



FOLLOWING THE BOX

An Artistic Exploration of an Archive of Anonymous Photographs from India

Alan Teller and Jerri Zbiral
followingthebox@gmail.com

Following the Box is an art exhibit inspired by a collection of found photographs taken in India by an unknown U.S. serviceman towards the end of WWII. The exhibit features:

- 30 vintage 4x5" photographs, a selection from the 127 images in the collection.
- The creative work of 12 contemporary artists—2 American and 10 Indian—inspired by the old photos. Artistic disciplines include painting, photography, film, mixed-media, installation, graphic arts, graphic novel, book art and folk art.
- A documentary film that would be screened at selected times during the exhibition.
- A series of public lectures on the strong historical and cultural relationship between India and the United States; on the implications of a cross-cultural look at historical imagery; on the stories that can emerge from exploring family album photos; on the impact that digital technology will have on the future's visual understanding of the past.
- Workshops with several of the participating Indian artists, all experienced teachers.

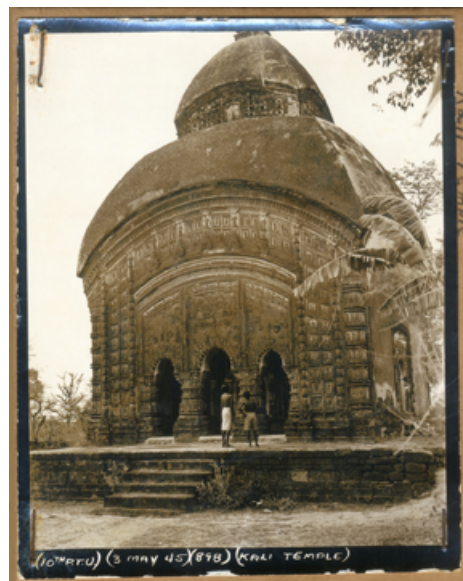
This 1,700-2,500 sq. ft. exhibit was funded initially through a Fulbright-Nehru award and subsequent U.S. State Department grants. It has been successfully shown at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture in Kolkata (2015); at the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts in Delhi (2016); at the Loyola University Museum of Art in Chicago (2018); at the University of Southern California's Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena (2019) and at the Lilley Art Museum at the University of Nevada in Reno (2022). The project's website includes all found images; the artists' work; curators' statements; historical context; links to extensive press coverage and more: <http://followingthebox.com>. You may see an overview of the LUMA installation shown on PBS here: <https://bit.ly/2Njgap3>. Detailed space requirements available on request.

Following the Box employed a unique collaborative approach that involves the curators as working artists—participant conduits—whose artistic efforts are shown alongside that of their Indian colleagues, a self-reflective exploration of historic images using a cross-cultural perspective. Each artist was given digital and/or print copies of the photographs and asked to incorporate the images directly into their work; deconstruct them; or simply use the images as a catalyst for their imagination.

Photographs are both windows to another time and place and mirrors of ourselves and the diverse worlds in which we live. The curators' goal is to explore different methods of understanding the images, opening a dialogue about the ways in which American and Indian perspectives and memories might vary. At a time when different interpretations are often feared, this exhibit rejoices in those differences.

Following the Box is a visual conversation between Americans and Indians across space, time and culture, a mystery tale of old photographs and a celebration of new artistic interpretations.

SELECTION OF HISTORICAL IMAGES: See <http://followingthebox.com> for the full set.



PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Aditya Basak, painting

Alakananda Nag, installation

Alan Teller, multi-media installation

Amritah Sen, book art, illustration

Chhatrapati Dutta, mixed media, original wall paintings

Jerri Zbiral, photographically based mixed media

Mamata Basak, digitally collaged scrolls, drawings

Prabir Purkayastha, photography

Sanjeet Chowdhury, film, photography

Sarbajit Sen, graphic novel

Sunandini Banerjee, digital graphic art illustration

Swarna Chitrakar, traditional patua folk art scrolls

Exhibit Installations

Birla Academy, Kolkata



Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, Delhi





SELECTED COMMENTS BY VISITORS TO THE EXHIBIT

Magnificent! Totally fascinating bringing history to life and sharing the creative vision of India and America.
 - Helen LaFave, U.S. Consul General, Kolkata

Stunning, original, brimming with human feeling. What a marvelous collaboration! One of the most creative projects I've ever seen.

This exhibit is one of the MOST alive, present, engaging that I have seen in a long long time, if ever!

PRESS EXAMPLES

