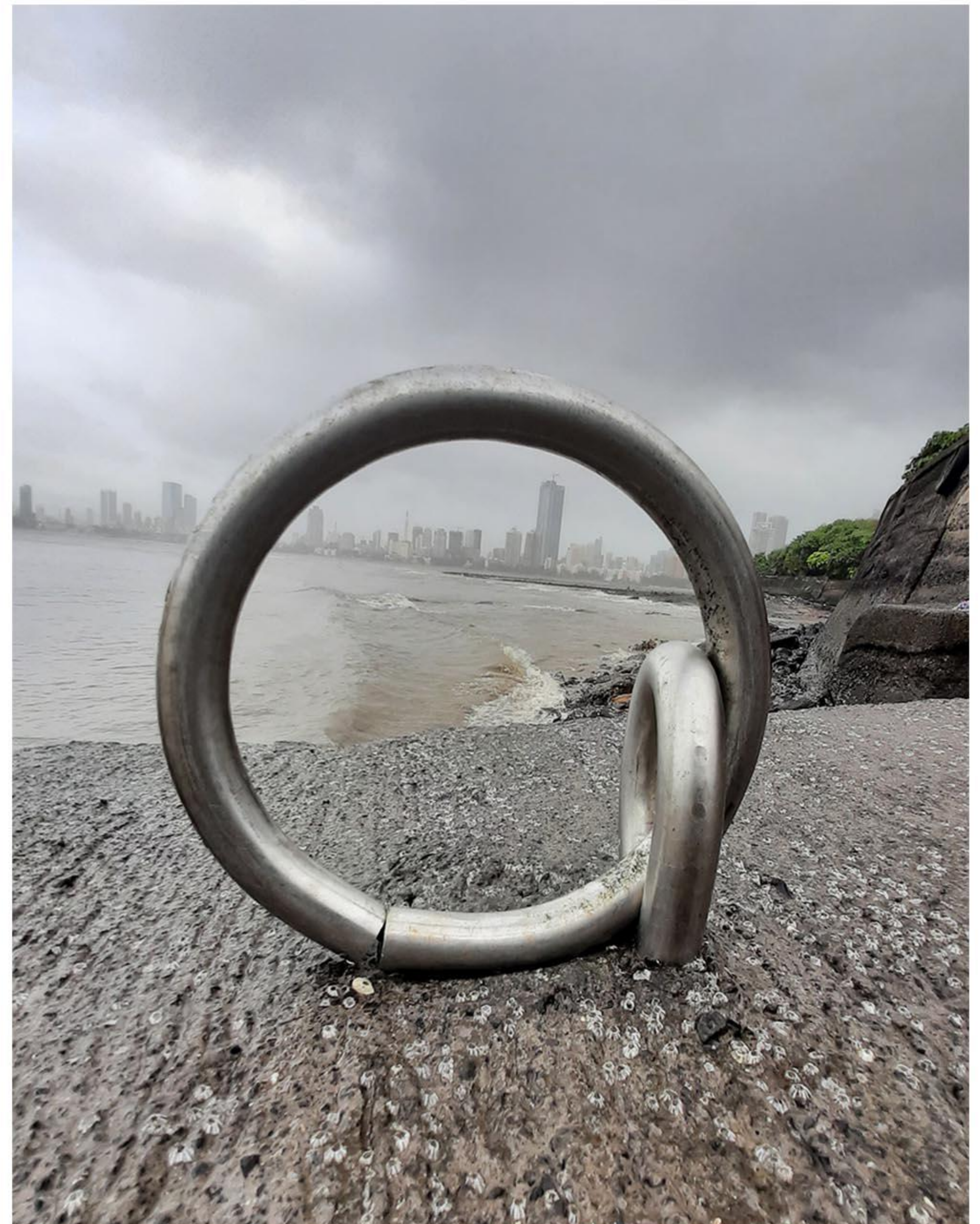


FOGGY MORNING KASS PLATEAU
ASHWINI K CHHABRA

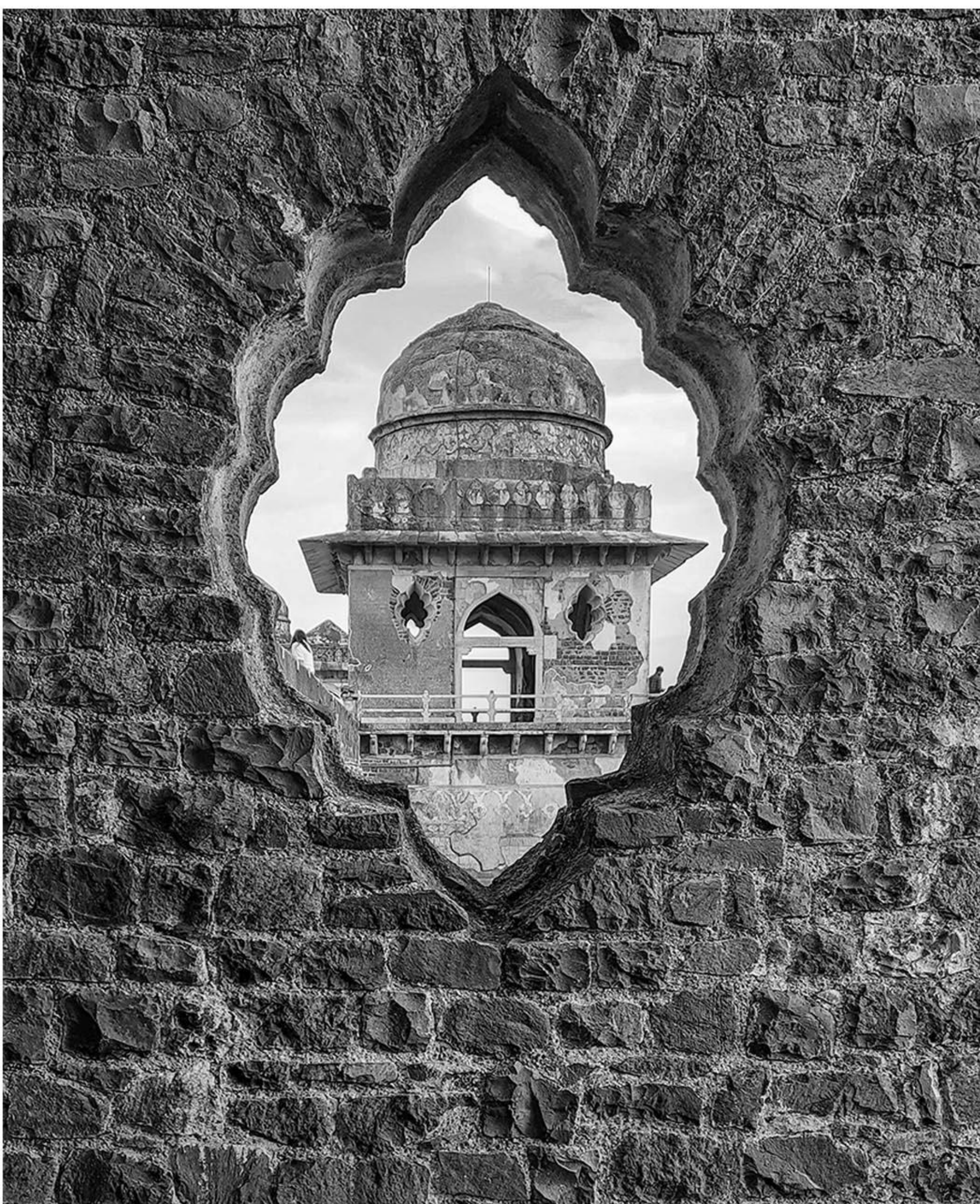
BEGINNERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (MONOCHROME)



**MADE FOR EACH OTHER
PRADIP PATIL**



**SKYLINE THROUGH RING
AJEETA CHAWAN**



**GOA FORT
VRINDA NADKARNI**

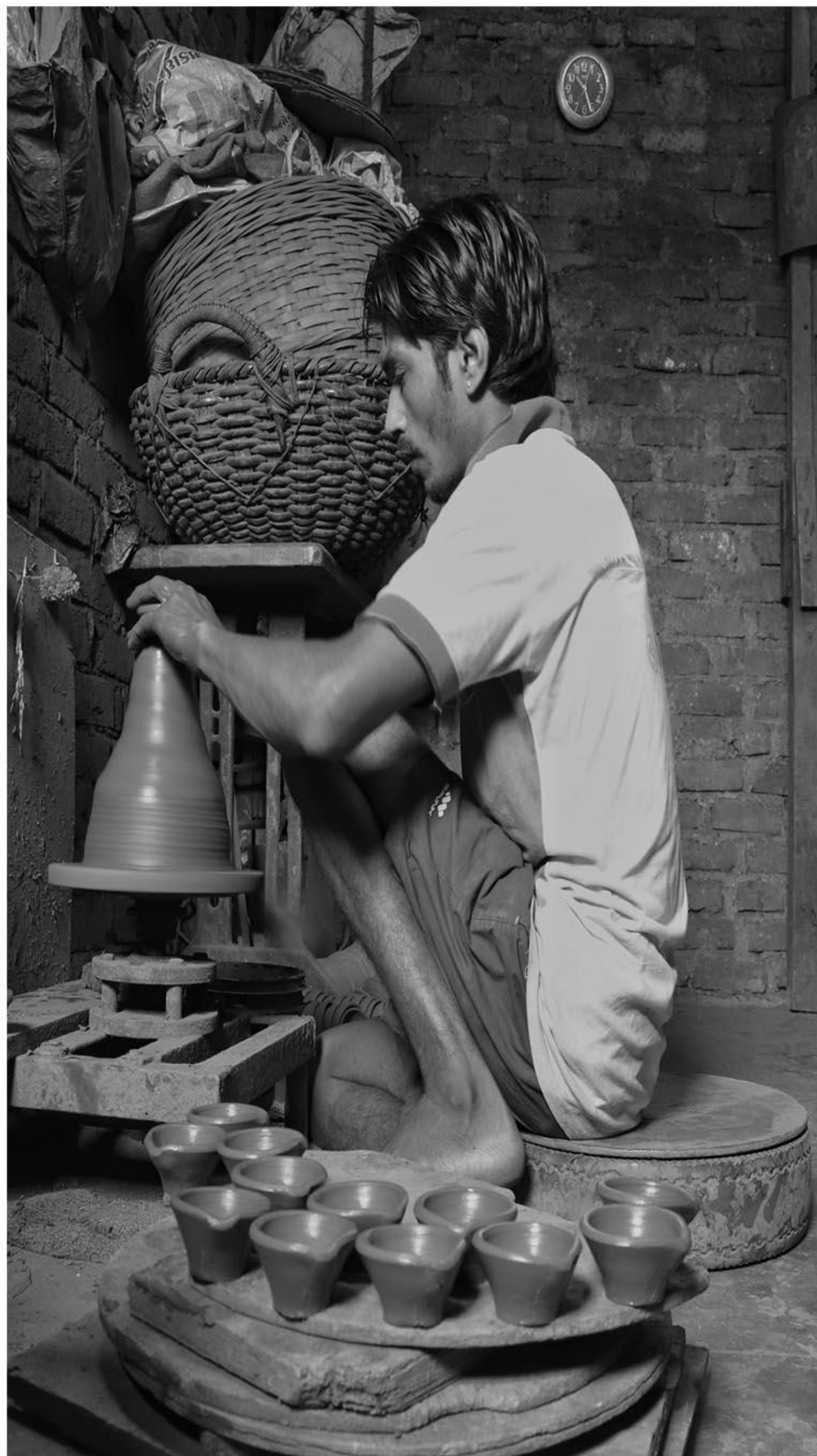


**LIFE PARTNERS
CHETAN DODWAD**

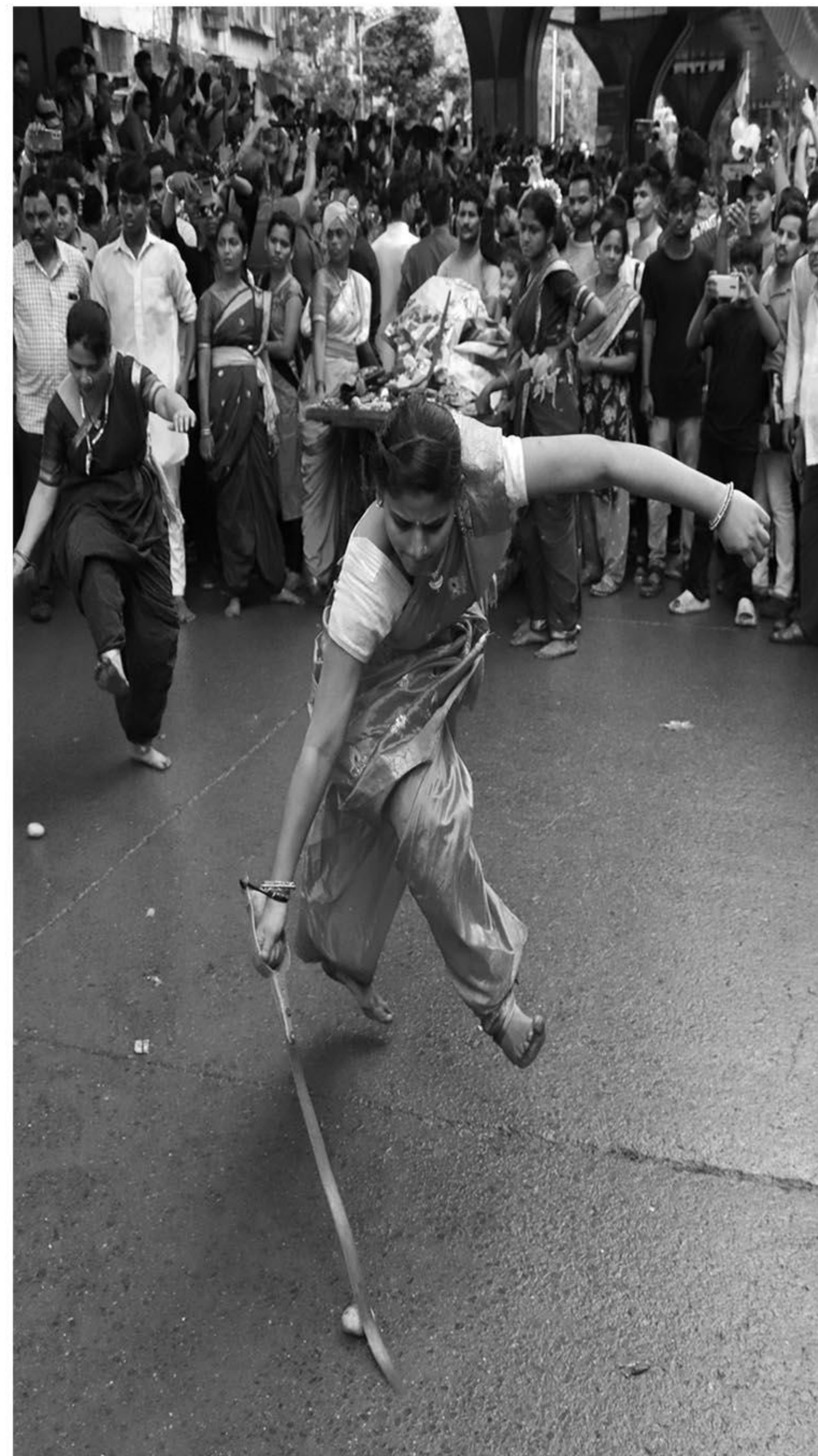
BEGINNERS ACCEPTED ENTRIES (MONOCHROME)



AKELA
VRINDA NADKARNI



CERAMIST
SANJAY SHETYE

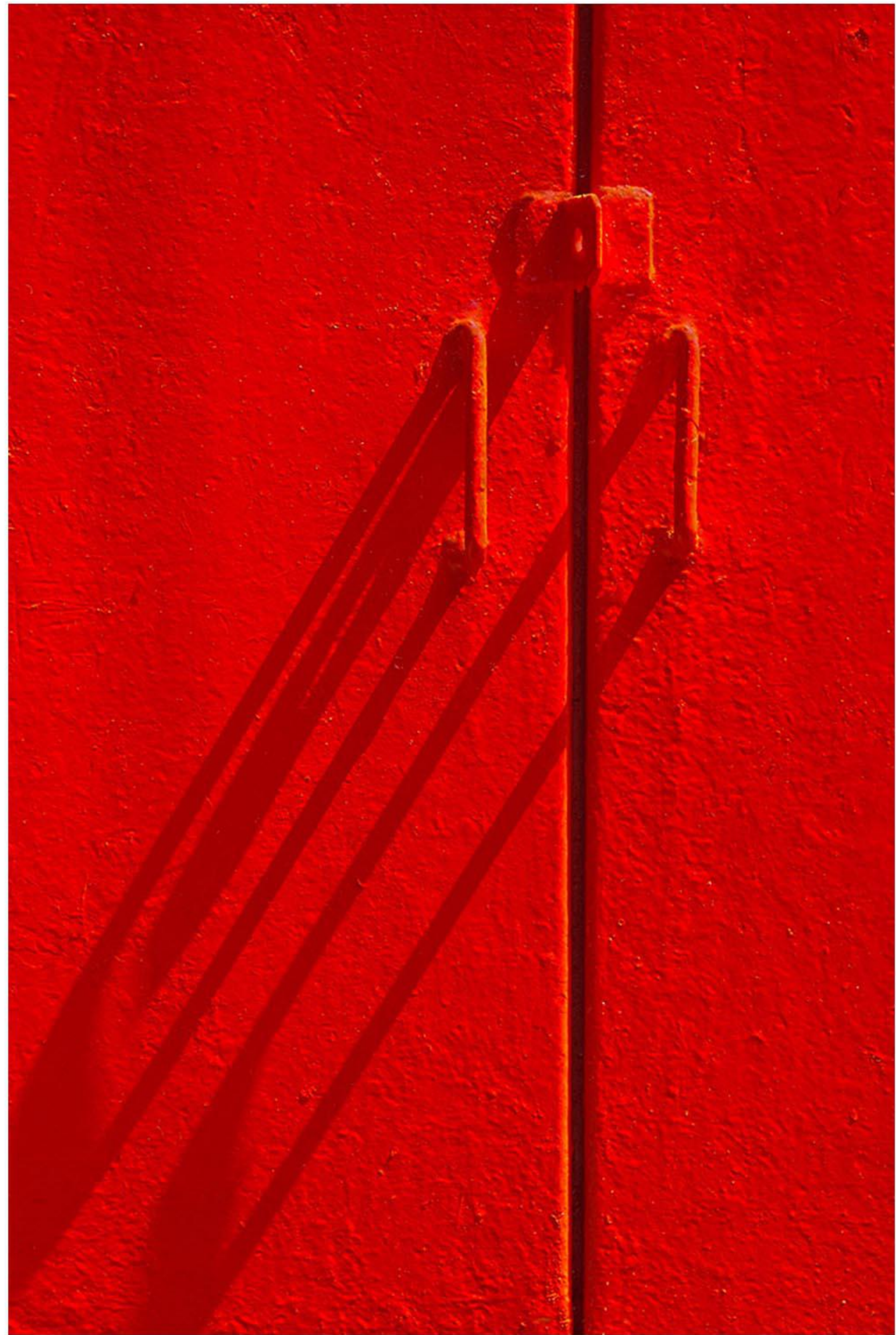


WOMEN WITH SWORD
SANJAY SHETYE

MEMBERS (THEMATIC)



**RED DOOR
PRASAD MANTRI**

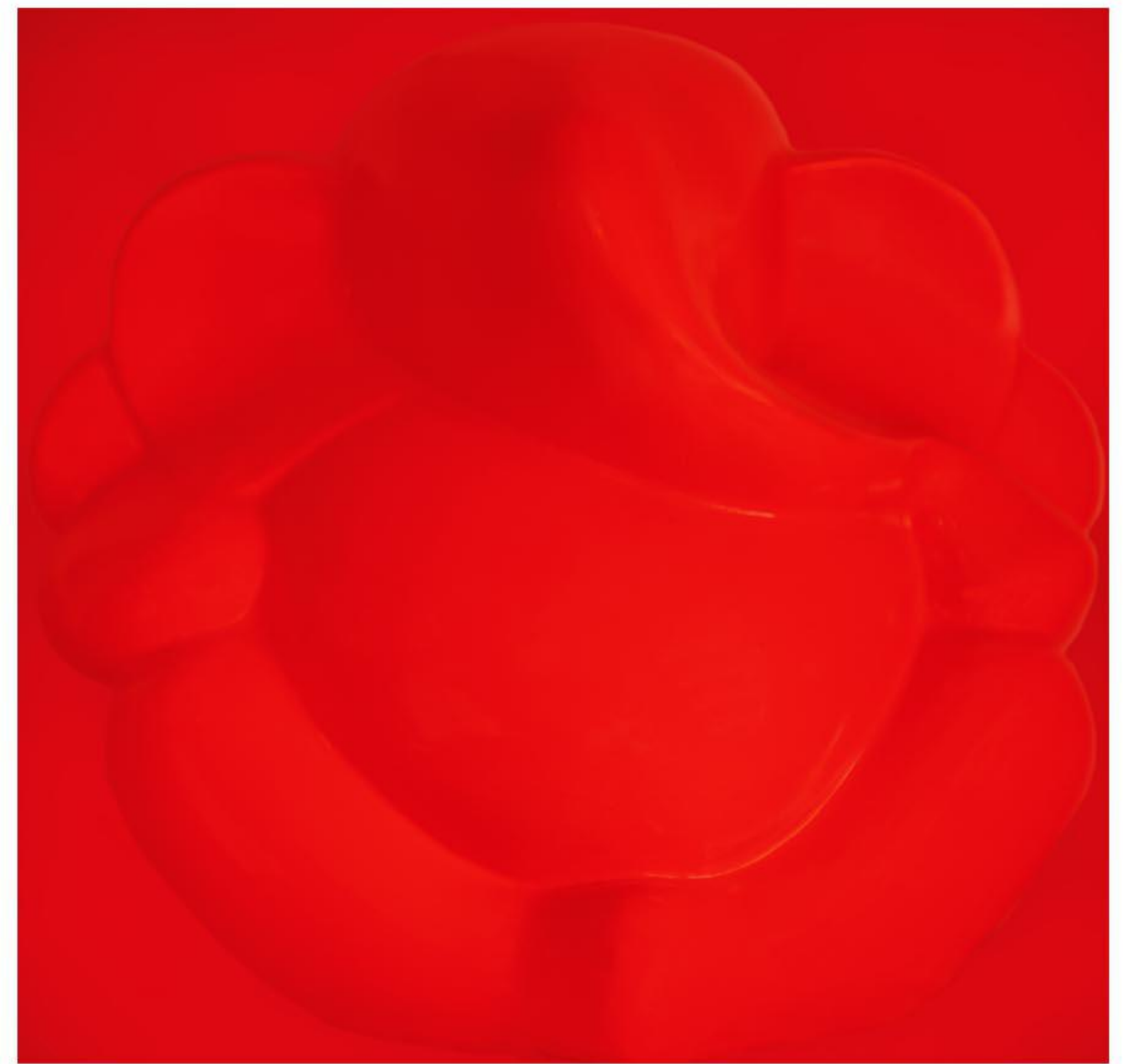


**BONNET
PRASAD MANTRI**

MEMBERS ACCEPTED ENTRYES (THEMATIC)



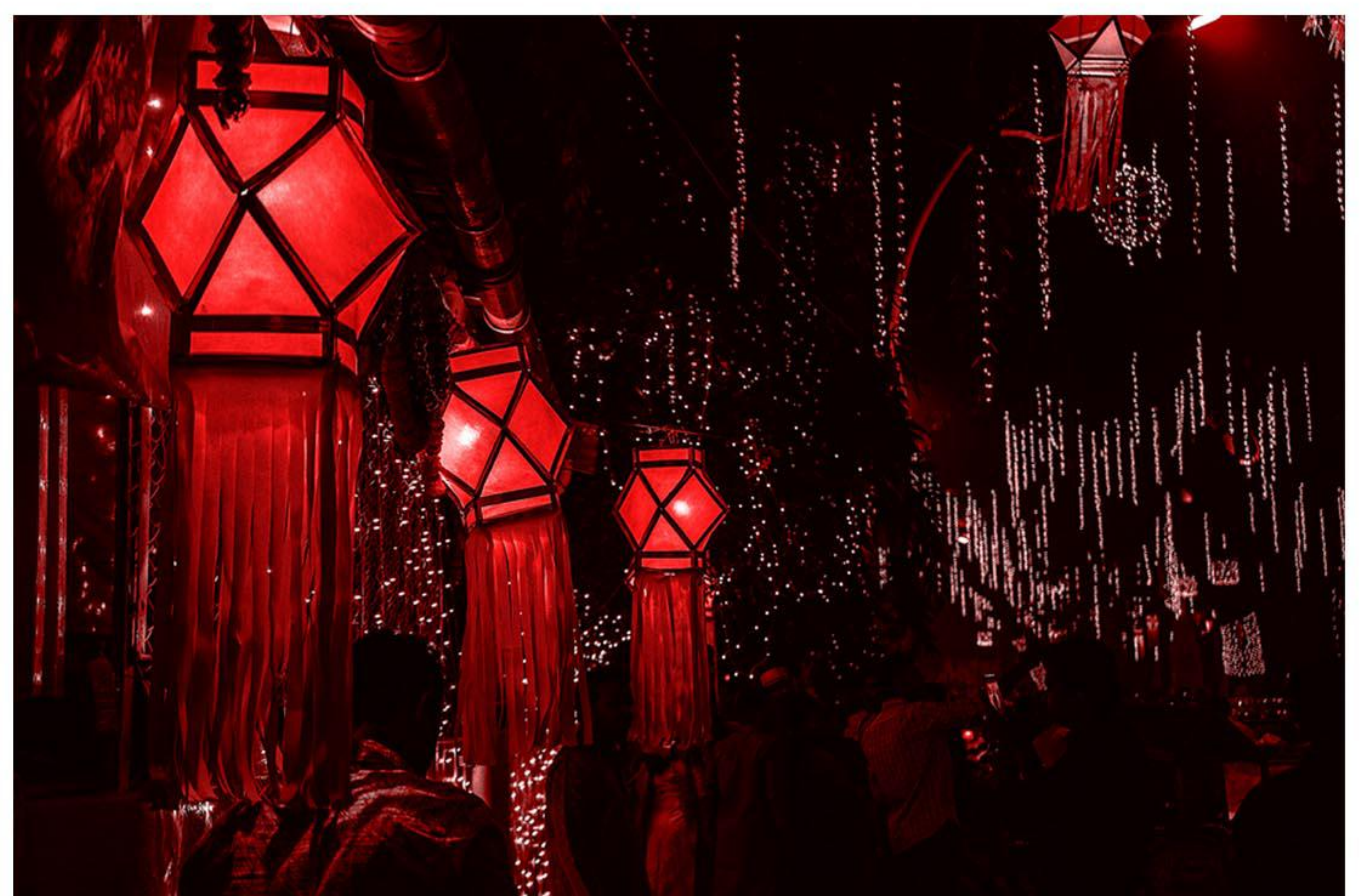
**VILLAGE ROUTE CORONA
NIKHIL PANCHAL**



**BAPPA
PRASAD MANTRI**



**APPLE RED
CHANDRASHEKHAR SALUNKHE**



**LANTERNS
CHANDRASHEKHAR SALUNKHE**

OUTING (At Maharashtra Nature Park)



INSECT MATING
CHANDRASHEKHAR SALUNKHE



GREEN LEAF
NIKHIL PANCHAL



OUTING (At Maharashtra Nature Park)



**GREEN
SHATRUGHAN SINGH**

ECCEPTED ENTRIES (OUTING)



**MY BED
SHATRUGHAN SINGH**



**FLY MATING
PRAVIN JADHAV**

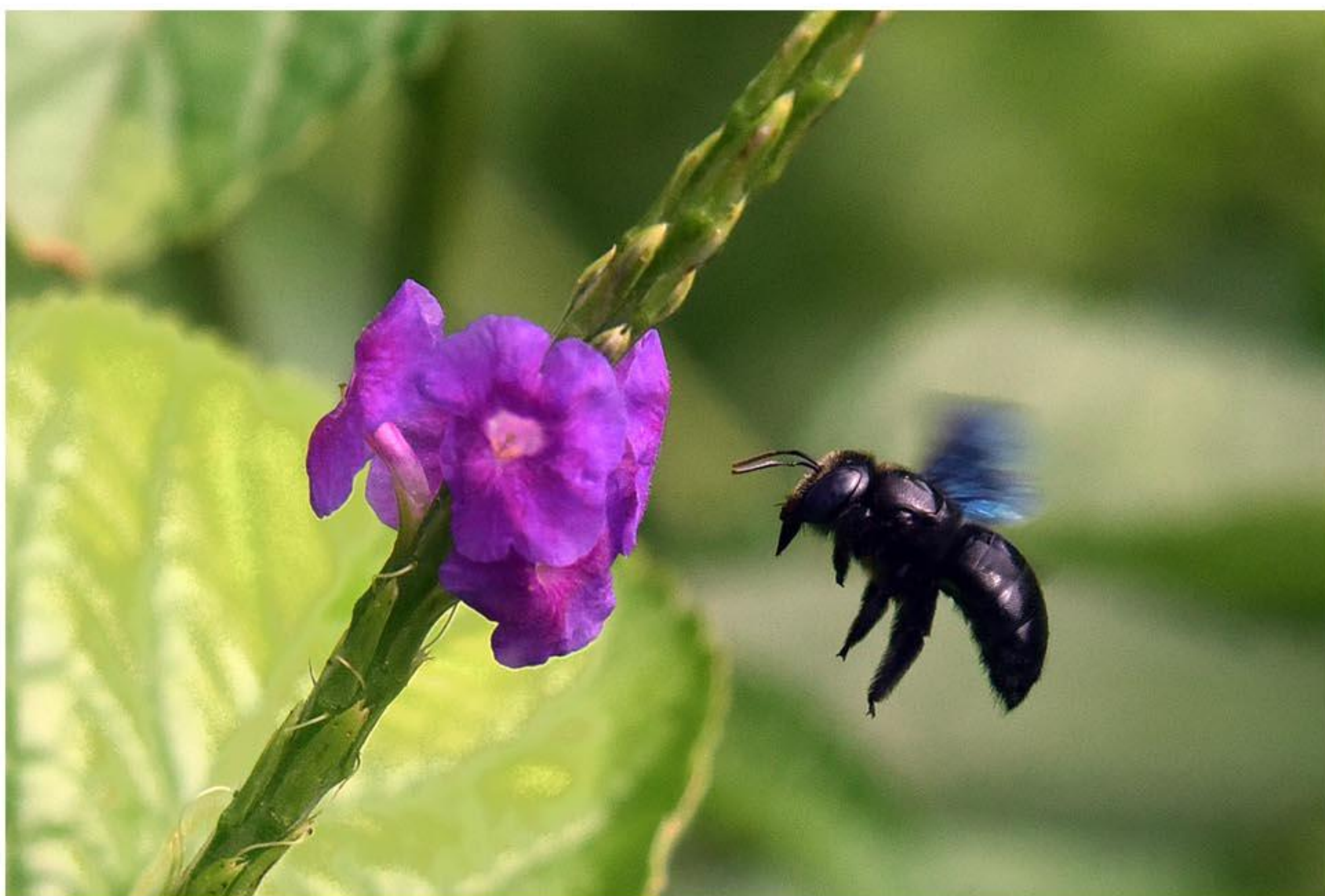
ACCEPTED ENTRIES (OUTING)



**MORNING BREAKFAST
MAHESH AMBARE**



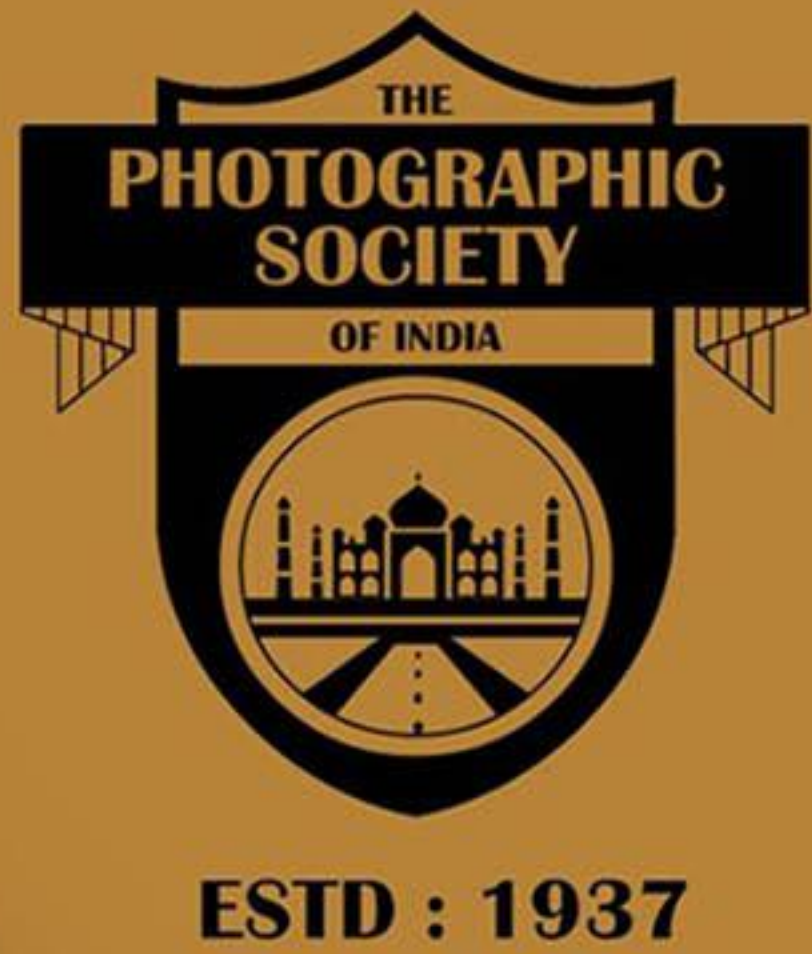
**BUTTERFLY
SHRIKANT AMBOKAR**



**BHOONGA
SHRIKANT AMBOKAR**



**MUSHROOMS
SHATRUGHAN SINGH**



PROMOTING THE ART OF PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE 1937

**THE PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY OF INDIA**

ORGANISES

**PHOTOGRAPHY
COMPETITION**

SPONSORED BY

Godox

**G A N E S H
V I S A R J A N 2 0 2 2**

RESULT

**FIRST
PRIZE**



**RAKESH RAWAL
(THANE)**

**SECOND
PRIZE**



**PARSHURAM RAWOOL
(MUMBAI)**

**THIRD
PRIZE**



**JACKIE PRAJAPATI
(GUJRAT)**

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DIGITAL MAGAZINE

KUMORTULI

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S HEAVEN!



Kumortuli, a wonderland in the midst of the city of creativity, called, Kolkata.

A small correction right in the beginning!
"Kumortuli", that's how colloquially the Bengalees prefer to call it, instead of "Kumartully", forget the road name given by the then Calcutta Municipal Corporation. It's Kumortuli!



Tucked at the northern part of Kolkata, right at the eastern bank of river Hooghly, lies, roughly, in a square kilometre of mazed, dingy, cramped area which houses thousands of artisans who, with their magical touch create the most magnificent idols of Gods & Goddesses out of clay, round the year for generations together for over a century and half.

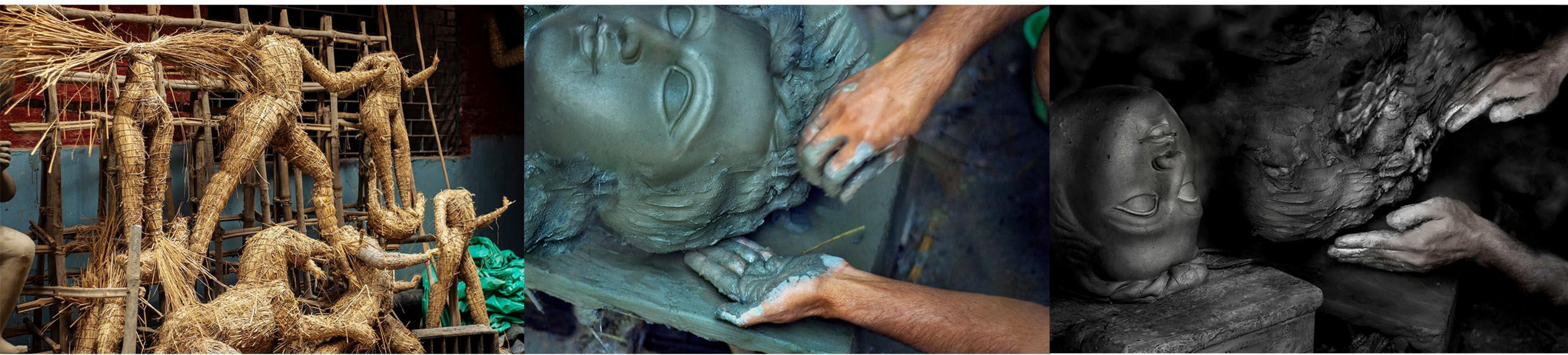
As of today, roughly, twelve thousand Durga idols are made in Kumortuli alone every year.

A quick flashback.

Centuries ago, even before Calcutta was born as a city, in the beginning, some rich Hindu zamindars started Durga or Kali puja in their family homes in different parts of Bengal. For that they employed artisans to make those idols. This custom gained momentum over the years and had spread all over Bengal. Slowly with the growing demands, the artisans moved to Kolkata for better prospects from places like, Dhaka, Nadia, Shantipur, Krishnanagar etc. Initially, they started making earthen pots, plates, diyas, cups, glasses and all puja related earthen items as they realised only idol making for this handful of rich zamindars couldn't foot the bill. The news of their artistic works had spread by then. In fact, in order to make Durga Puja popular amongst the common man, city's



Narrow lane at Kumartuli



first community Durga Puja started by the artisans of Kumortuli in the year 1931. Interestingly, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose became the first President of this Kumortuli Sarbajanin Durgosab. Over the years, the population of artisans have grown in multifold, as there are thousands of community Durga Puja take place in and around Kolkata.

Craze for Kumortuli: Photographers of all kinds swoop down to Kumortuli round the year from all over the world. It's an amazing place and it's quite understandable. For the first time, if you land up in this Bhulbhulaiyya, kind of a cramped space in the middle of the city, you may just wander about with sheer awe, joy, or confusion. Firstly, the raw smell of clay gets into your nostrils as you walk through those narrow lanes, then it settles down slowly and quietly as you start exploring the space, watching the artisans making idols. There are dozens of narrow lanes and even very narrower bylanes, then tiny pockets in between the old tenement, in fact, in every nook & corner you hit upon idols!

Round the year these artisans create idols of various Hindu deities as per their worshipping schedules. Alongside they make idols of national heroes, large frescoes, statues on fibre, for which they've to make a fine clay model as dice with their magical touch. The idols are made of clay mostly. If you go to Kumortuli in the month of June, you may think this is just a hype other than anything else. But if you visit just a week before Durga Puja you will be stunned to see the activities, the volumes and varieties of idols being made there with feverish activities. Let's say in June the same friendly





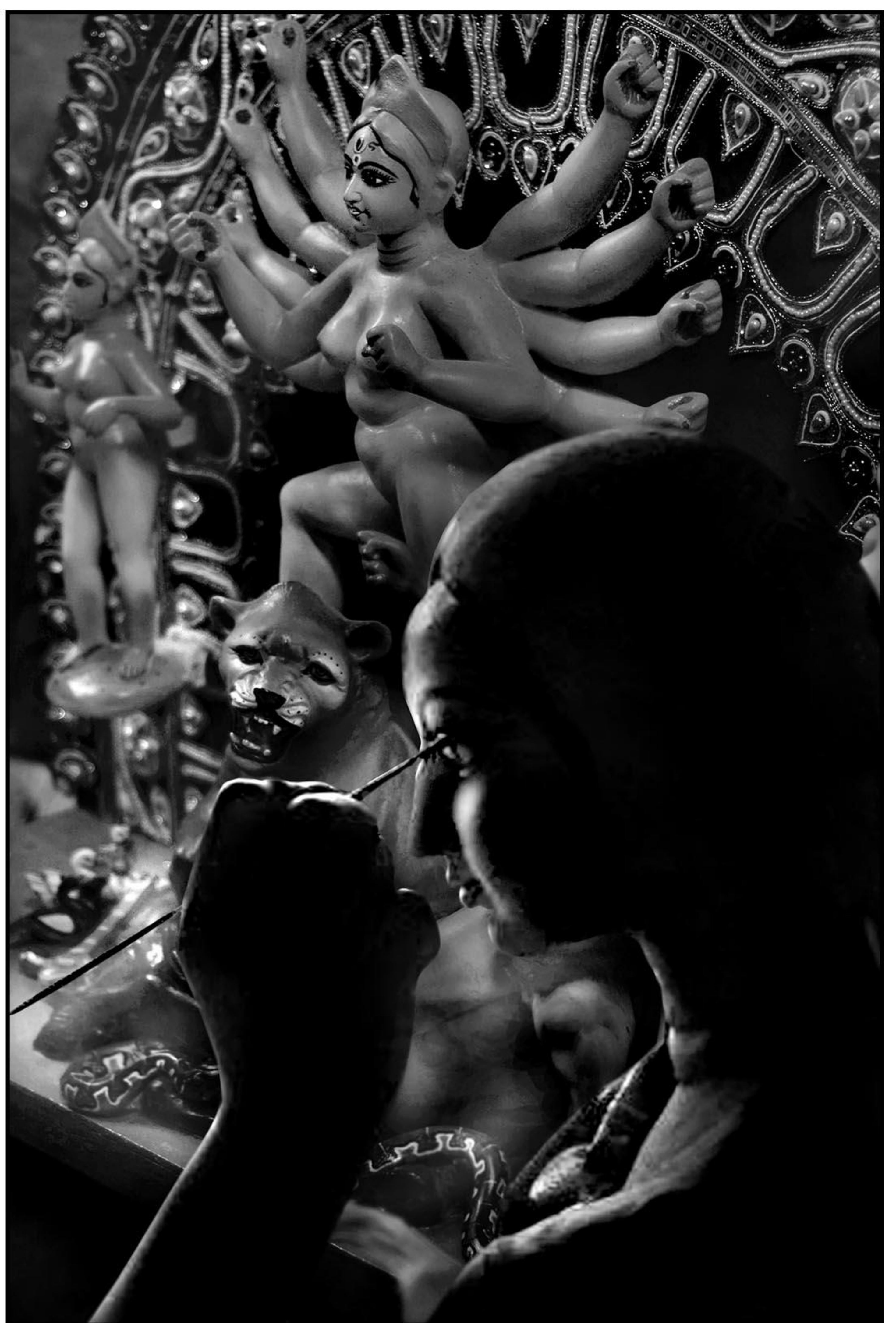
artisans who would jolly well love to socialise with you with a cup of tea, gossip about socio-political affairs of the country, won't have even time to greet you, or entertain even a small query from you or extending a proper "Hello"! As they chase the deadline, they stay up all nights to finish their assignments on time as per the clients' schedules. In between, as the D-Day approaches, their biggest worry, nowadays, besides prolonged rains, are the troops of photographers armed with their dsrls, smartphones and bringing their friends and girlfriends along to make belief stories related to Durga for social media. It's pretty annoying at times.

This time we heard from a very senior artiste that at the wee hours of night when they just took a short break for a couple of hours, the young guys sneaked into the workshop to record social media stories, read circus, by posing with the idols, like hugging the lion or discrediting the Asura. As a result, the idols were damaged! These naive amateurs 'photographers' create the problems for the serious art loving photographers.



Next evening the artiste locked his workshop up to prevent it from any further damage. The photographers should adhere a strict discipline by not disturbing the artisans. Besides, as it is Kolkata is the heaven for visual treats, in every step you would have emotive images of this huge city. But during Durga Puja, Kali Puja or Saraswati Puja, Kumortuli turns on in high voltage activities. Once the artisans complete the idols there comes the parties to carry the idols to various respective pandals in the city and beyond, as far as the early seventies the idols are sent to overseas Bengalees living in UK, USA, Australia, Germany, Canada ... wherever the Bengalees have settled down. Those idols are made air cargo friendly and sent much early than the ones which are mainly made for Bengal. When those big idols are carted by the seasonal porters in a group, while pulling ropes with the help of bamboos and ropes through the narrow lanes, makes a great feeling. It's an amazing art of logistics! Beside the emotional chanting, kind of sloganeering, "Jai Jai Durga Maai Ki, Jai" the whole atmosphere brings the feeling as if the real Durga is coming home. The situation becomes electric!

Interestingly, these magnificent idols are created from just clay and straw on bamboo structures. The artisans know, despite their months long hard labour, the idols would finally be immersed in to a river or pond soon after the puja is done.





They have good reasons not to feel too bad, because, Maa will come back next year again. With that hope, the artisans wait for her homecoming... that's why emotionally during the immersion the crowd chants, "Asche Bachorer, Abar Hobe", means it'll happen next year again.

The good thing which has happened in last 20 years or so, is the Kolkata Municipal Corporation has taken an extra initiative to save Ganga and other water bodies from water pollution, so that the idols cannot be immersed without their supervision. Sadly, people still immerse idols and throw all other articles like flowers, puja related materials into the water.

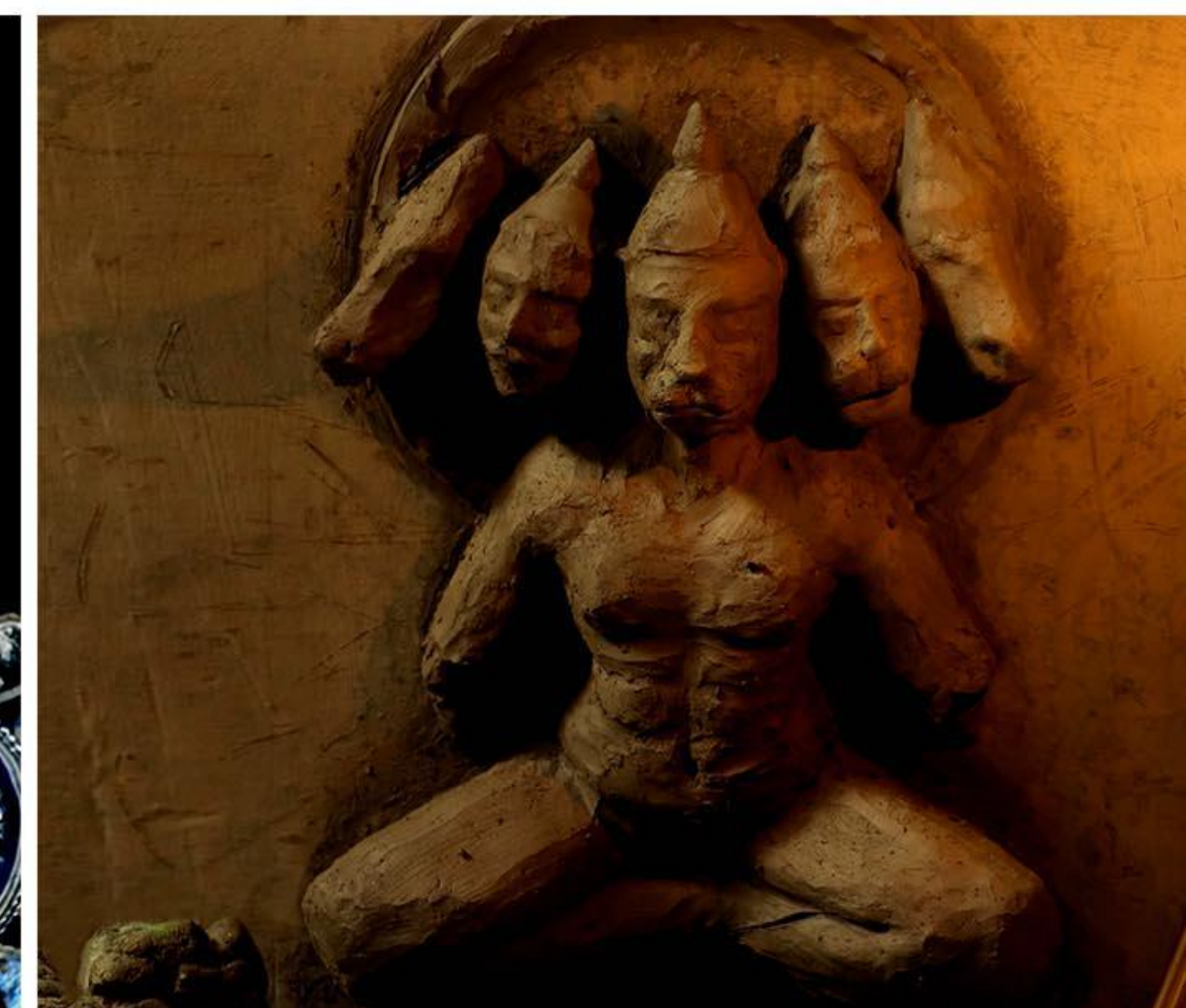
In this case, emotion loses out to scientific logic. That's truly frustrating, indeed.

However, the mesmeric experience of photographing so many idols being made in such a challenging situation, like those cramped & dingy spaces, for the future generations, would be an experience of a lifetime for any photographer!

(Article by -Palashranjan Bhoumik)
Senior Photojournalist

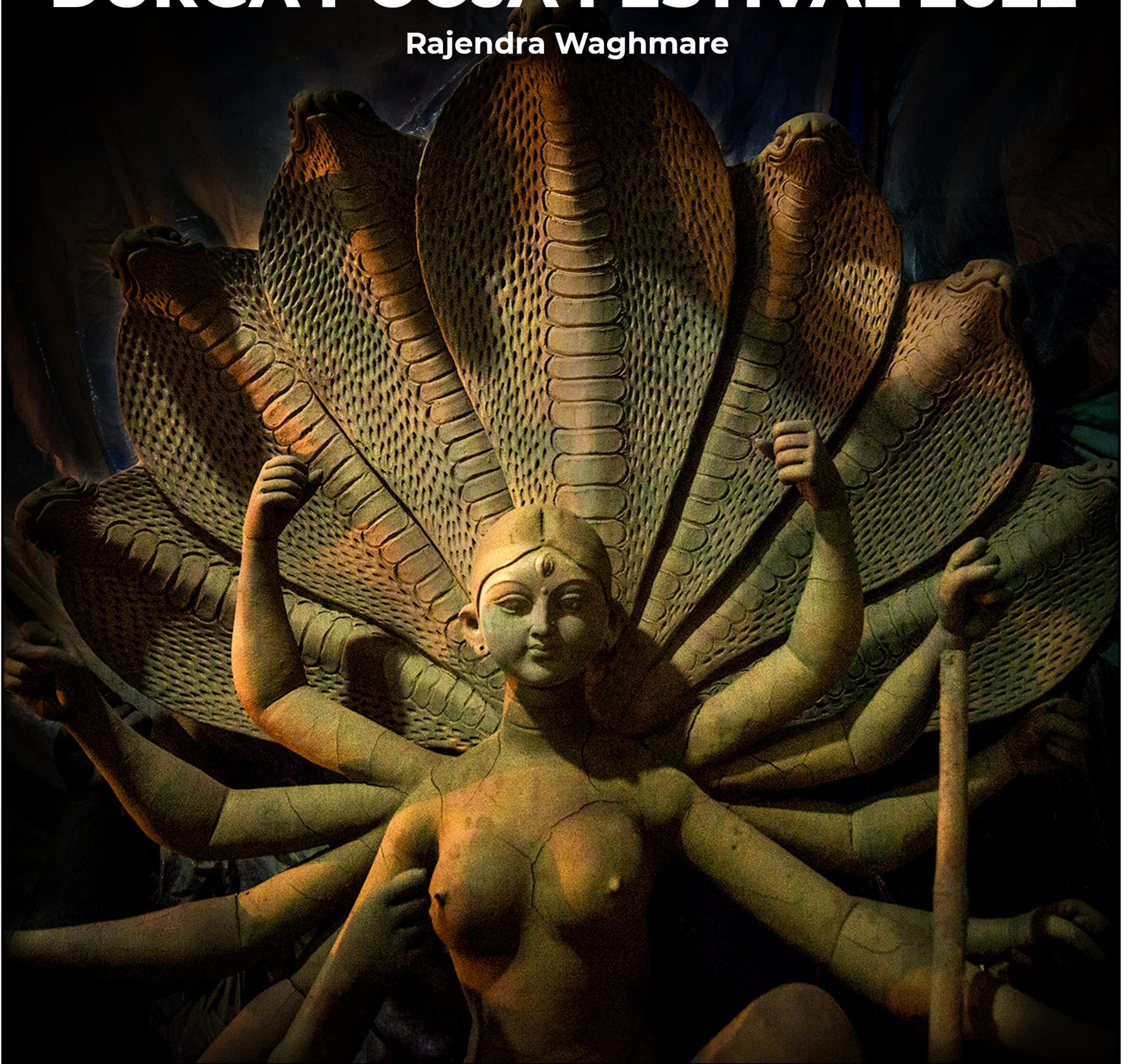


Photos by
Shekhar Roy



DURGA POOJA FESTIVAL 2022

Rajendra Waghmare



These are some of the images I have taken at Kolkata during this year's Durga Pooja Festival. I have tried to capture various aspects of the festival.



Snow Photography Tour (HP)

Fri 17th to Sat 25th Feb 2023

TOUR COST

FIRST 1 TO 8 MEMBERS RS 18,000

9 TO 20 MEMBERS RS 20,000



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WILDLIFE PHOTO TOUR

2N/3D, 4 X 4 Safari, Ex - Nagpur

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to 01/05/2023

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- 06/05/2023 to 08/05/2023

Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary- 12/05/2023
to 14/05/2023

Pench National park - 19/05/2023 to
21/05/2023

Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuary- 26/05/2023
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All Meals, Stay, Pick and drop from Nagpur
One camera Fee, Forest Fees Incl.

Tour Cost - Rs.19000/- per tour



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