

CRITICS' PICKS

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New Delhi

Richard Bartholomew

PHOTOINK

#1 MGF Hyundai Building Ground Floor, Faiz Road, Jhandewalan
January 17–February 28

The New Delhi that a teenage Burmese refugee named Richard Bartholomew arrived at in the 1940s was a city in flux: its population transformed by the traumatic British partitioning of India and Pakistan, its viceregal palace and colonial courtrooms turned over to men who had spent decades in prison for resisting the authority they embodied, its construction sites emblematic of a young nation in the throes of an aggressive program of modernization. Bartholomew, who died in 1985, spent the rest of his life in the city—he met and married a young refugee displaced by partition, raised a family, and established himself as a key figure in the development of Indian modernism. Best known as an art critic with close ties to both the Bombay Progressive Artists Group and the lesser-known Delhi Shilpi Chakra, Bartholomew privately produced an archive of highly personal photography documenting the mundane intimacies of his family at home and abroad, as well as the artists and intellectuals with whom his name is linked: M. F. Husain, Ram Kumar, Francis Newton Souza, and other giants of Indian postwar painting. The images on display here, selected with help from his son the photographer Pablo Bartholomew, portray a powerful sense of the quiet, cosmopolitan bohemianism of their author and his circle. Never intended for exhibition, they seem haunted by the ghost of the photographer, standing there behind the lens, using his camera to try to stitch together a world where parochial tradition has lost its grip; one where making, reading, and talking about art are paramount and inseparable.

— Alexander Keefe



Richard Bartholomew, *M. F. Husain, Old Delhi*, 1985, gelatin silver print, 9 1/2 x 9 1/2".

BLUM & POE

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