

***À l'occasion de l'Exposition à la Bangal Gallery of Fine Arts - Dhâkâ Bangladesh  
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*Apni kisher chobi tolen ?* Just what is it that you're taking a picture of? It's a question a photographer is commonly asked. It happens particularly when a lens is pointed at nothing in particular. At least nothing that one considers significant, or photographically meaningful. That a photographer might find joy in capturing the fleeting, the ephemeral and the insignificant is difficult enough to explain. When one photographs 'something' that does not necessarily have a material presence, or is visible in some tangible form, then explaining it becomes more difficult still. I am not even getting into the 'why are you doing it' syndrome. What you are doing, is difficult enough to get across. This is a dilemma in a profession where one is seen as a communicator. Reaching out to an audience is part of what a photographer is generally meant to be doing. In a medium known as the most ubiquitous art form, which prides itself in being the most accessible to the person in the street, part of the exercise is in people being able to 'get it'.

Jean-Philippe PERNOT however, rejects the notion of the photographic truthsayer. Neither does he attempt to search for the decisive moment. It is ambiguity that he thrives in, the most tangible part of his work being the metaphor. Even while depicting the female nude, he stays away from a classical representation of beauty, rejecting form for energy. Playing with space, bending time. His finished frame is always work in progress. Is his work beautiful? It is the wrong question to be asking. For in this work, one never arrives. These are still images depicting perpetual motion. Slices of time layered as an onion. A silent scream, tethered down anger. A violence that is sometimes quiet, and always disconcerting. For it is not the 'what' of the photograph but the 'why' that leaps out of every frame. A muffled scream that struggles to free itself from its binds. A coiled rage that seeks neither solace nor release, staying forever in a state of flux.

PERNOT walks at the precipice between the still image and cinematic motion, blurring the edges, blending one with the other. His photographs may be painted with light, but the hues in his canvas are from a palette of raw emotions. It is not the content of his frame that moves me, but what his images aspire to that fire my imagination.

***Shahidul Alam***

## À propos de Shahidul Alam

“As a journalist, your only space is at the edge. You have to be constantly feeling the heat. Go back one more step, and you may cease to be effective. There are no safe options, and no prizes for popularity and if you’re not making certain people uncomfortable by your presence, you are probably doing something wrong. The struggle for change is a never-ending process that requires you to be constantly alert, and forever swimming against the current. It is a lonely, stressful, tiring and immensely gratifying journey.

I am a Bangladeshi photographer, writer and activist with a special interest in education, new media and ICT. I was a research tutor at London University where I obtained a PhD in organic chemistry before taking up photography as a profession. I am a former president of the Bangladesh Photographic Society and set up the award winning Drik Picture Library. I also set up the Bangladesh Photographic Institute and Pathshala, the South Asian Institute of Photography and the DrikNews photo agency. I am the director of Chobi Mela the festival of photography in Asia. My work has been shown in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts, the Royal Albert Hall in London, Le centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the National Art Gallery in Kuala Lumpur. I have chaired the World Press Photo international jury. I am an honorary fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, a board member of the National Geographic Society and the Eugene Smith Foundation. I am currently visiting professor of photography at the University of Sunderland. In 2007 I lectured at Harvard, UCLA and Stanford universities in the USA, Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines and Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique and was one of the Masters in the Joop Swart Masterclass organised by World Press Photo. In 2007, I also had two books published, “Nature’s Fury” on the earthquake in Kashmir and “Portraits of Commitment” a book of portraits of leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Asia. I have been a guest curator for the National Art Gallery in Malaysia and the Whitechapel Gallery in London. In 2009 I had the rare privilege of being given exclusive access to photograph Nelson Mandela. I am currently setting up a media academy in Bangladesh

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