



*Green Edition*  
**RETRO KOLKATA**

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Cover photo courtesy : **Jayanta Guha**



“

*We don't inherit the  
earth from our ancestors,  
we borrow it from our  
children.*







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EDITION

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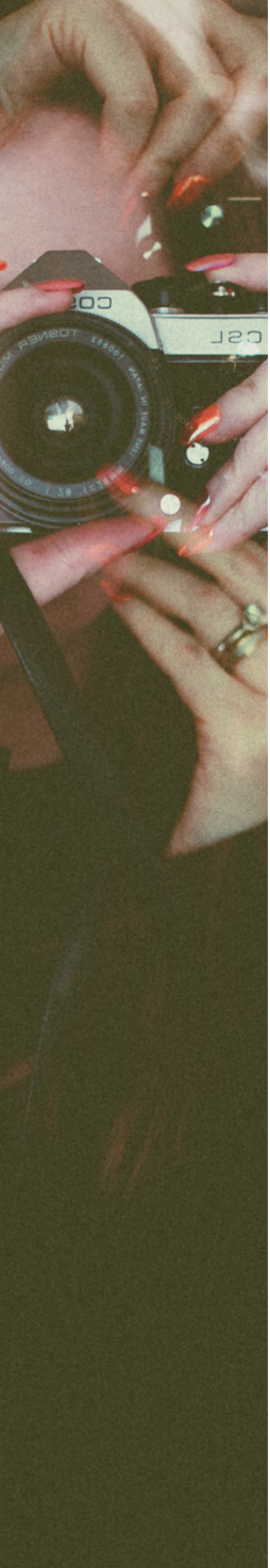
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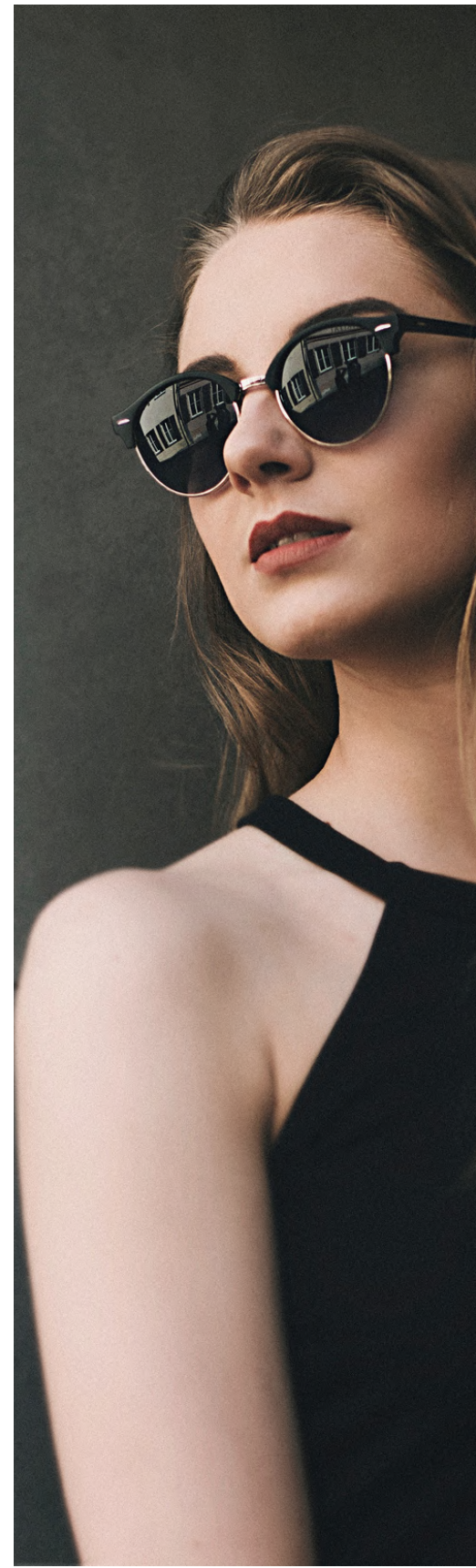
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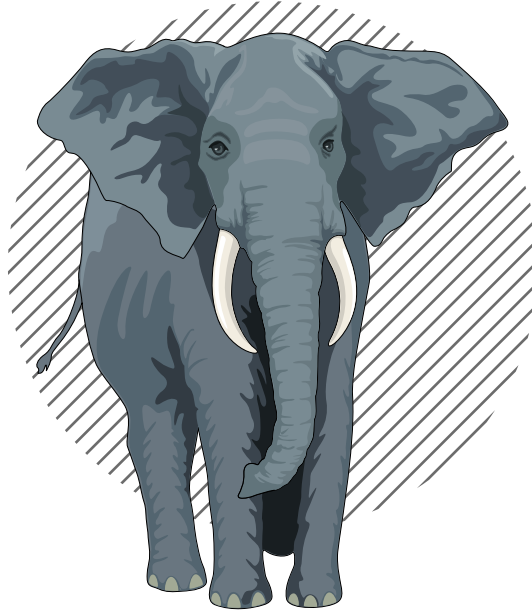
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## Importance of Wildlife Conservation

As humans continue to encroach on natural habitats, it is more important than ever to be aware of the importance of wildlife conservation. Wildlife provides many benefits to humans, including food, Recreation, aesthetic value, and potential medicinal use. In recent years, however, human activity has taken a toll on wildlife populations around the world. Here are four reasons why wildlife conservation is important.

### **Maintaining ecosystem health**

Wildlife plays an important role in maintaining ecosystem health. For example, predators help to keep populations of their prey in check, preventing overgrazing that can lead to problems such as soil erosion. When one species declines sharply in numbers, it can have a domino effect on other species in the ecosystem. This is just one reason why it's so important to maintain biodiversity.

### **Supporting human livelihoods**

Wildlife also supports human livelihoods in a number of ways. For example, fish provide a source of food and income for millions of people around the world. In addition, ecotourism—tourism that focuses on experiencing natural areas—is a growing industry that relies heavily on healthy wildlife populations.

### **Enhancing quality of life**

Beyond supporting our physical needs, wildlife

also enhances our quality of life in other ways. For example, spending time outdoors in natural areas has been shown to have positive effects on mental health, and interacting with animals has been shown to reduce stress levels. In addition, many people find beauty in nature and enjoy observing wildlife for its own sake.

### **Conserving future generations**

Finally, it's important to conserve wildlife for future generations. We have a responsibility to preserve the planet and its resources for those who come after us. By taking steps to protect endangered species and natural habitats now, we can help ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits that wildlife provides.

As humans continue to have a greater impact on the planet, it is more important than ever to be aware of the importance of conservation efforts aimed at protecting wildlife populations and their habitats. Wildlife provides many benefits to humans, including food, recreation, aesthetic value, and potential medicinal use. In recent years, however, human activity has taken a toll on wildlife populations around the world. Conservation efforts are important for a number of reasons, including maintaining ecosystem health, supporting human livelihoods, enhancing quality of life ,and conserving future generations .By taking steps to protect endangered species and natural habitats now ,we can help ensure that future generations will be able benefit from them .



# MUSIC





# MEET TETSEO SISTERS

## Naga Folk Music Icon

Image © Tetseo Sisters

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview. Congratulations on completing over 28 years of musical journey. How does it feel to have been active for so long?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Thank you very much. It just feels like yesterday we were doing our first few shows. The journey has been wildly enriching and one with many learning curves. We have also seen through stormy weather and many challenges which made us relearn and rethink. For a career which has been driven by spontaneous and serendipitous growth and opportunities, we have worked hard to be realistic, relevant and relatable. We continue to learn and grow. There is still much ground to cover and plenty of milestones to look forward to.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tetseo Sisters started their journey in 1994. Can you recall the

moment of your debut show as a group? Has anything surprised you about it all so far?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Being on stage is a pure joy and thrill and it remains so today. From the adrenaline rush to the calm assurance of holding your audience captive and enjoying the music and your art! It is a great new high everytime especially when your audience respond and sing along with you. It is always surprising when the audience request your songs - especially the ones you didn't realise they were so familiar with.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have devoted your life to the art &

**Tetseo Sisters** are a quartet of sisters from Nagaland, India. They are devoted to the art and tradition of the Naga folk music and have been performing on stage since they were children. The Tetseo Sisters: Mütsevelü (Mercy), Azine (Azi), Kuvelü (Kuku) and Alüne (Lulu) grew up in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland. In 2012, they received the Trail Blazer Award at the 4th Nagaland Music Awards by Native Trax, along with Alogo Naga. In early 2014, they received the Eastern Panorama's Achievers Award for excellence in Music at Shillong. They have won the many prestigious awards including Trail Blazer Award, MTS Discover title, Governor's Award for Excellence in Music, Achievement Award for their contribution to Music in Nagaland. In 2019, Tetseo Sisters presented their music and storytelling art at the first ever Hornbill Festival Box Office Show. They have recited the National Anthem at the opening ceremony of the Pro Kabaddi League Season 1 in Kolkata. In 2021, Tetseo Sisters joined activists, celebrities and important personalities of the country to commemorate Network18's Mission Paani Waterthon and performed Live on National Television. They debuted a single "Paani Lizo" a tri-lingual song about the importance of saving water.



Image © tetseo sisters





tradition of Nagaland and have taken Naga Folk Music to a different level. Who has been your greatest guide, support, and source of inspiration in music? Who's been standing beside you through your ups and downs?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Thank you. We have worked hard and so have our parents. Our parents have been our greatest support and of course, God's grace without which there will be no Music and no inspiration. Also, our respective significant others and our team members. We all have different dreams but we aligned our passion to push through, all these years.

**Retro Kolkata :** From your debut album 'Li Chapter One : The Beginning' to 'We stand with her', Tetseo Sisters has released a lot of hit albums & tracks. What professional expertise and learning experience did you bring home? How's the experience and what's the personal favourite track of Tetseo Sisters so far?

**Tetseo Sisters :** It is hard to choose and specify a favourite track. We all have our list of top 5 especially to perform. It is a continuous learning process - the writing, recording, production, branding etc. We are still learning and enjoy exploring and experimenting - to bring our signature touch to all that we do and take it to the next level.

**Retro Kolkata :** How strictly do you separate improvising and composing?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Inspiration drives it all. Sometimes it just feels stuck and then

suddenly, it clicks. We are quite flexible but some things are best left alone to its original state. We do improvise a lot on stage or when performing live.

**Retro Kolkata :** In 2021, you released 'Paani Lizo', a tri-lingual song about the importance of saving water. How are you taking the message of the importance of water and water conservation to all over India? In both urban and rural areas.

**Tetseo Sisters :** We personally experience water crises and it is important for us to voice our concern and so the song. We have performed the song at several events and have made use of all available platforms to get the message out. Here's a shout-out to all Retro Magazine readers to be mindful of water conservation. Every drop counts and you can make the difference! Thank you.

**Retro Kolkata :** Since you are on the scene for quite a long time we are sure you went through many challenges. Do you think in India perusing music professionally specially in the band circuit is still not a preferable option for all?

**Tetseo Sisters :** It's been done successfully but it is not easy - specifically for non Hindi music- but we encourage everyone who has a dream to follow it and find your way to wherever you need to be.

**Retro Kolkata :** Let's talk about 'O Rhoisi', which is a massive hit by the Tetseo Sisters. What was the creative process behind the amazing track. What was the story/concept behind the track?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Rhoisi is a feeling and a mantra. To inspire and bring joy. And it just worked out like that. The mood just lifts through the song. And we have 3/4 versions of it and most people can't decide which one they like more- because it has become so popular over the years.

**Retro Kolkata :** In 2018, you have received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Music at a special function on the occasion of the Indian Independence Day at the Nagaland Raj Bhavan and the Achievement Award for your contribution to Music in Nagaland. How was the feeling when you heard the news?

**Tetseo Sisters :** It was a long time coming and we were not sure if to even expect it to happen. When it finally happened, we were relieved and happy. Sort of like a validation of all the work we had done but more for the joy of making music and not for an award. However, recognition is always sweet and acknowledgement of your work and contribution to society is always humbling and gratifying at the same time. Encourages you to work harder.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where do you think you are all happiest: In the studio recording new music, on stage performing or elsewhere?

**Tetseo Sisters :** We do have fun studio sessions especially brainstorming and writing but we are happiest on stage doing our thing.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some of your favourite artists right now? Who would you love to work with in the future? What would be a dream collaboration for Tetseo Sisters?

**Tetseo Sisters :** We are five very different people so our list is long. We listen to quite a range of music and enjoy many different genres. Our dream Collab would be with AR Rahman, Amit Trivedi, Coke Studio and hmmm Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga, any of the top K-pop groups, Perfume...the list is long.



**Retro Kolkata :** Any current plans for future releases?

**Tetseo Sisters :** Many new songs slowly coming your way including an independent film OST. Ten songs in English we hope our listeners will be thrilled to hear from us.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Tetseo Sisters :** That's wonderful to know. Being an artist is a challenge and a joy and we thank all who make our journey as artists worthwhile. And we are glad to have the opportunity to touch, move and make people think twice with out art. Keep encouraging the arts because without art, the world will be less meaningful and plain. Thank you for amplifying the work and stories of artists. Kudos to the Retro Kolkata Team.

“ We personally experience water crises and it is important for us to voice our concern and so the song. We have performed the song at several events and have made use of all available platforms to get the message out. Here's a shout-out to all Retro Kolkata Magazine readers to be mindful of water conservation. Every drop counts and you can make the difference! Thank you.

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## Tetseo Sisters - Hiyo (Official Music Video)



## Tetseo Sisters - O Rhosi : The Dance Edit







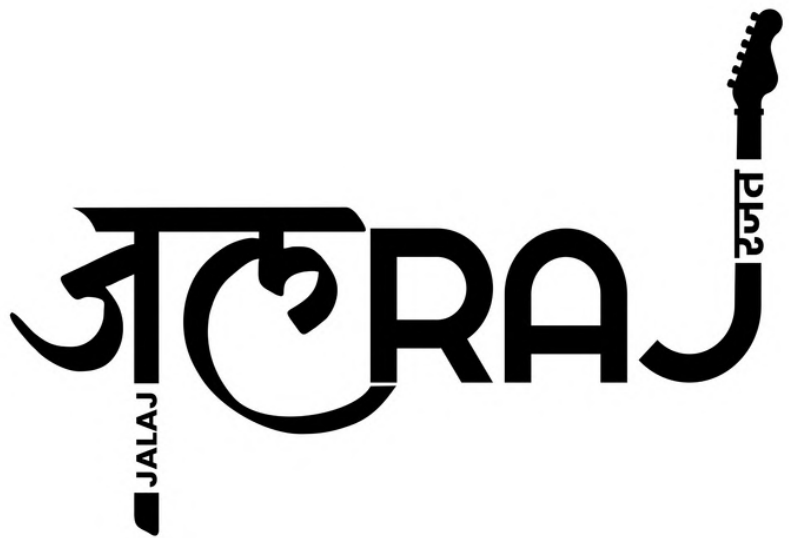
Meet Jalraj and Rajat, two brothers from Chandigarh who love music. If you combine the first three letters of each name, you get "JalRaj," a music producer, singer, lyricist, and composer. With over 100 covers, 30 original songs, and Million YouTube subscribers.

They've been in Himachal Pradesh for over 15 years. They are not trained musicians or singers, but they have the skill to learn something that might seem very different or difficult for someone else.

“

Just to clarify, we are neither Singers nor performers. We are just music lovers who see music from a very simple yet different point of view.

”



## JALRAJ - THE MUSIC SENSATION

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start with the first question ...When did you first gravitate to music?

**Jalraj :** Thank you so much for finding us worth sharing a few things about music as well as our life. Speaking about how we got attracted towards music, honestly, we always were. Maybe it was in our genes. Our parents are music lovers and there was always a radio or a cassette or something musical going on ever since we could remember and probably that was it, we had found our love for music since then.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who has been your greatest guide, support, and source of inspiration in music for both of you? Who's been standing beside you through your ups and downs?

**Jalraj :** Our parents!! Undoubtedly. Our Mother has taught us everything that we know about music. Our Father has been the strength and inspiration for us and we really are not saying this because they are our parents and for obvious reasons, parents will always be the source of inspiration and strength for everyone right, but honestly, they are the ones who we really really admire as a person.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you follow or incorporate any particular singer's style in your rendition? Who is your favourite international artiste and what quality attracts you to him/her?

**Jalraj :** This might sound different but we do not have any favourites for that matter. Everyone is so so good at what they are doing, that it sort of becomes impossible to pick someone over the other. So yes, we admire every artist. Really!

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some of your favourite artists right now? Who would you love to work with in the future? What would be a dream collaboration for you?

**Jalraj :** Ha Ha! there's a saying like the biggest nightmare is "when your dreams come true"! If you know what we mean. But jokes apart, there are a lot of people who are really good when it comes to making

music and like we said, picking someone over the other is something can't do. We are always open for collaborations with every artist, be it with a million follower or none.

**Retro Kolkata :** What aspect of music interests you the most (singing / song-writing /music composing) and conversely, what interests you the least?

**Jalraj :** We love composing and writing the most. Singing would be the least one.

**Retro Kolkata :** As an individual artist, what genres of music are you interested in exploring?

**Jalraj :** Oh! there's a lot. Hip hop alone has so many different sub genres that God knows when we are gonna jump onto next including Sufi music. We love **Sufi music.**

**Retro Kolkata :** You have succeeded and have become a music sensation and an inspiration for many artists. We don't want your secrets but can you offer some hints at how you manage longevity?

**Jalraj :** Well, that is really kind of you for calling us successful, but we still have a lot to achieve. The thing which keeps pushing us every time is our discipline. Hard work, success and everything else will automatically come your way if you are disciplined enough to follow your passion or your profession. Artists these days lack that. Apart from this, we have no secrets to share for now. Ha Ha!

**Retro Kolkata :** Let's talk about your album, "Safar" released in 2021, which is already a massive hit. Tell us something about the album.



**Jalraj :** Yes, SAFAR! We had no plans of working on albums initially. But there were so many tunes playing in our head during the time, that we had to find a way to store them and people loved all of them. "Tumse Mohabbat Hai" Was the most loved track and people still actually request us to make a similar song even to this day.

**Retro Kolkata :** From 'Zara Zara' to 'Adaa', you have improvised a lot of hit songs by adding your own essence. How strictly do you separate improvising and composing?



**Jalraj :** See improvising and composing are two modes for us, simple. Composing music is like handling a baby and you know straight away how delicate the situation is gonna be. Improvising is like talking to a matured person, you just have to be there and nod the way you want to.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are your favourite current songwriters or musicians? Can you turn our readers on to someone they may not have heard of yet?





**We still have a lot to achieve. The thing which keeps pushing us every time is our discipline. Hard work, success and everything else will automatically come your way if you are disciplined enough to follow your passion or your profession. Artists these days lack that. Apart from this, we have no secrets to share for now.**

**Jalraj :** We are pretty sure, everyone knows about the ones we listen to, so naming somebody would again be against our ethics.

**Retro Kolkata :** Did you have any incident where you think if you'd taken it, life would've been completely different. If yes, what was it?

**Jalraj :** Not really! Life has always been kind to us in every single way, at every single point.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Jalraj :** 1. We have been making music on a broken laptop for the last 3 months now. Like it is broken "broken", literally.

2. The latest original "Ilzaam Mohabbat Ka" Was written, composed, sung, produced and released within 48 hours, which is really unusual for other independent artists.

3. We both cannot sleep in complete silence. There has to be a sound but it should not be music. Our go to sound is 'Rainfall 10 hour loop' which keeps playing the entire night.

4. We have been making music for more than 10 years now but neither of us knows how to play any instrument entirely. Not even a guitar.

5. We sleep with the fan turned ON even during extreme winters.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Jalraj :** You guys are doing a really good job and kudos to every single one in the team! Keep doing whatever you are doing. And to the FANS - Always work hard, always be patient, always be loyal to what you do, always be consistent and always be kind. The struggles will always be there. Ups and downs will always be there, no matter if you are new in this field or a professional. Just be focused and follow these 5 things. God bless!

**SAFAR! We had no plans of working on albums initially. But there were so many tunes playing in our head during the time, that we had to find a way to store them and people loved all of them. "Tumse Mohabbat Hai" Was the most loved track and people still actually request us to make a similar song even to this day.**

## Zara Zara Bahekta Hai | JalRaj | RHTDM



## Rozaana - JalRaj (Official Audio) | Ummeed





# MEET THE HOTTEST ELECTRONIC MOOD MUSIC DUO PANDA

PALOMA & ADIL

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview. For those of our readers who may not be familiar with your sound yet, how would you define your own genre within electronic music

**Paloma & Adil :** We were really glad to receive an initiation from Retro Kolkata. We are looking forward to playing amidst the mountains. We like to call our genre experimental electronic mood music. It aims at being a mood based electronic experience with thought provoking lyrics and melodic guitar playing.

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you get started as a duo? Can you recall the moment when you thought you could form 'Panda' together? How did you all first meet each other? Has anything surprised you about it all so far?

**Paloma & Adil :** We met through a mutual project when we were at university around 5 years ago. We realized that we had similar working styles and decided to join forces and form Paloma and Adil aka Panda to express through experimental music. Despite being an English language band (primarily), it was surprising to receive support from people of all ages.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your initial memories with electronic music? And can you name a song that really made an impact on you and why?

**Paloma & Adil :** There's no particular song as such but we had a listening session and certain artists resonated with us, like Made in Heights, Sylvan Esso, Rhye among others and we knew which direction we wanted to take after that.



## PALOMA & ADIL

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us more about the first track 'Monkey Mind'. What was the concept behind? How did your sound evolve since that first track?

**Paloma & Adil :** 'Monkey Mind' is actually not our first track. Our first track is Hold on Or Let it Go which was a song based on the uncertainty of feelings that lovers usually embark on. This song was 5 years ago. Our sound has definitely evolved a lot since then although our sentiments behind the making remain the same. Our sound has become more incorporative of pop and jazz melodies, inclusive of the changing currents around us.

**Retro Kolkata :** Let's talk about your newest EP 'Alonely', which is already a massive hit. What was the creative process behind the amazing track? What was the story/concept behind the track? How does it feel when you get so much support from your listeners?

**Paloma & Adil :** We wanted to make a playlist for easy listening and different moods tackling everyday emotions that all of us feel, which is that of collective loneliness. Alonely was written about feeling comfortable in our differences in a day and age when every changing internet trend tells you how to be. It's about embracing our lonely weird selves and existing in its glory. It feels great to find that our music has reached out to so many hearts. It gives us fuel to make more music.

**Retro Kolkata :** Since you are on the scene for quite a long time we are sure you went through many challenges. Do you think in India pursuing music professionally specially in the band circuit is still not a preferable option for all?

**Paloma & Adil :** It is a rite of passage for every artist to go through ups and downs in this industry and we are no exception, however we have been quite fortunate to have supporters all around us right from our first release. Pursuing music as a career option is definitely a risk but we believe that a balanced approach usually works out for most people. Being self-aware is the key.

**Retro Kolkata :** As a music artist, it becomes apparent that there is a huge difference between the art and the business. Is there anything about the music scene that you would personally change?

**Paloma & Adil :** The difference between art and business is quite huge and apparent.



However, if one has to make a living through their art they must participate in the business side of things, so they remain quite intertwined with each other all the time. We wish there was a way where artists would not have to undervalue themselves just to get ahead or get more business and some balance could be achieved in this transaction.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where do you think you are all happiest: In the studio recording new music, on stage performing or elsewhere?

**Paloma & Adil :** The two spaces have their own charm. The recording studio is where everything is stripped and an artist finds themselves in the birthing process of a new song so the feeling of creation is quite unmatched. While on the other hand the stage has an energy that cant be equated with anything. The rush of baring one's soul out on stage under the warm lights is a very liberating experience for an artist. It is where we learn to be one with our performance. I think as a duo we thrive in our live performances but as creators the process of recording is very important to us as well.

**Retro Kolkata :** What would you say are some of your biggest highlights as of 2022?

**Paloma & Adil :** The lockdown being lifted was perhaps the best part of 2022 for us. We were really grateful to have survived the pandemic with minimum damage but having a semblance of our pre pandemic life returned to us was perhaps the biggest highlight of 2022 so far.

**Retro Kolkata :** What can we expect from you in the near future? Any upcoming projects or gigs in the pipeline that you would like to tell us about?

**Paloma & Adil :** Apart from performing at the Teesta Triveni Art Carnival soon we also have gigs lined up in Kolkata. We are re-releasing a new take on an old song of ours in the month of October as well. This song was very special to us as we met on set while this song was being made so we are excited about rediscovering it in our own way again.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any current plans for future releases?

**Paloma & Adil :** We would also like to release another EP soon, hopefully by the end of this year or the beginning of the next as soon as we finish recording.



## Paloma & Adil | ALONELY | Music Video



## Paloma and Adil - Monkey Mind (Official Music Video)





# Beggar by Destiny or by Choice

अदेशकाले यद्दानमपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।  
असत्कृतमवजातं तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 22॥

"And that charity, which is given at the wrong place and wrong time to unworthy person's, without showing respect, or with contempt, is held to be of the nature of ignorance".

India is a land of saints and seers, living purely on alms, with no possessions and or permanence of place, giving us a practical view of "khaali haath aaye thhey, Khaali haath jaana hai".

As they say, "The joy in giving is much more fulfilling than the joy of receiving". We give alms, donations and come forward for any good cause like feeding poor people, distributing clothes etc. Anything that appeals to our basic human self or goodness in us, we open our hearts and pockets for them.

At times, it also breaks our hearts to see our donations misused or mismanaged, but then donating for most part is done for self-satisfaction. You may also have come across a beggar whom you gave some money for food and later found him "puffing a beedi", and you felt bad as money given for needs was used for pleasure, but aren't those people eligible for pleasure?

Let me offer an analogy again, suppose a Rat nibbled into your stuff out of hunger, and you out of generosity start sparing some food aside for him. So what should be the outcome? Hopefully the rat will not bite into your stuff, but your place will surely be full of rats!

If you feed somebody once, they will be hungry again, if you offer a shelter to the needy, they would need it the same every day, no wonder these are lifelong needs.

With every coin or note we drop, we kill the self-respect of the receiver and also their motivation to earn their living. It seems like, we as a donating society are creating beggars, but is that a responsible thing to do? We are not addressing

Meet

## Nitin Rohra

Singer & Songwriter

**Introducing Nitin Rohra from Kanpur, a businessman by profession and a musician at heart who likes to say things in a song.**

**He sees for stories everywhere, in emotions and people, in events and situations, in answered and unanswered questions, in remembrance and in longing, in promises and assurance, in love and romance, in children and grown-ups, in memories and the present.**

**The story and the composition blend together and that creates a song!!**

**Meaningful lyrics, soulful music and heart-warming emotion are what he always tries to imbibe in his songs.**



the problem as such by shedding a coin or two. It is just a quick fix, a momentary one!

Well! There are natural disasters and calamities and they need such quick fixes in huge denominations. In such events, donating generously is just the need of the moment.

The ever-increasing number of beggars in the country also suggests that this is building up like an organised crime and there may be powerful people behind it. And the increasing number of disappearing children every year, can we connect something here?

One of the oldest techniques to win a war was to cut the supplies of the enemy, so the quick fix here might be to stop giving cash to the beggars. The next time you think of donating, just use your "Dimaag wala Filter" to check if the receiver is a worthy one, because If we do not address the core of this problem today then having the largest population of young people in the world, how many more can we expect?

BEGGARS NOT BY DESTINY BUT BY CHOICE!

“

This dates back to July 2019. I have a routine of having coconut water every day in the morning. I saw small children begging for money and their mother or leader sitting nearby collecting the same.

Many times I tried offering them coconut water or food from a nearby stall but except a few times they would not accept it.

I saw similar situations near a temple, mosque and traffic lights so I started thinking about it. I faced the dilemma every day, whether to give or not.

”

## Paisa Nahi Dene Kaa, Should We Give Money to Beggars?

Nitin Rohra



# FASHION







meet the Guest

**DEBAPARNA**

Paul Chowdhury

*Dipayan Majumdar Photography*



“

**I am a director's actor! When I'm asked to play a character, I create the character in my head based on the script, which means I visualize the way the character moves, talks, feels, smiles, and interacts with other characters. When preparing to play a character, I sometimes draw similarities from personal life experiences if the character allows it, if the character demands a more contrasting output, which is far from my real personality, I either find inspiration from the work of other actors with similar roles or from a real-world person who I can fit into the character I am playing.**

”

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. What has been your dream since you were a kid? ...what would you like to do?

**Debaparna:** I was an introvert kid who found expression through dance & always dreamed that someday I could make a career out of it & thankfully I did.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your journey. When do you decide to become an actor?

**Debaparna:** When I first started dancing, it liberated me, I found the confidence to express what I was feeling at the time, and with training, I got pretty good. As and when that happened, I wanted to explore different forms of art, and fortunately, I started taking acting lessons and fell in love with it; that's when I decided to pursue a career in acting, and I've never looked back.



© Bipradip Chakraborty



**Retro Kolkata :** You have started your career in television and after that in big screen movies like 'Jigyasha Chinha', 'Total Dadagiri' and many more. You're amongst the commercially viable actresses today. What are the sacrifices that go behind the glamour? What kind of roles excite you as an actor?

**Debaparna:** I came from a middle-class family and began acting professionally when I was 13 years old. As a result, I never got to enjoy my teen age as a normal teen would, and when I look back now, I think I sacrificed my carefree teen years being swamped with work, which I now very much miss. In terms of roles, I've never cared if I got to play the lead, for me, it's always been about the story and creating a character from the ground up, where I can freely shape and spark life into the character I play.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have earned a lot of critical acclaim for your performances. Which are the roles you look back at with pride and satisfaction?

**Debaparna:** Few memorable roles I look back with a smile are 'Bina' from 'Egaro', 'Bokul' from 'Subarnalata' & 'Anu' from 'Bojhe na Shey Bojhe na'.

**Retro Kolkata :** Generally you do challenging roles. How do you prepare for these roles that pose such a contrast to your personal character?

**Debaparna:** I am a director's actor! When I'm asked to play a character, I create the character in my head based on the script, which means I visualize the way the character moves, talks, feels, smiles, and interacts with other characters. When preparing to play a character, I sometimes draw



similarities from personal life experiences if the character allows it, if the character demands a more contrasting output, which is far from my real personality, I either find inspiration from the work of other actors with similar roles or from a real-world person who I can fit into the character I am playing.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from movies, you have acted in many popular Web Series like 'Lalbazaar', 'Cartoon'. Do you think Web Series have changed the scenario of the



Film Industry? Is Big Screen now facing major competition from OTT platforms?

**Debaparna:** To be honest, I believe so! However, this does not have to be a bad thing. People will choose convenience over anything else in the twenty-first century. It's true that OTT platforms have flooded us with high-quality content that can be accessed at any time, but that doesn't mean that big screens are failing. Look at 'KGF 2' and 'Top Gun Maverick', these films were like



festivals, I personally went to see these movies more than 3 times. I believe the problem with our industry is the overall quality of the content, we don't have enough going on right now to compel audiences to go to the movies, and with OTT services like Netflix and Prime Video releasing fantastic content almost every week, the competition is getting steep. In my opinion, just another 'movie' will not be enough to entice audiences back to the screens right now, we need a festival.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's the real Debaparna Paul Chowdhury like?

**Debaparna:** In one phrase 'filled with gratitude', I've been an actor for over 17 years, and the love and support I've received has been nothing short of extraordinary. I have a truly wonderful life with a loving husband and supportive family, I'm healthy, financially independent, and truly happy.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your mantra to not give up in life and not to give in to any peer/external pressure?

**Debaparna:** I am not too much concerned with

, I find contentment through work & staying true to the identity that have created over the years & to be honest I believe 'giving up' is for lazy people, which I am not, so that's it, that's my mantra, I just work & never get lazy.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which of your forthcoming projects are you eagerly looking forward to?

**Debaparna:** Right now I'm getting ready to setup my own business & currently this is what I am looking forward to.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

- Debaparna:**
1. I am really short, I mean really!
  2. When I eat fish, you will never see any remains of the bones.
  3. I can do a full split.
  4. I am a terrible driver.
  5. I can swim, but not in life threatening situations. (LOL)

**Retro Kolkata:** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Debaparna:** Thank you Retro Kolkata for this fun interview, your initiative to provide a single platform for all the fans to interact with their favourite artist is truly one of a kind. To my followers, I would like to once again thank you for your timeless love & support. Much love.





# THE SENSATIONAL SANCHI RAI



“ Since my childhood I always wanted to become a Superstar and a fabulous Actor. I would wave and imagine that everyone is watching me, clicking pictures and calling out my name “Sanchi Sanchi Sanchi” just like Deepika Padukone’s red carpet scene in ‘Om shanti Om’ and to be honest I still do the same ”

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's have a jump into the past. What has been your dream since you were a kid? ... what would you like to do?

**Sanchi :** Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to connect with International Art Magazine.. Talking about my dream, since my childhood I always wanted to become a Superstar and a fabulous Actor. I would wave and imagine that everyone is watching me, clicking pictures and calling out my name “Sanchi Sanchi Sanchi” just like Deepika Padukone’s red carpet scene in ‘Om shanti Om’ and to be honest I still do the same.

I love my roller coaster life with adventures and can't wait to see what my future holds.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have an exceptionally unique look. Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Sanchi :** Thank you for the compliment, I practice yoga and other exercises to keep myself fit and healthy, which also helps me maintain good shape.

Talking about my style, I'm just me, I love being myself and I reflect the same through my style, really chill, apart from that I love wearing sarees as I believe Indian wear truly brings out beauty and looks graceful. My inspiration comes from my mom who was herself really stylish in her college days and keeps guiding me as well.

**Retro Kolkata :** You are the girl who fuelled her dreams to make it a reality! An inspiration to all the common girls who dream of being a queen! The most prominent face of Social Media today. How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Sanchi :** My Instagram family means so much to me, I always try to fulfil their wishes, read comments, DMs etc and try to incorporate them and deliver the same through my content.

They love seeing me in Sarees, so I try my best to wear sarees in my reels

**Retro Kolkata :** You acted in Sanjib Jaiswal's 'Fareb', Vishal Verma's 'Aye Hum Barati Barat Leke' and have earned a lot of critical acclaim for your performances. What is that specific moment in your life which lit the spark in you to become an Actor?

**Sanchi :** Talking about 'Fareb', I absolutely love the songs and Sanjib sir's cinematography in the film, the Retro look, Style and dialogues, it's so mind blowing! Personally, I love films and songs from the 80's & 90's because they have a classic way to express everything, I still prefer old films and music, those days actors had their own style and their talent was unmatched. I want to be like one of the icons and that's why, I work hard and give my 100%.

**Retro Kolkata :** What do you enjoy most in acting?

**Sanchi :** Characters!

I love to play different kinds of role and characters, I would like to play meaningful and challenging roles. That gives me motivation to grow more.

“

**Sanchi Rai is a model, actress. She is best known for her roles in 'Lopalki Raa Cheptha' and 'Aaye Hum Barati Barat Lene' & 'Jeene ki Umeed Tumse Hi' in which she co-starred with Brajesh Rai. Apart from Glamour World, Sanchi Rai, the Social Media Icon, has achieved tremendous success on Social Media platforms such as Instagram and MX Takatak.**





**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your favourite shoot / campaign / work to date?

**Sanchi :** I am currently working on an International project which is based on slaves, at this point I cannot discuss further but it is definitely new and something I have never done before. However, there's a second favorite character – ZOYA, from my unreleased film 'zoYA' which is based on Triple talaq, it's full of emotions and portrays a strong woman.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's your beauty regime? Would you like to share some of your best beauty secrets?

**Sanchi :** Be Happy from Inside...there is no beauty secret. When you are happy from inside your face automatically glows. Yoga and drinking plenty of water also helps.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you stay in Shape?

**Sanchi :** Again, My answer is Yoga, It really helps me stay fit and healthy, both physically and mentally. Yoga is the perfect way to find yourself in every way.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have a skin care routine?

**Sanchi :** I can't say I have a routine ....But yes I take care of few things such as I avoid using makeup when not required, keeping my face clean and moisturized at all times, drink plenty of water.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three essential elements of fashion that every girl should have?

**Sanchi :** You should know your body type and dress up with what makes you feel comfortable, one of the first things people will notice about you is the colours you are wearing, It has the power to affect your mood, make you look great, make you look tired or make you stand out and lastly but most importantly just be yourself.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Sanchi :** I really like to dress casual and comfortable, and therefore my favourite thing in my wardrobe is Spaghetti and shorts.

**Retro Kolkata :** What have been the greatest challenges you've faced in your career so far and as per your opinion?

**Sanchi :** In the beginning of my career, I used to get so many fake mails that it was really hard for me to take decisions, pick and choose wisely as you know there are people out there to take advantage of you and your vulnerability...so it was a real challenge in the beginning, but I learned with time.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Sanchi :** 1. I'm really afraid of snakes or any creepy crawlies but I want to overcome that fear someday  
2- I love to explore and try new things, eg : new types of cuisines, food.  
3- I'm little short tempered but I am working on it.  
4- I'm a really good swimmer.  
5- I really believe that everything happens for a reason even if it's not in our favour.

Thank you.



Interview with  
**Angelica  
BAGHI**

FEMINA MISS INDIA J&K 2022

“

**It feels great to have finally achieved something that I wanted to do for a really long time , looking back at my entire Miss India journey it gets me really emotional. I miss every single bit of it. It wasn't all sunshine and rainbows, I had to push my limits to get through it but it was all worth it. Miss India made me grow as a person, it has changed my perspective in life. Pageant preparations can be very hectic and exhausting and Doing everything alone from the very start of the pageant till the very end of it is something that I am very proud of.**





# ANGELIA BAGHI

MISS INDIA J&K 2022

Image © Angelia Baghi & Miss India Org



**I am very grateful of Mrs. Rita Gangwani ma'am who's helped me to shape my personality and groomed me in such a way where I could be more confident about myself. A lot of credit also goes to Miss India Organisation, that gave me the opportunity to learn from the top most professionals in the industry.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. What has been your dream since you were a kid? ...what would you like to do?

**Angelia :** When I was a kid, there were a lot of things I wanted to do when I grew up. I wanted to become an architect, I wanted to become a supermodel,

I wanted to be an actress, I wanted to be an interior designer, at some point I even wanted to join the Indian army.

But as I grew up, I realised that I wanted to be an influential personality while being an artist in whatever field I chose, because both of these things have always been a major part of my personality.

I always wanted to inspire people and become a role model to many, which I think I have achieved to a certain level and I want to continue to do so, thanks to Retro Kolkata Magazine for letting me share my experience.

**Retro Kolkata :** You are the girl who fuelled her dreams to make it a reality! An inspiration to all the common girls who dream of being a queen! Heartiest congratulations on winning the title of Femina Miss India J&K 2022, How does it feel?

Thank you so much.

**Angelia :** It feels great to have finally achieved something that I wanted to do for a really long time , looking back at my entire Miss India journey it gets me really emotional. I miss every single bit of it.



Image © Angelia Baghel Miss India Org



Image © Angelia Baghel Miss India Org

It wasn't all sunshine and rainbows, I had to push my limits to get through it but it was all worth it. Miss India made me grow as a person, it has changed my perspective in life. Pageant preparations can be very hectic and exhausting and Doing everything alone from the very start of the pageant till the very end of it is something that I am very proud of.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you walk us through your preparation routine for Miss India: diet, fitness, personality training, etc.?

**Angelia :** My diet was mostly the same, simple home cooked meals are the best, nothing fancy is needed, Although I enjoy having different kinds of salads. I avoid stuffing myself up and prefer to eat in small portions. I really do believe that somebody who is slim is not always fit.

You can be of any body type but the ultimate goal should be to have a healthy and toned body rather than a slim one. I personally have been into a lot of sports in my entire school life, so that made a lot of difference, I prefer walking and going out for runs , that helps me maintain my body, other than that I am truly grateful of my genes.

I am very grateful of Mrs. Rita Gangwani ma'am who's helped me to shape my personality and groomed me in such a way where I could be more confident about myself. A lot of credit also goes to Miss India Organisation, that gave me the opportunity to learn from the top most professionals in the industry.

**Retro Kolkata :** Every competition can be stressful. How do you keep your mental health in check?

**Angelia :** In such competitions, remain calm is very important. You should be patient about the process and just give your best. I personally feel that it's all in the head. We create that stress for ourselves.

During the pageant I tried to stay positive about everything. I used to talk to my friends and family to keep myself sane and who helped me believe in myself all over again once I spoke to them after every breakdown that I had.

I believe that you should never let that stress get the best of you.

**Retro Kolkata :** Did you always want to be a beauty queen? If not a beauty queen, what would you be?

**Angelia :** Becoming a beauty queen has never been my ultimate goal. It has always been one of the things that I wanted to be, and it is something that has been ticked off from my check list. I've always been very keen on becoming a model, not just on the Indian platform but internationally and that is my dream at the moment.

**Retro Kolkata :** You are from Amity School of Design. Being a girl with relatively no modelling background, how did you manage to face the challenges that came your way in the journey of Miss India contest?

**Angelia :** Being an interior designer, I have always had that artistic side. I am someone who's been artistic in all the aspects of my life.





Image © Angelia Baghi & Miss India Org



Image © Angelia Baghi & Miss India Org



Image © Angelia Baghi & Miss India Org

Modelling is no different, it is something that came very naturally to me, but on a professional platform I learnt a lot of things, from the professionals and other established models who were present around me during my miss India journey. I tend to observe things and learn from them and that's exactly what I did. Miss India has given me immense amount of exposure, where I used to learn something new everyday so I am glad all of that came as a challenge to me, where I could establish myself as a model.

**Retro Kolkata :** Having been involved in the Fashion Scene, do you think there's anything about the Indian beauty pageant scene and the modelling scene that needs to change?

**Angelia :** I think that the Indian beauty standards have immensely evolved over the past few years. It's great that we are finally accepting all kinds of beauty. So many young women all over the country have broken stereotypes about colour and physical attributes. Pageants are all about showcasing different kinds of beauty and I think the purpose is being fulfilled and people are very receptive of that even in the industry.

I am glad to see how we are promoting this side of beauty.

**Retro Kolkata :** What pros and cons did you experience while coming from Jammu & Kashmir to the modelling and pageant world?

**Angelia :** I come from an army background. The constant moving and shifting has been the greatest pro and con of my life. The pro being that, I was already raised differently than others and had the opportunity to meet so many different people from all over the country that gave me with a diverse range of experiences. The biggest drawback was having very few opportunities to get an exposure in the field of modelling and pageant world. It gets very hard to find opportunities where you could constantly learn and work on yourself to be on a bigger platform.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where do you see yourself five years down the lane? Any future plans for entering into the Bollywood industry?

**Angelia :** Five years down the line, I see myself as an established model and I

also want to have my own brand chain of interior decor.

I do wish to explore in the field of acting and hopefully enter the Bollywood industry because I think that I have a knack for acting, so I will definitely go to grab the opportunity, where I could showcase my talent.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us a fun fact people might not know about you yet.

**Angelia :** When I was six years old, I fell from a monkey climber while hanging upside down, and my entire face was distorted and even after that, I just wanted to go out and play the very next day.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any message to all the aspiring girls who dream to be successful in the Indian beauty pageant scene?

**Angelia :** I would like to tell all the girls out there that just believe in yourself and trust your capabilities even if no one else does. Most importantly don't forget who you are and just be yourself, no matter what, because at the end of the day you should be happy with yourself and what you've become.



Count every little step you take as an achievement and keep learning throughout your journey, because that is what will help you grow as a person. Everybody is beautiful in their own way, so embrace it !

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Angelia :** I think it's a great thought and initiative taken by Retro Kolkata.

I truly appreciate it and respect what this organisation is trying to achieve.

Giving a voice to all the artists out there and appreciating their work, creating a platform for them to present themselves to the world is something very unique and I'm glad that I could be part of it.



MEET THE GORGEOUS

# KIMAYA

Image © Kimaya



**My fashion modelling journey started after my marriage. My husband is a photographer. He loves taking my pictures and helped me create my modelling page on Instagram. Within no time, I had a good audience engagement and I was getting great feedback from a lot of people. Some known and famous accounts started liking and commenting on my pictures which provided a great boost to my work!**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. What has been your dream since you were a kid? ...what would you like to do?

**Kimaya :** Thanks for inviting me for this interview and giving me a platform to discuss my personal and professional life.

As a kid, I always wanted to be famous, either as an actress, model or anything of repute! Coming from middle class family, watching Bollywood films that were way more romantic back then, it was an automatic choice to be bedazzled seeing all of that and to become an actress!

**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about your career as a fashion model. How did you get started?

**Kimaya :** My fashion modelling journey started after my marriage. My husband is a photographer. He loves taking my pictures and helped me create my modelling page on Instagram. Within no time, I had a good audience engagement and I was getting great feedback from a lot of people. Some known and famous accounts started liking and commenting on my pictures which provided a great boost to my work!

**Retro Kolkata :** What is that specific moment in your life which lit the spark in you to become a model?

**Kimaya :** When Sushmita Sen was crowned Miss Universe, it was a moment I will always remember. Before that, I had not seen any Indian female being recognized at global level. She was all over the news and very deservedly too!

**Retro Kolkata :** What do you enjoy the most in modelling?

**Kimaya :** The makeup, the outfits, the attention you get as a model - no matter how big the photographer is, or how much efforts or editing goes behind a good photograph - knowing the fact that I am the most important piece of that artwork is a great feeling in itself! Also love doing crazy poses in middle of a shoot like doing pouts or pushing my butt out or a funny pose just for the sake of it. I also improvise within shoots and suggest ideas and hold poses that I feel may look good. Photographers that I have worked with, love and encourage me to do that as well.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you walk us through your daily routine like diet, fitness, personality training, etc.?

**Kimaya :** After having a baby, the routines get changed and adjusted to baby's routine :) So my usual pre-pregnancy routine was like starting with Yoga for 30



minutes, giving some time for my body to rest. Breakfast and lunch as usual. Then going to the gym in late afternoon/early evening and doing a-lot of cardio. A green tea to follow after the workout and detox my body. An early dinner so my body gets enough time to digest. Then a midnight snack, if needed an hour before sleeping. I still stick to this routine as much as possible, but sometimes with baby you cannot plan ahead so now I go with the flow.

**Retro Kolkata :** What have been the greatest challenges you've faced in your career so far and as per your opinion, what are the main challenges in the fashion industry today?

**Kimaya :** In today's world of so many Instagram users, real and fake, you get so many "fake" offers trying to reach out to you just to get your personal information or to talk to you. This may not be a challenge for famous or known models with someone managing their account for them but as a model who is getting started, she has to endure a-lot of these and be careful about them.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your favourite shoot / campaign / work to date?

**Kimaya :** I had a birthday vacation at Miami, the four days trip that was my best vacation so far included a-lot of shoots on the beaches on all four days. This was the first time I sported a bikini too





and enjoyed the final pictures. Another photoshoot was the Bengali makeup attire. Not only I enjoyed doing the Bengali makeup, but also loved the pictures from the shoot!

**Retro Kolkata :** Sometimes the modelling industry gets a bad rap with the jealousy and egos encountered between other models and agencies. Was this true for you? Have you managed to tough it out and make good friends?

**Kimaya :** On a larger scale, it is much like a college life where if one girl gets too much attention, others who are more beautiful or consider themselves so, would get jealous. Within this world I'm a kind of a nerdy silent girl who only wants to do what she does best and not care about outside factors. I have made so many model friends on Instagram, collaborated with them, supported them and we never have had jealousy issues whatsoever. Having said that, sometimes a bit of jealousy can result in positive outcomes and

create a sense of competitiveness to get the best out of you. So it's not as bad until it gets too much in the head.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from Fashion Model, you are also a successful Makeup Artist. Can you name some of the biggest trends you are seeing right now in the makeup world? Are any of them here to stay, or are they just fleeting trends?

**Kimaya :** Yes, I do makeup for other models occasionally and professionally. I do it for my friends for their parties and in occasions. And often I am involved 3-4 hours before going to a party doing makeup on others.

The biggest trend I am seeing right now is the no-makeup look for casual parties. It aims towards making a face look as real as possible and show as little makeup as possible. Taylor Swift sports such makeup looks a-lot. This would surely be going to stay for long.

Another one I see is creative and funky eye shadows to match your

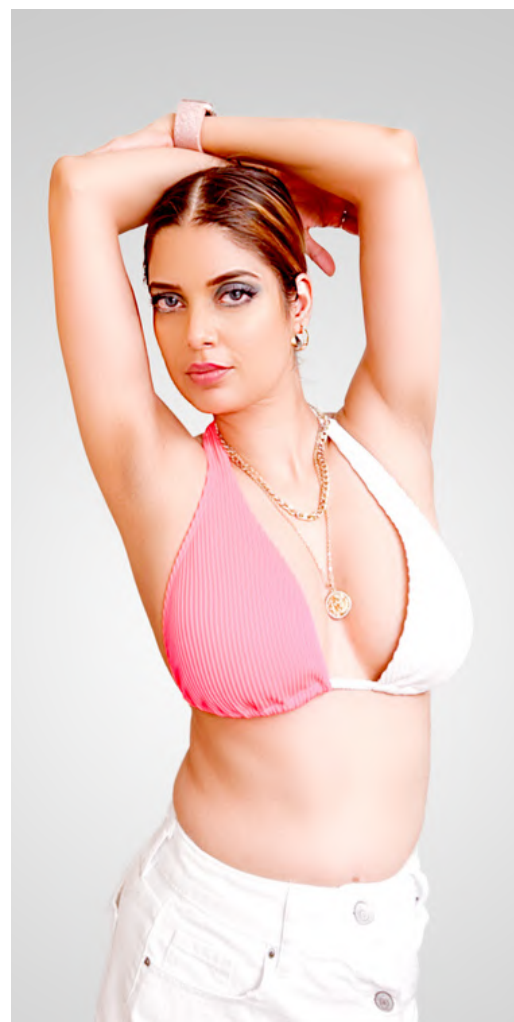
outfits or occasion. For eg: Green eye shadow, if you're wearing a green dress or eye shadows in colour of a flag if you're going out on independence day. This may be one of those fleeting trends.

**Retro Kolkata :** What three makeup items should no woman leave home without?

**Kimaya :** A lipstick, A duo Contour-highlight stick and a setting spray or face spray. A contour-highlight stick helps recreate the makeup if you are out for long and a lipstick can get dull if you are eating or drinking. A setting spray can make your dull makeup look great and you look fresh!

**Retro Kolkata :** Staying fresh and innovative in today's fast-paced world can be a challenge. How do you stay creative and where do you look for inspiration?

**Kimaya :** My inspirations come from Celebrities and models that I follow on Instagram. Taylor Swift, Deepika Padukone to name a few. Since I'm just starting my modelling journey, I enjoy trying



out various techniques and sporting various outfits, creative and orthodox both. I can be an elegant queen and a cheeky girl at the same time and in the same outfit.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the 5 Things you want to tell newbies before he/she becomes a model.

**Kimaya :** Never do anything for free. There are a-lot of genuine and not so genuine people out there trying to build their portfolios. But remember you are the most important part of that and not their expensive cameras or equipment. If they really need you, they have to pay you.

Do your research well and learn about what's normal and what's not. Learn how much should you charge and keep in mind the makeup and preparations you have to make before the shoot or any gig.

Always sign a model-photographer release agreement or similar written agreements for your work. This dictates your rights for a work in which you are involved in, including the rights of images or outputs from the work. Don't do anything just for the sake of some cash, be patient and chose your projects wisely.

Do more creative work and enjoy your work! Don't make it mundane and redundant for yourself.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us a fun fact people might not know about you yet.

**Kimaya :** I sometimes talk in my sleep. My husband tells that I talk very clearly and not just mumble! Initially he used to get confused if I'm awake or sleeping.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one

single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Kimaya :** I went through Retro Kolkata website and articles and I absolutely love the initiative you guys have taken. This gives us all a platform to be recognized and reach out to more audiences easily. Specially for someone like me who is living in the US, its a great opportunity for us to close out the geographical boundaries and make themselves counted. I truly believe RK is going to be a big giant in the fashion industry globally.



# THE SENSATIONAL TANIYA GUHATHAKURATA

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Fashion is sometimes so complicated and sometimes it's just absorbing tension. I do not understand fashion. But I have a fashion sense. Thankfully, my childhood played a great role here. There was a series, Fashion Police, my brother used to make me watch. Also, I used to read the magazine Femina Mag, which helped me to groom myself. Fashion is like eating, but you shouldn't stick to the same menu.

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start with the first question. Let's jump into the past. What has been your dream since you were a kid? What would you like to do?

**Taniya :** As a kid, I always dreamed of being an Airhostess and even made plans for it. I enrolled in Fashion Journalism, then got a job as a trainee cabin crew in Air India. But couldn't end up taking my dream job due to family concerns. Later turned into hotels and so far worked in luxurious brands from Novotel, and Leela Palace. My last assignment was with the Taj Group of hotels in Hyderabad. But after lockdown, I took a break from hospitality and

currently working within a Fashion Design Lounge as a Luxury Brand Manager of Millennials Fashion Spot, a one-stop-shop solution for wedding trousseau for Grooms of India.

**Retro Kolkata :** You are the girl who fuelled her dreams to make them a reality! An inspiration to all the common girls who dream of being a queen! Ms. India 1st Runner-up 2021 & Miss West Bengal Quintessential Finalist. How does it feel? Has the feeling sunk in yet?

**Taniya :** I always take life as it comes, just go with the flow. I was passionate about modeling, perhaps dressing up and styling my friend, giving them the best suggestions - I just enjoyed it. Kolkata is very lucky, and lots of opportunities are here. It's just you need to make the correct move. But yes, I still can't believe the crowns are in my trunk. I and Mumma had a huge laugh sometimes over a cup of cappuccino, it's just the moment that can't be explained. I still get butterflies in my stomach.

**Retro Kolkata :** Did you always want to be a beauty queen? If not a beauty queen then what would you be?

**Taniya :** Yes, (Laughed) you should ask my cousins how being a six years old girl, I used to wear my mum's stilettos, wrap her saree and used to do catwalk whenever someone came to my house and I said to everyone that, "I am Miss India." The period was a happy memory and now a reality.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you manage to face the challenges that come your way in the journey of the Fashion World?

**Taniya :** Fashion is sometimes so complicated and sometimes it's just absorbing tension. I do not understand fashion. But I have a fashion sense. Thankfully, my childhood played a great role here. There was a series, Fashion Police, my brother used to make me watch. Also, I used to read the magazine Femina Mag, which helped me to groom myself. Fashion is like eating, but you shouldn't stick to the same menu.

**Retro Kolkata :** Having been involved in the Fashion Scene, do you think there's anything about the Indian beauty pageant scene and the modeling scene that needs to be changed?

**Taniya :** Yes, a lot. I just want it to be cleaner and more welcoming. Many teenage girls get misguided, and the rest

are very tough to sustain. So you know diet, home care, and skin care - all don't need a lot of money, just need patience and determination that I don't see these days. And I personally believe that your skin won't make you a top model. Maintaining your dignity and flaunting your beauty with brains make you stand out from the crowd.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any designer brands you like wearing?

**Taniya :** I love experimenting with my style and I am not a big fan of designer labels. But my closet has more than ten sets of Sarees from Neeru's India. A white chic top from Rina Dhaka and I just kept a place empty in my wardrobe for a Sabyasachi Ensemble. I think every Indian girl wants to be a Sabyasachi Bride in her lifetime so am I.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where do you see yourself five years down the lane?

**Taniya :** Well, the lockdown has taught me to go with the flow. I started assisting a Well known Designer from Kolkata with wedding trousseau for Grooms of India. Now, my main focus is to learn from the brand and grow within it.





**Retro Kolkata :** Give us a fun fact people might not know about you yet.

**Taniya :** Ohh! I am a foodie. I can have momos for breakfast, pizza for lunch, and pasta for dinner. And yes, let me share with you a secret, I can munch every now & then.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any message to all the aspiring girls who dream to be successful in the Indian beauty pageant scene?

**Taniya :** I never joined a training institute only because of the lockdown. But trust me, if you have a goal to be in a pageant and see yourself as a winner, then my suggestion is to join Cocoaberry, they do an offline course as well and yes portfolio with for looks is a must. Groom yourself, maintain a diet, exercise, and have faith in yourself.



Meet the Guest

# Mekhala Bawsay

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I dress up as per my vibe of the day and not follow any trends. I pick up outfits and colour that accentuate my assets and hide the flaws. Fashion inspiration is everywhere. My mantra is to choose what suits you best rather than fad trends. Trends go away, but style endures. A little more in detail, I usually wear solid over patterns and like a little drama on my outfits.

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Fashion Blogger &  
Influencer

**Entrepreneur**

Traveller



# MEET MEKHALA BAWSAY

Fashion Blogger & Influencer

Image © Mekhala Bawsay

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a fashion Blogger & Influencer. How did you get started?

**Dr Mekhala :** Hey, I am Dr Mekhala Bawsay, an influencer, entrepreneur and an MBA professional and a full-time creator. I have collaborated with 700 plus brands like Samsung, L'Oréal

Paris, Tanishq, SKODA Kushaq, Zivame, One Plus, Mathey Tissot, Esbeda etc. I have long term partnerships with multiple fashion and lifestyle brands and have travelled 23 plus countries and worked with multiple luxury travel brands like Cordelia cruises, Mah tourism, Anchaviyo, Marriott etc. I mainly work with luxury

brands and create videos for a living. Published in five newspaper and Rotaract brand icon 2020. I started my journey three years ago when I decided to stop practicing dentistry and follow my passion on Instagram. There has been no looking back since then, I have been blessed with so many opportunities and this was the best decision of my life.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have an exceptionally unique look. Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Dr Mekhala :** My style usually comes from my feelings and mood at that time. I dress up as per my vibe of the day and not follow any trends. I pick up outfits and colour that accentuate my assets and hide the flaws. Fashion inspiration is everywhere. My mantra is to choose what suits you best rather than fad trends. Trends go away, but style endures. A little more in detail, I usually wear solid over patterns and like a little drama on my outfits.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Dr Mekhala :** I am blessed with a highly engaged audience who appreciate everything I do. I reply to my comments and DMs as much as I can. I keep experimenting with my content to bring out the best in me. I love to play around with my videos and my amazing Instagram family always tell me whether it's working for me or not.





*Favourite thing in my wardrobe is a white dress that I got from a collaboration with Amazon. Just love the way it looks and feels.*



**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Dr Mekhala :** Favourite thing in my wardrobe is a white dress that I got from a collaboration with Amazon. Just love the way it looks and feels. White is usually the colour that I avoid, as I am a messy eater, but this dress has made me fall in love with white again.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your top five beauty essentials?

- Dr Mekhala :**
1. Lip balm
  2. Nude lipstick
  3. Perfume
  4. Foundation
  5. Eyeliner

**Retro Kolkata :** What three products do you always keep in your makeup bag?

**Dr Mekhala :** Phone, House keys, Lip balm

**Retro Kolkata :** You are the girl who fuelled her dreams to make it a reality! Apart from Fashion Influencer, you are a Doctor & successful entrepreneur. When did you first know you wanted to be an entrepreneur and what was the point that really made you go for it?

**Dr Mekhala :** I always knew I have the entrepreneurship bug in me. I started my own clinic at the age of 23 when I had just passed out



from college. I had refused to accept an ordinary life and desired everything that life had to offer. I knew taking risk at young age is the only way to get somewhere in life and that doing what everyone else was doing would never get me there.

I trusted my guts when I decided to shut my settled flourishing dental practise to start something else that I actually love. It was a big step leaving dentistry for fashion. Back then, content creation was a completely unknown term and field. I started it on Instagram as I had nothing to loose, at the same time I decided to do MBA full time in marketing as I loved marketing even during my clinic days.

Today I have worked with over 700 plus brands and I have my own company digital marketing agency and I couldn't be more proud. Taking risk and following your gut is the only way to success.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's the best and what's the hardest part about having your own skin care brand Ahava?

**Dr Mekhala :** I have a small team who have been with me since the beginning. We are like family now and I can't work one day



without them. My videographer literally spends 12 hours a day with me shooting. My editor is always working and my social media manager works remotely, but he hasn't taken a single day off including his own wedding. He was working on his wedding day as well. This dedication only comes from passion and love for what they do.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any business is as strong as it's team. How do you choose the people you work with and those who work for you?

**Dr Mekhala :** While hiring, my main point is whether they love their job or are just doing it for money. We are in a creative world and only love for art and creation can survive and thrive.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from Fashion Influencer, u also a traveller. Where is your favourite place in the world? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

**Dr Mekhala :** I have travelled 23 countries and all over India. My favourite place is definitely London, as the city is imprinted in my heart, so beautiful and Royal.

Bucket list definitely US and Africa. Would love to cover these super soon.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Dr Mekhala :** I am classical Bharatnatyam dancer done my Arangetram at the age of 14. Travelled all over India and Abroad for the same. I am a big time foodie and I can eat anything and everything and regret after that.

Since I am a foodie, I love to cook as well. Usually try to make healthy options of my favourite food.

I used to be very fat and underconfident as a kid.

Gym is the sanctuary I found during college and fitness has been my best friend since then.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundary can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Dr Mekhala :** This is an amazing initiative and aspiring artists definitely need a lot of guidance and help in order to grow. All the best for your venture. Very proud to be a part. To all the aspiring content creators you have to find what content works best for you and what you can create on almost daily basis. And don't be disheartened if you don't get a response immediately. It takes time to build a following and a true set of followers. You keep doing your best without expecting return immediately. Also start today. Creators are the future and anyone anywhere can be one.





# K

meet the Guest  
**ousani**

*fashion & lifestyle blogger*



©NEEL AKASH

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Comfort and Confidence are the three main things for me. If I can't take an outfit from dawn to dusk then what's the point? If I'm wearing a simple Kurti with a mesmerizing confidence, no one can stop me from being the showstopper.

But don't overdress yourself by just trusting on what you see on social media. It's very very important to know your body type, know your personality and your pocket. I always keep these three things in my mind, whenever I am buying something.

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**Kousani Bhattacharyya**



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a fashion Blogger & Influencer. How did you get started?

**Kousani :** Hello! this is Kousani Bhattacharyya. I am a software engineer in Wipro and modelling is my second Love. So, when I was in college, I was a bridal model. Since my childhood, I've always been fascinated by the glamour world and also done some tv shows in DD Bangla as well as I was a radio artist. Suddenly one day, I got an offer from a very well known makeup artist in Bengal and grabbed the offer. Though I was in the middle of my semester, I went there and it turned out to be one of my best shoots to date. Then I continued doing the same. In 2019, I got the job offer from Wipro and my location was Bhubaneswar. I shifted there. But I used to come to Kolkata in every weekend and never gave up my passion.

When lockdown hits, shoots and all was stopped.

Then I thought of sharing my beauty routines , some makeup hacks, various saree poses on Instagram. Then I got someone who given me the idea of being an influencer. I was totally a naïve then, without his help and supervision, I couldn't be the one I am today. Then started accepting the brand collaborations started getting more loves from my audience.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Kousani :** Comfort and Confidence are the three main things for me. If I can't take an outfit from dawn to dusk then what's the point? If I'm wearing a simple Kurti with a mesmerizing confidence, no one can stop me from being the showstopper.

But don't overdress yourself by just trusting on what you see on social media. It's very very important to know your body type, know your personality and your pocket. I always keep these three things in my mind, whenever I am buying something.

And also repeating the same cloth is not a backdated thing. If you are ashamed of doing that, try to give some new looks with the same outfit. And you'll bling.!

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Kousani :** I always try to communicate with my audience ignoring the negative comments. And I always check the insights of each posts to know which is the thing my audience is liking. I always try to create something entertaining, something new, so that they don't get bored by seeing the posts.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand?

**Kousani :** Sonata watches was the first brand I worked with. I generally choose the brand which will help my audience. Like when I am promoting a beauty brand, it should be very clear about their ingredients, their target audience and so on.





And also, being a small business owner I also know the struggle of a small business owner. So I also select those businesses that are giving real efforts to make themselves known in this competitive world. There were numerous incidents where they sent me a product and if I suggested that it would not attract your customers and that you try something different, they trusted me and did so. So the effort and truthfulness are the main thing I check before accepting any collaboration.



**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Kousani :** I am totally a saree person. So saree is always my best fashion purchase.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Kousani :** Saree saree & saree. My wardrobe is full of sarees.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your top five beauty essentials?

**Kousani :** Sunscreen, Moisturiser, Lipstick, Kajal

**Retro Kolkata :** What three products do you always keep in your makeup bag?

**Kousani :** Compact , lipstick and Kajal.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are your beauty icons?

**Kousani :** Swastika Mukherjee , Aiswaria Rai Bachhan & Hema Malini.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you remember your first fragrance?

**Kousani :** Skinn by TITAN Amalfi Bleu

**Retro Kolkata :** When shopping for beauty products, what is important to you?

**Kousani :** It should be skin friendly and pocket friendly.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Kousani :** I can sleep at any point of time.

2. I always keep forgetting about my to-do list and end up messing everything.

3. I wear sarees even on hill station.

4. If I start laughing, I can't stop it without any proper reason.

5. Though I am nonveg, still I eat veg in any invitations.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Kousani :** Lastly, I would really like to thank Retro Kolkata, who has given me this opportunity to hold up myself to bigger number of audience. They have really trying to build a stage for all artists to reach to a bigger number of audience. Thank you so much and best wishes for your journey.

You guys rock!

**I always try to communicate with my audience ignoring the negative comments. And I always check the insights of each posts to know which is the thing my audience is liking. I always try to create something entertaining, something new, so that they don't get bored by seeing the posts.**



# Shiny Bae



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To me, fashion is an art form and a way to express myself and my different forms of personality. I usually draw inspiration from anything and everything around me. It could be from movies, inanimate objects, pinterest, etc.  
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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a fashion Influencer & Content creator. How did you get started?

**Shiny Bae :** So I actually joined Instagram in high school; I would post my outfits every day there, and that's how I realized I wanted to get into this world of creation. Although, at first I feared getting judged by posting a lot online. However, I trusted the process and gained confidence in myself. I learned it's important to do things for yourself, not for others. My college also did help me a lot regarding this. They would hold presentations explaining everything in detail. I got my first few brand collaborations because of my college as well. Eventually I gave it a serious thought and started pursuing my passion for content creation in the year 2019. And now almost after 3yrs I am here and enjoying every bit of my Instagram journey as an influencer.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have an exceptionally unique look. Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Shiny Bae :** Thank you for the compliment. To me, fashion is an art form and a way to express myself and my different forms of personality. I usually draw inspiration from anything and everything around me. It could be from movies, inanimate objects, pinterest, etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Shiny Bae :** First and foremost know your body type. And wear what makes you feel the most confident. If you think you can pull off a certain outfit confidently in public then do it without a second thought! My fashion mantra is all about wearing outfits that makes me feel confident, sexy and powerful! Komal Pandey inspires me a lot and I have inherited this ideology from her.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Shiny Bae :** I usually post a lot of interactive stories, asking them what they would like to see next. I also ask for their suggestions on what kind of content I should be creating.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand? While selecting brands

**Shiny Bae :** There simply will have to be a great level of fit between what I represent and what the brand represents. When I do a collaboration with a brand, it's important to me that I get to experiment with my creative energy.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Shiny Bae :** My Linen shirts and my Air Jordans.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Shiny Bae :** My Corsets! There's endless possibilities how you can style a corset!

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Shiny Bae :** I was really stoked when the y2k trend came back. My top favourite trend would be Y2K fashion because,

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**It's all about making a statement, and making it louder than anyone else. The cottage-core trend has also made a comeback. This trend is all about investing in pieces that are timeless and have beautiful Victorian-esque details. I have recently been loving bustiers/corsets as well. It's a great versatile layering piece – you can wear it by itself if you want to, or you can edge it up or make it girlier depending on how you wear it. Honestly, the possibilities are endless.**







**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Shiny Bae :** I think this initiative is really remarkable as it gives exposure to a lot of micro-creators. Through retro Kolkata the creators get to connect with their audience on a deeper level. I hope you continue with this great work and provide exposure to all the up-and-coming artists.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three essential elements of fashion that every girl should have?

**Shiny Bae :** A baggy bottom be it a denim or trousers. With a baggy bottom-wear you can create 100s of outfit combinations. A satin dress which you can wear from day to night. And an oversized Blazer.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any Beauty/Skin Care tips or Tricks to look fresh and rested for an early morning Photo shoot?

**Shiny Bae :** I usually follow a 5 step skin care routine. Toner-vit C/ Hyaluronic serum-hydrating moisturiser-Night gel mask-under eye gel. The hack is that the more you hydrate your skin at night the more glowy your skin gets when you wakeup. It is worth the effort because our skin absorbs nutrients better at night than it does during the day.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Shiny Bae :** The first one is that most people doesn't know my real name is Bandhani.

I am a cat mom to my 12 cat babies.

I change my hair colour every-time I have a mental breakdown.

My guilty pleasure is watching documentaries on serial killers.

I am a big FOODIE!





# ANUSKA SAMANTA

*fashion & lifestyle blogger*

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, Congratulations to be the Rising Fashion & Lifestyle Blogger of Retro Kolkata Magazine. Please say something about you. About your career as a Fashion & Lifestyle Blogger. How did you get started?

**Anuska:** Hello everyone, I'm Anuska Samanta. I'm a student and beside pursuing studies, I create fashion and beauty content on Instagram. I have 15.8k followers on Instagram. I have collaborated with a variety of brands from Lakme, Ponds to fashion brands such as Myntra.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have an exceptionally unique look. Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Anuska:** Well, it all started during the Lockdown in 2020. Styling outfits and a sense of fashion was something I always had in me and that's why I thought why not put it up on social media and that's how my journey began. From clicking pictures using my mobile to collaborating with different photographers and brands it has been a wonderful experience and I'm looking forward to grow more in this field.

I have got inspirations from many but I always try to recreate it on my own. Also, I keep in mind how I can reflect my personality and characterisation through my fashion.

**FASHION BLOGGER**





**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Anuska:** My fashion mantra is comfort, confidence and simplicity. I believe fashion comes with comfort and comfort comes with confidence. If you feel comfortable and confident in a certain outfit, just wear it!! Life's too short to compromise your outfit/fashion for others!! From a cami top to a saree /kurta, wear whatever you want to and just be confident enough to carry it nicely in your way! My fashion icon is Deepika Padukone. I absolutely love the way she carries herself. Her style statement, her dress sense is just magnificent.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Anuska:** Buying basic cami tops and denims are always my best purchases ever because I can style it in different ways and can make a whole new outfit of it.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Anuska:** A Basic Cotton Kurti is my favourite. Besides western wear, I love to wear Indian Traditional Clothes as well. It gives an amazing vibe and comfort to pair up with my confidence.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Anuska:** My favourite fashion trends at the moment are- Street Style Fashion, Monochrome Matrix & Colour Blocking.



**Retro Kolkata :** What are your top five beauty essentials?

- Anuska:** a. Sunscreen  
b. Concealer  
c. Eyeliner  
d. Red lipstick  
e. A gentle Cleanser

Because it helps be get a complete natural makeup look with these 5 products



**Retro Kolkata :** What three products do you always keep in your makeup bag?

**Anuska:** a. Concealer, b. Eyeliner, c. Red Lipstick  
These are just enough for me to get a nice glamorous look when I'm in a rush.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

- Anuska:** a) I put on my earphones and dance for hours in my room alone.  
b) I hate Horror Movies.  
c) I like Maggie with Ketchup  
d) I talk to myself every time I feel low and that helps me get out of that zone really well cause I believe I'm my own best friend and no one can understand me the way I will.  
e) I can be weirdly crazy when I'm in my comfort zone.

# MEET FASHION BLOGGER PALLABI GUHA

**My first collaboration was surprisingly with Myntra as a Fashion Ambassador from Kolkata. I am very particular about the brands I work with. I look at the intention of the brand, the campaign idea and obviously the deal before saying yes to a brand.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a fashion Blogger & Influencer. How did you get started?

**Pallabi :** I started blogging in 2016, when I was in my 3rd year of Engineering. I was always very fond of styling and I used to post styling looks on Myntra. Back then, Myntra had a section where users can post looks and give styling tips. I was very active over there. One day, I got a call from the Myntra Team saying that they love the looks I post and want me to post more. They sent a Fila bag and 2 outfits with a letter. That's how I got started. Currently, I have a full-time job apart from blogging. I try to manage both flawlessly.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Pallabi :** Be comfortable in whatever you're wearing! Oh! I have many on my list.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Pallabi :** I do Instagram polls to find out what they like and what they don't.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand?

**Pallabi :** My first collaboration was surprisingly with Myntra as a Fashion Ambassador from Kolkata. I am very particular about the brands I work with. I look at the intention of the brand, the campaign idea and obviously the deal before saying yes to a brand.







*I am an extreme extrovert.  
I talk a lot and hence at times, I will take 5  
mins to actually come to the point.  
I had a huge huge crush on Armaan Mallik from  
Dill Mill Gayye.  
I fell down and broke my elbow bone while  
playing Shaktiman in class 1.  
I go all kuchu-puchu whenever I see a dog.*

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Pallabi :** Definitely a white shirt which goes with almost everything! Oh, also an evil eye footwear.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Pallabi :** A coffee brown pair of trousers that fits perfectly. It's hard to find something like this.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your top five beauty essentials?

**Pallabi :** Sunscreen, Mascara, Lipstick, Blush & Compact.

**Retro Kolkata :** What three products do you always keep in your makeup bag?

**Pallabi :** Mascara, Compact & Nude Lipstick

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Pallabi :** Wearing colors from top-to toe, Cut-outs & Puffed-up sleeves.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are your beauty icons?

**Pallabi :** Honestly, I can't name just one.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you remember your first fragrance? What drew you to it?

**Pallabi :** I do. The subtleness attracted me.

**Retro Kolkata :** When shopping for beauty products, what important to you?

**Pallabi :** I first check whether the product is suitable for my skin-type or not.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Pallabi :** I am an extreme extrovert.

I talk a lot and hence at times, I will take 5 mins to actually come to the point.

I had a huge huge crush on Armaan Mallik from Dill Mill Gayye.

I fell down and broke my elbow bone while playing Shaktiman in class 1.

I go all kuchu-puchu whenever I see a dog.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundary can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Pallabi :** I would like to thank the team for the wonderful opportunity. You guys are doing a great job. All the best!

# Surabhi Pisal

# Ahuja



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a fashion Influencer & Content creator. How did you get started?

**Surabhi :** I have done my Masters in Microbiology, even worked as a trainee scientist at a well-known MNC. While I was pursuing my masters, I used to write beauty articles for a beauty website and I got hooked. I began posting content on Instagram and within no time, I started getting a lot of love there. When I was sure I had a stable income, I wanted to take content creation as a full time job and I did just that! I now own 2 beauty websites, have a successful Instagram account (@surabhi\_littlereviews) and a YouTube channel (Surabhi Pisal).

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**I think fashion is what we make of it; I believe in reinventing, recycling to stay unique and look minimal and chic at the same time. Also, comfort always comes first. I personally really like and follow Ashima Makhija and Shaurya Sanadhya for some fashion inspiration.**

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**Retro Kolkata :** You have an exceptionally unique look. Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Surabhi :** My style always depends on comfort, mood and the occasion. For inspiration, I always take a look at Pinterest fashion and beauty boards, they have the best recommendations.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Surabhi :** I think fashion is what we make of it; I believe in reinventing, recycling to stay unique and look minimal and chic at the same time. Also, comfort always comes first. I personally really like and follow Ashima Makhija and Shaurya Sanadhya for some fashion inspiration.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Surabhi :** I absolutely love making interactive Instagram stories and always post a question sticker to know what my followers want to see; that is exactly how I stay relatable. I also take replying to comments very seriously, it is the best way to stay in touch and know what the audience likes.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand?

**Surabhi :** If I am being approached by a brand, the first thing I see is if the brand resonates with my niche and style and if I personally like the brand/product. And if the brand is already in my Wishlist or if I already really love the brand then nothing like it, no second thoughts while working with such brands. Now coming to the second part, My first collaboration with a brand was I think almost 1 year after I began posting on Instagram.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Surabhi :** I love accessories and I feel they can instantly add a spark to any look. My best fashion purchase would be my gold-diamond ring and Michael Kors watch.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?


**Surabhi :** A classic white shirt is hands down one of the most versatile piece in my closet. It's transeasonal and can be styled in multiple ways at any given occasion. It's my fav!

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Surabhi :** I'll start with beauty trends, I love a good ombre just-bitten lip and would definitely love to try the hidden rainbow hair colour! Coming to fashion, it would be colour clashing using pastels.







**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three essential elements of fashion that every girl should have?

**Surabhi :** According to me, the first and most important element would be confidence! Whatever you wear be it fashion or beauty, wear it with confidence. Second- Less is more! Over accessorizing or/and using more than 3 different dominant colours in the same outfit would be a little too much. Third- Playing and experimenting with textures.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any Beauty/Skin Care tips or Tricks to look fresh and rested for early morning Photo shoot?

**Surabhi :** I love a good ice massage in the morning, gives a flushed glow and reduces puffiness; Try freezing pure rose water into ice cubes for added benefits. You can also use a chilled jade roller for lymphatic drainage- will make you look instantly fresh and all set!

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Surabhi :** (1) I have maintained a 'Gratitude book; since 2017 wherein I write things I am grateful for and things I want to achieve, I can proudly say I've managed to gradually achieve 70% of listed things. I am a strong believer of the Law Of Attraction.

(2) I often feel guilty if I am home and if I do not work, the very reason I often even work on weekends to have a peaceful night's sleep. My work drives me and I love that about myself.

(3) I have always been a shy kid in school and most of my college life. Facing the camera almost daily and interacting with my followers has given me a whole new level of confidence and a chance to work on myself- the change I always needed.

(4) I have my own research work published in the International Journal of Current Research In Biosciences and Plant Biology wherein I worked with some natural plant extracts to see if they have anti-dandruff activity (and they definitely did). This is where I got my love for home remedies.

(5) I have an obsession with 'Saving Money' and I feel my husband Chirag has a major role to play here, he is the one who taught me how important this is. I make sure to save at least 50% of my annual income and I am always successful in doing so. I also believe in not spending the money I don't already have to buy things I don't really 'NEED' the very reason why I don't own a credit card. I mean it's ok to splurge sometimes, but also focus on saving your money.

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# ANIKET RAJ

Fashion & Lifestyle



“ Speaking of my shopping behaviour, I'm a really confused person. Before buying any clothing for myself, I consider how many different ways it would look great on me. Additionally, I can incorporate this in how many shoots. And this won't go with any of my other clothes. This implies that it must be exceptional and distinctive to win my favour. ”

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. About your career as a Fashion & Lifestyle Influencer. How did you get started?

**Aniket :** Aniket Raj, a fashion blogger, is on this side. I'm also a digital marketing guy doing professional work on another side. I eventually started blogging and tried to attract viewers to my profile by posting candid reviews and creative photos. So gradually, I had a respectable following and decent post reach. I'm into Fashion Blogging since 2015, month by month and year by year, I tried to uplift my fashion skills by following up with famous creators. At a tender age of 13 or 14 years, I marked the start of this ongoing journey. You could call it a silly ambition, but it was then that I began to fantasize about becoming a well-known face for my creative works.

I was showered with accolades and compliments as soon as I did so. This indeed boosted me up. I took a step forward and followed young artists and models, seeking inspiration and guidance from them.

**Retro Kolkata :** How would you describe your personal style and is there a person in fashion who inspires you? Which fashion designers and fashion bloggers do you admire?

**Aniket :** I recall a well-known phrase, "If you want something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done." This compelled and inspired me to do something I had previously avoided: be socially active. It took some time for me to begin sharing a creative perspective on my routine work. I was surprised to see that the audience was being attracted to them and that they were providing a good reach to my page. Also, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported, criticized, and helped me grow.



**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Aniket :** I used to follow up with all of the trends going on, and as an experienced digital marketer, I used to analyse the impression for any ongoing content. I try my best to create something amazing from that, which will undoubtedly attract an audience and increase interaction.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand?

**Aniket :** Checking over my page will give them the impression that I always work with reliable brands. I never continued working with companies whose products don't stand out from the competition in terms of quality. Because I think that if I am

endorsing a brand and some of my viewers are affected by it, they won't have to choose something that would harm them in the long run. I always want to provide my audience with a better brand. My first collaboration was with Beardo, then I've collaborated on projects with numerous reputable companies, including Bewakoof, Nykaa, UBON, Mivi, Garnier Men, Bazaar Kolkata, mcaffeine, Biryani By Kilo, Hoichoi, Eyewearlabs, SinDenim, Myntra, Sonata, Wildstone, US Polo, Amazon, American Tourister, Rapido, Qraa Men, The Man Company, Missali Shoes, and many more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Aniket :** Speaking of my shopping behaviour, I'm a really confused person. Before buying any clothing for myself, I consider how many different ways it would look great

on me. Additionally, I can incorporate this in how many shoots. And this won't go with any of my other clothes. This implies that it must be exceptional and distinctive to win my favour.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three menswear brands you love and why?

**Aniket :** It will be challenging for me to name them. I tend to favour things that are a good fit for me. And I feel quite secure and at ease in it. Still if talking about homewear casuals I go for Bewakoof. And for my formals Mochi for shoes, Levis, pepe for jeans and Jockey, US polo for shirts.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Aniket :** Definitely that is my formal wear, I really love to wear formals. I feel damn confident and stylish when I wear formals.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite style, a suit or casual wear?

**Aniket :** A suit for all times.



**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Aniket :** 1) I'm a damn funny character in front of the camera, I can flirt with the camera also.

2) I can change my style and character with cloth.

3) I really love to do adventures.

4) I can skip anything for shoots.

5) I still get a lot of excitement when I receive brand collaboration emails.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundary can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Aniket :** When someone makes the effort to connect with a large audience and encourage artists, I genuinely respect and support them. And it's wonderful that you guys are engaging with artists, learning about them, and providing them with a platform to spread their message.

The key takeaway for all viewers is "Please don't give up because you think money might be an issue or because you don't think you look great. If you have the right skills, nothing can stop you, I assure you. Simply preserve your faith in yourself and develop gradually. Love your work at all times. Additionally, continue assisting newcomers."





MEET THE GORGEOUS

# TANYA SAIFI

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**My Fashion Mantra is very simple I love to wear what makes me feel comfortable while looking beautiful. My Fashion Icon is definitely again Deepika Padukone.**

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about your career as a Fashion Model & Influencer. How did you get started?

**Tanya :** While growing up, I have always heard this and seen this that girls can't do this, girls should wear this and so on. Girls were never given freedom to do the things of their own choice and I always wanted to do something for all the women out there and for myself. Being from a family where no one would have ever thought of such a career, it was really difficult for me to tell my parents that I want to make my career in the glamour world. But I think if at that time I had not courageously told my parents about my dream, I would hardly have reached here today and I am lucky to have the best parents who are always there for me no matter what the situation is. I had a dream since childhood to work in films. But it was not so easy for me to work in films because I had no relation with the industry, so I started off my career with modelling because I think modelling is the best option for an outsider like me, but



honestly both the fields are completely different from each other. I started modelling as an option but as soon as I entered the fashion world it becomes my life. I have started my modelling career in the year 2019 with my first 'Miss India Fame' beauty pageant where I was crowned second runner up. I have won many beauty titles from different beauty pageants like Miss India Fame 2019 2nd RU, Miss Meerut 2020 1st RU, Miss Internet Fame Face 2020 (Top 6), Miss Stylish 2020, The Queen of Rajwada 2020 and Miss Glorious Eyes 2021. I am the only model from Meerut who won maximum number of beauty titles. Although I first went to Delhi for a modelling audition in 2018, but was refused citing my young age. I have also worked as a female lead in many music videos. I have judged modelling shows as well. I have got several awards like 'The Pride of India Award, Wow Star Award 2022', and many more for the work done by me in the field of modelling and acting. I have got coverage in several prestigious Bollywood magazines as well, including Enlighten India Bollywood Magazine, Lavafaramedia Magazine, Grehlakshmi Magazine, The Eagle Eye Magazine And P & I Magazine. I have been appointed as the 'Brand Endorser' for Women Personal Hygiene Brand 'Femiss'. I feel privileged to take over all the roles and responsibilities. I have also worked with many top Jewellery and Clothing brand. For me the highest point of my career is when recently i received the award of 'WOW STAR 2022' by 'Wow Skin Science India' in Mumbai. This has made me more confident and hardworking towards my work. It is not a small thing to come Mumbai without having any contact in the industry. I have worked really hard to reach this point. The way i have started my journey being a complete outsider to recently bagging the award in Mumbai is something that has helped me in breaking the stereotypes. I do not come from a filmy background then also i have proved myself that yes i can do it and i'll do it. The credit for my success goes to my parents, they always supported me in my thick and thin times. I am literally blessed by the best parents. Before completely roping into modelling i was a 'Fashion Influencer'. I have collaborated with more than 100 brands including international brands like Mikkados and many more. I was very fond of dressing since childhood, I love wearing sarees. I believe that the beauty of a girl increases thrice in a saree.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is that specific moment in your life which lit the spark in you to become a model?

**Tanya :** My Journey started when one day I saw an advertisement of a modelling show in the newspaper and I thought I should give a try. When I cleared the audition that's when I realized yes now this is what I have to do. And since then I haven't looked back.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Tanya :** My inspiration would be Deepika Padukone because the way she carries herself so beautifully in every outfit from Indian to Western she is a Style Icon in herself.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Tanya :** My Fashion Mantra is very simple i love to wear what makes me feel comfortable while looking beautiful. My Fashion Icon is definitely again Deepika Padukone.





**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever? What have been the greatest challenges you've faced in your career so far and as per your opinion, what are the main challenges in the fashion industry today?

**Tanya :** When I purchased a Dress for a beauty pageant's evening gown round and it turns out to be my winning gown. As I come from an orthodox family so modelling or acting was never a career choice but somehow I convinced my parents but there came a time when I didn't have work for months because of which I was completely broken I started wondering what was I am doing? Sitting ideal and doing nothing. I can't wait for an opportunity to come instead I have to make my own way because if i want to be somewhere after some years then for that goal I have to work for my own self no one else can do that for me. But I never give up because I knew not today, not tomorrow or not day after tomorrow but one day I am going to be at the place I have dreamed of. Challenges are still the same feel as it was before and the talent of the small towns gets hardly any opportunity because the competition is still in huge number and the opportunities are still less because of which most of the talent stay unseen and unheard.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Tanya :** Saree, all time favourite.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Tanya :** Bright bags, Shiny things and Oversized shirts.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your top five beauty essentials?

**Tanya :** BB cream, Loose Powder, Kajal, Lip & Cheek Tint and Face Mist.

**Retro Kolkata :** What three products do you always keep in your makeup bag?

**Tanya :** Face Wash, Moisturizer and Lip Balm.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Tanya :** 5 fun facts about me -

One of my favourite things to do is writing.  
My perfect day would start with Tea and end with Tea.  
If I could live anywhere in the world, it would be a Hill Station because the kind of peace you get there is speechless.  
My favourite comfort food is Daal Chawal.  
My favourite subject in school was English.





# SAGAR UDASEEN



Meet

# SAGAR UDASEEN

Fashion & Lifestyle

**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about you. About your career, about your interest?

**Sagar :** I have over 12 years of experience in teaching and research. I am an educator, who is working with school students in their preparations to gain competitive admissions to reputed medical colleges in the country and abroad. I enjoy teaching to the core.

Right from my childhood, I always took an immense interest in my studies. I went to a boarding school where I had a phenomenal performance in both academics as well as extracurriculars. Thereon, I completed my BTech and MTech in Biotechnology from NIT Rourkela. I've bagged University Silver Medal and Vidya Shree Awards for academic excellence.

I write poetry and fiction (fingers crossed for getting published!). I've also done freelance modelling work for portfolio shoots of fashion brands. I also love anchoring for events and of course, I cook pretty fine. (Readers are most

welcome to taste and relish!) I've discovered that the more I pursue my interest with dedication and consistency, the more rewards come my way – whether it is poetry, anchoring, or cooking.

**Retro Kolkata :** How would you describe your personal style and is there a person in fashion who inspires you?

**Sagar :** My personal style is contemporary, casual, and catchy.

What matters the most to me is how one carries themselves. I always make sure that I make my presence noticed and thus I need to keep working on my dressing sense, communication skills, and receptiveness as per the setting.



To always stay on top of the fashion curve one needs to be alert and ready to adapt and evolve one's dressing sensibilities with the times.

Milind Soman is the man who fuels me with the inspiration of looking relevant, and younger with age.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Sagar :** Most of my early followers were people I personally knew. They are friends, relatives, students, and colleagues. This initial group has been instrumental in increasing the followers through their own social circles that share the mutual desire for the adventure of traveling and believe me it has grown manifold and that too organically. Since travel is infectious!

On social media, most followers come across these adventures through my posts. I make sure to keep my social media always alive and buzzing with what's happening in my life. Travel of course occupies the top spot for engagement. I speak of personal stories from my visits - how to plan within budget, how to live like a local, what best outfits to carry, what to shop for oneself and others, what to eat (and what not to eat!). I make sure that I motivate the followers through these social media to go out there and travel the world around them for themselves!

One thing that I've learned is that this is very symbiotic - The stories I have to tell gather a lot of liking and appreciation. However, it never happens without leaving a token of inspiration for myself. I make sure to get inspired by and adopt all that there is to - most of it coming from those who follow me - their own stories, adventures, and misadventures!

I receive a lot of feedback for my attitude towards teaching, travel, and ventures into poetry and modelling. To be honest, we're socially, emotionally, and mutually connected. That is what makes it easy for me to give them the content that they want.

**Retro Kolkata :** You love to travel. Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Sagar :** Travel is medicine. Some medicines are bitter!

Back in 2019, I accidentally crossed into Canadian territory from the US without a valid visa.



I was traveling with a fellow from the US who insisted that it is a very usual thing for tourists to Niagara Falls to take a walk to the Canadian side by crossing a bridge on top of the falls. Being a first-time visitor, I was quite enthralled by the proposition because I'd heard that the Canadian side of the falls is much more beautiful. My fellow traveller was a person I'd first met just earlier in the day and he'd also offered to store my luggage in his car while we went to look at the falls. Everything seemed to be getting quite well in place so far.

To my shock, when I took a stroll across the bridge to the Canadian side, a Canadian visa was demanded. My fellow traveller, still waiting in line, got separated from me, while I was taken to another immigration post for further questioning. The ground had just slipped beneath my feet - I did not know if I'd committed a crime while my US SIM card would not work on the Canadian side. I had no documents, I could not contact my fellow traveller and all my luggage was in the car of that stranger whom I'd met that very morning! I was not happy with my judgments during the day.





My mind started running in all directions ...  
 Have I been scammed?  
 Will I be able to give answers to the satisfaction of the Canadian immigration authorities?  
 How will I establish contact with the people in the US who could help me out of this situation?

I was finally out of the fiasco. I took time to patiently explain to the authorities my circumstances and the genuine confusion that had landed me in this situation. While the fellow traveller was very apologetic for the confusion that had put me into an almost criminal situation, he had indeed been trying to get across to me on the phone all this while.

This event has had a deep impact on me. Three key things that I learnt that day -  
 ·You can easily get out of a difficult situation by dealing with it with patience.  
 ·Whenever you are not able to establish communication from your SIM for whatsoever reason, look for Wi-Fi – the tourist information centre will mostly have free wi-fi to your rescue.  
 ·Trust fellow travellers. Be careful, but don't rush into judging people.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Sagar :** Travel changes a man in aspects more that can be counted or accounted for. I remember meeting

a dog called Hollister on my trip to the US and that entirely changed my attitude towards pets. Before meeting Hollister, I would never let an animal touch me. Hollister gave me that warmth and comfort. He made me into a more evolved being.

Over these years I have realized that we don't just travel to places, we travel to people too.

This realization has made me discover empathy as well as self-love – both inside myself. I have learned that survival is a very personal journey and the resources at your disposal will never be a deterrent to your travel ambitions. This big world is a beautiful place, filled with beautiful and hospitable people. And that you can never have enough of it – so be ambitious but remain humble.

Whenever the experiences of the fast and demanding modern professional life in a metro city seem to get overwhelming, I apply for leaves and leave for travel. Once I am back from the trip, I'm ready to once again dedicate myself to work in a fully functional way with improved efficiency and focus. I like this cycle, it's contagious!

Travel helps me communicate better at my work. This is very instrumental to my profession of teaching. My travel stories have made the classes more interesting, students more attentive and the whole learning experience livelier.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Sagar :** Colourful set of boxers – comfortable, lightweight, easy to pack (in under 7 Kg of cheap cabin luggage-only flights!) Believe me boys, they are your best travel companion.

On a lighter note, I'm truly fond of the travel tags I purchased recently. Whenever I look at them, I'm excited to travel more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite style, a suit or casual wear?

**Sagar :** When I'm traveling, casual wear for sure. They make me feel more comfortable and breezier. However, I can carry suits quite well too! I have done a few portfolio shoots for formal wear.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Sagar :** I was caught cheating on an exam by my teacher. (I'm a teacher today myself!)

·On my trip to Vietnam, I had to eat pork just to calm my hunger. (I didn't like it!)

·One of my best friends and I worked in the same place for many years without any colleagues knowing about this friendship. (kucch toh log kahenge...!)

·Back in the day, my father was trying to set me up with a girl but my mother hated her. (What do you think I could have done?)

·I ate the "forbidden" durian fruit and entered a bar in Singapore. To my surprise and later to an informed realization, no one was dancing with me (The fruit smells horrible. Don't go for a date after eating it!)

SHASHANKSINGHOFFICIAL

odi bhaut कमियाँ भी ज़रूरी है,  
aan ho toh Insaan lagna भी जरूरी है ! ❤️



# SHASHANK SINGH



shashank singh  
Shashan08510774

is the best way to get away  
able even if it's a fake one.

8 Feb 22 · Twitter for Android

Meet

# SHASHANK SINGH

Fashion & Lifestyle

**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about you. About your career as a Fashion & Lifestyle Influencer. How did you get started?

**Shashank :** I started my fashion and lifestyle influencer journey since march 2020, and I'm really blessed that within a year, I got a family of above 22k people and I'm very happy that my followers are organic and genuine. I started sharing my daily looks over my Instagram and got positive feedback, which is overwhelming to me.

Being an fashion and lifestyle influencer is a hard work. If I love something wear it all the time, find things that suits on me, that's how I look extraordinary. And being a lifestyle influencer , I create content based on my daily life, like traveling, health and fitness.

**Retro Kolkata :** How would you describe your personal style and is there a person in fashion who inspires you? Which fashion designers and fashion bloggers do you admire?

**Shashank :** I always getting positive feedback from my

Instagram family about my personal style by the way, that i introduce any product or brand and my travel lifestyle.

There is a person in fashion always inspire me is Mr. Vijay Devrokonda. He is an actor and his fashion and lifestyle always inspire me.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you get involved with your followers and find the best way to give them the content they want?

**Shashank :** Be authentic and real and speak with them in my live session or in message is my best way to get always involved with my followers. One of the best ways to find out what audience likes (or what works for me) is to use your analytics that is I simply post a question or a



poll on my social media profiles. For example, "What content do you want to see me sharing?" By these steps, I always involved with my Instagram followers family.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you select brands you work with? When was your first collaboration with a brand?

**Shashank :** I always select that brand which have genuine quality of products. My first collaboration was with a beauty brand - wow skin science. Where, I share review of facewash with my Instagram family. And now, I have worked with 25+ brands.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever?

**Shashank :** I always love to wear Tshirt in clothing. My best ever purchase was casual shirt and pant that i purchased with my family. My family suggest me to buy it and i received best feedback from my followers family about it.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three menswear brands you love and why?

**Shashank :** The three menswear brands that i love it, are- Levis, Fila and puma because they have best quality . Their feedback around their sites are real and genuine. I always wear mostly , Tshirt of these brands and I love their quality and style.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you had to name one thing, what would be your favourite thing in your wardrobe right now?

**Shashank :** Favourite thing in my wardrobe right now is Tommy Hilfiger jacket that I was purchased last month.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite style, a suit or casual wear?

**Shashank :** Casual wear is my favourite style because I love clothes that are comfortable and easy to move in. And make me feel good about me and my fashion.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Shashank :** 1- Except fashion and lifestyle, I love to travel every place around the world. I love to show my followers, a good place, healthy vibes around it through my videos.  
2- Being an actor is the dream of my life and 2 years, I also worked in theatres.  
3- Except fashion, I love to share beauty products because my followers want to know about it.  
4- Next year, I will go foreign for my travel and lifestyle influencer journey.  
5- I love to speak frankly with everyone that's help me to know them better.



## FASHION &amp; LIFESTYLE

## AAHIL GANAIE



“In my opinion, everyone has a spark in his inner side, only have to find, I found that. Acting & modelling spark when I got chance and got selected in Delhi without any experience, I rocked the stage,

**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about your career as a Fashion Model & Actor. How did you get started?

**Aahil :** My career started when I was 17 and in Delhi, I was selected for modelling show and after that I did many shows and garment shoots in Delhi, after that I came back to home.

After a gap of 2 years, I went to Mumbai for some work and I got a chance to work in serial as a cameo and worked there, I have also worked in Telegu movies as well,

suddenly I got a call from home about some problems and I returned home which is Kashmir and after that all knows about 1 year of strike curfew, I lost all the contacts

and in between I met with accident also. Time changed when I came to Kolkata and again started my career for modelling, I did many garment shoots, fashion shoot and I got offer from Bangla movies as well but due to unknown language, I lost the opportunity.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is that specific



# AAHIL GANAIE



moment in your life which lit the spark in you to become an actor?

**Aahil :** In my opinion, everyone has a spark in his inner side, only have to find, I found that. Acting & modelling spark when I got chance and got selected in Delhi without any experience, I rocked the stage,

**Retro Kolkata :** Where does your style savvy come from, and where do you get your inspiration?

**Aahil :** I think everyone has that style savvy, only have to look and find that, my inspiration is my mirror, I don't want to copy anyone's style or anything,

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your fashion mantra? Any fashion icons that you personally like or follow?

**Aahil :** Fashion is something that comes with disciplined way of wearing, way of walking, I follow me and I am my own role model, following someone and copying them seems like you are living his life, and I don't want that, I want to be my own BRAND.

**Retro Kolkata :** What has been your best fashion purchase ever? What have been the greatest challenges you've faced in your career so far and as per your opinion, what are the main challenges in the fashion industry today?

**Aahil :** Best purchases I bought Zara jacket and Zara shoes. Greatest challenge I have faced in my career is that at Mumbai, after my shoot, I lost my wallet and was full hungry all day and in the morning at 5 am, I had to come back to studio from Bandra to Miraroad, but I slept all night

at metro station with empty stomach, main challenges in fashion industry is nepotism and sexuality, giving chance to only those who can give them profit physically.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your three favourite trends at the moment?

**Aahil :** If you are asking about fashion trend, then it's jeans and T Shirt, Suits and comfortable joggers.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the three menswear brands you love and why?

**Aahil :** Zara, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, all are my favourite but I can wear anything and that suits more than the Brands,

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Aahil :** a) I have anger, which I don't want to show anyone.

b) I love animals.

c) Love to help poor secretly.

d) I want to heal the pain of every hurted person.

e) loving everyone who still hates me.



RETRO KOLKATA MAGAZINE

# TRAVEL

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EXPLORE YOUR WORLD

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TRAVELING  
LEAVES YOU  
SPEECHLESS  
THEN TURNS  
YOU INTO A  
STORYTELLER.

Neila Rey,  
Travel Bug Channel



Interview with

# Christian Betzmann

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**My favourite place in India is Varanasi. It's probably the most adventurous and most interesting place in India. I love Kerala and Rajasthan. I am also a fan of Goa, which I currently based in. My bucket list is to travel to every state in India and every country in the world , just to be happy to love what I do and to inspire more people to leave their bubble.**

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# CHRISTIAN BETZMANN



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Christian Betzmann :** Basically my mom was a flight attendant. She travelled all over the world with some of the biggest airlines in the world. So I guess I got it in my blood from her. You know, as an early age, I was always into exploring, into nature, into new things. When I was 11, I travelled with schools to different countries by myself, with different trips, when I was 15, I went to different countries with my friends and some teachers. I was always into the unknown world, into starting something new. So, I always loved exploration.

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you decide to become a travel Vlogger & influencer?

**Christian Betzmann :** I was working in events in Australia. I was living there for 3 years. I was working on this one event, where I met a lot of influencers and you know, 8 years ago it wasn't that big, so I was very fascinated how they can make so much money by just posting different products or taking a picture with products. I had always a passion for photography. So what I did is, I started to post pictures on Instagram and then when Instagram announced the Instagram Story feature, I was really interested in sharing my life through these stories and that let me into long form video, when I started my YouTube channel.

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**Christian Betzmann, the crazy & amazing Travel Vlogger with an insatiable desire for adventure has travelled across 51 countries and have visited 10 states in India, currently he is in Goa.A**

**“Travel changed me as a person in that way that, I'm very open minded to where I go, to the people I meet and to the experience I have. I am very very flexible. I have thick skin. Like sometimes in long long travels, you have to do things like long transportation, long flights. So, I'm very very chill in that sense. I have so much experience now with people, I have seen a lot of the World, so a lot of things I can talk about right now, it made me smarter in a way.” Christian said.**

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**Retro Kolkata :** You have visited total of 49 countries. What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Christian Betzmann :** My favourite country is still Australia. I lived there for 3 years, almost 10 months summer, beautiful weather, very very nice people. I really had a good experience there and I really want to go back. Australia is definitely on the list.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Christian Betzmann :** So initially I had savings and I went to Australia, got a job. So, what I did, before my social media, before I did it full time, I would have a job, I would save money and I would travel. So, I would reinvest all the money that I earned and reinvested into my travels. So, with

that, I could sustain myself longer and then later on, I invested some of the money when I lived in London. I invested in my gear. Bought a laptop, a camera, a drone, a GoPro Pro and then I started making videos more professionally for YouTube and stuff and if you keep doing it, then you will make money based on ads, brands that you came in and that turned my passion into a full time job.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Christian Betzmann :** Yeah..I travel solo many many times. I left Germany completely alone with a one way ticket. That was a very big challenge to be so far away from family. Like, I have no friends in Australia, I don't know anyone, I could barely speak English, I could

barely speak the language fluently and then I found a job, I met people . It's teaching a lot about life travelling solo and I definitely didn't expect how beneficial travelling solo is, be yourself, you do things yourselves. It teaches so much about life, now I can convert it into my travels and it's actually funny, because you are never alone when you are travelling, you always meet people and if you're open minded to do so, then you will meet people from all over the world. You become good friends. You share a passion. So it's definitely what I can recommend to anyone.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Christian Betzmann :** Yes..I have been to Pakistan around 2 years ago, when COVID started and you know, what you hear in media, it's very bad, it's a very bad country, terrorists.. blah blah blah... All these things you hear in the media which are actually not true. I find it to be a very peaceful



country, very nice people and I had such a good experience there, so seeing that from a completely different angle, it's really shocked me how the media is manipulating different topics.

**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time travellers?

**Christian Betzmann:** I would say Bali, Indonesia. it's great to connect with travellers. if super affordable, I would say Philippines and I would say Vietnam. These are my top recommendations.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Christian Betzmann :** My most memorable adventure was probably my time in Pakistan. When I go to new countries, I usually don't have any expectation, but if you go to a country which has a negative reputation, like where media is portraying it very negative, then obviously you would be most surprised and the outcome, that you wouldn't believe, that's so good, so much fun, people are nice. So traveling in Pakistan definitely had a big impact on me.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Christian Betzmann:** It changed me as a person in that way that, I'm very open minded to where I go, to the people I meet and to the experience I have. I am

very very flexible. I have thick skin. Like sometimes in long long travels, you have to do things like long transportation, long flights. So, I'm very very chill in that sense. I have so much experience now with people, I have seen a lot of the World, so a lot of things I can talk about right now, it made me smarter in a way.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have visited 10 states in India. Till now, how is your experience and where did you like most? Where is your favourite place in the world? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

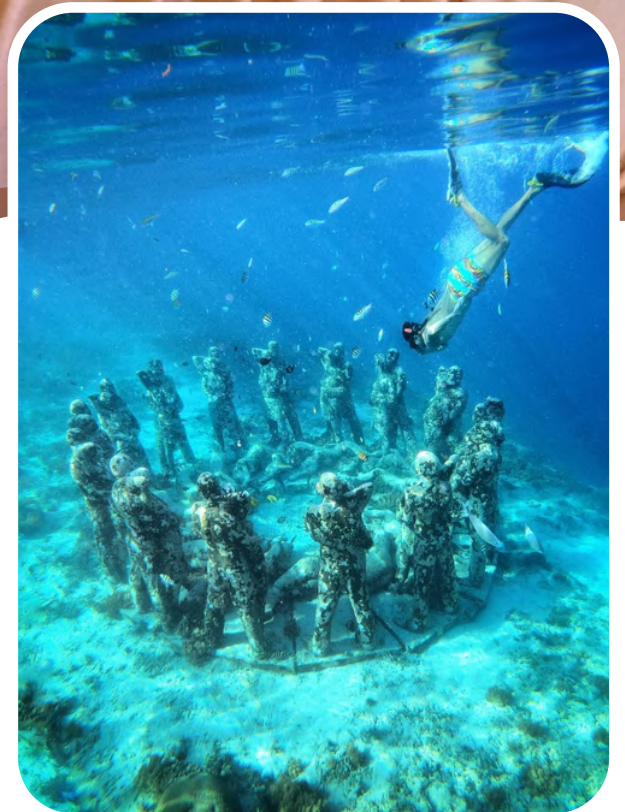
**Christian Betzmann :** My favourite place in India is Varanasi. It's probably the most adventurous and most interesting place in India. I love Kerala and Rajasthan. I am also a fan of Goa, which I currently based in. My bucket list is to travel to every state in India and every country in the world , just to be happy to love what I do and to inspire more people to leave their bubble.

**Retro Kolkata :** Vlogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel vlogging in 2022 and further?

**Christian Betzmann :** I believe personally that the internet is still just in the beginning. there's so much space for content creators. I mean, if you just look at Instagram 1.0, before Tiktok, before reels, it was so hard to grow. Only the big accounts with big followings would get a lot of likes. It was so hard to break out of this. Like, if you would get a thousand likes, you would be slowly decreasing every month and now with the Reels and short videos, it gives people a chance to be seen and to grow as a influencers and creators and if there is a better time to start Youtube and Instagram, it's literally right now. You can make money with art, with anything you love to do if you just make videos and post it.







**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list top 5 reasons for your success as a travel vlogger, what would those be?

**Christian Betzmann:** I am very positive and optimistic. I have a lot of energy. People love my energy. I am very honest and true. I'm not only showing the good side of my travel, I also show the bad sides. I am super engaging, super entertaining, super fun. I travel to a lot of offbeat places, where most people would not go.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring travellers?

**Christian Betzmann :** Don't plan too much, go with the flow, book may be one or two nights in hotels, don't be afraid to meet people, do whatever you love and just be open minded and be happy. Don't be scared of doing solo travel.





# JYOTHI PUROHIT



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Jyothi :** I have always been a fun loving and adventurous person since my childhood. I loved talking to people and going around, visiting places I haven't seen before. Since college days, I had taken up internships, hosted events as an Emcee in various brand launches and also worked as an IELTS trainer while I was doing a full-time job even post college. I always believed in doing something or the other as a side hustle with my full-time job and I never wanted to stop doing this. It was in the beginning of my corporate career; I started going on trips with friends and realised how much I was

enjoying it. Slowly I started documenting my experiences and that is how "Gullytrotter" was born. Eventually, I started traveling often because it made me happy when I met people from different places and heard their stories and this kept pushing me to travel more often than ever and then, there was no looking back.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have your family and friends always supported you? How do you handle it when perhaps some people close to you doesn't agree with your decision to travel?

**Jyothi :** Though I belong from an authentic Marwari family, my parents always had strong belief in me, my mother (my biggest strength) trusted and supported my decisions. Fortunately, I got married

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**Introducing Jyothi Purohit, a crazy dreamer with an insatiable desire for travel and adventure who could never settle for an ordinary life or conform with the norm, also an experienced & one of the most-recognized travel Vloggers who keep sharing her travel stories helps tourist planning their trip across India in budget.**

**“One of the best things travel does to you is, you stop being judgemental. Eventually you realise happiness is about understanding people around you as human beings and letting your ego go away. You are able to accept every culture, caste, creed beautifully because that is what travel is all about. Travel makes you realise that life is not just your house, luxury, family or a job, but it is a way beyond it.”**

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to a man who encourages me to travel more than anyone else and is always there for me, be it anything I want to pursue. Yes, sometimes they are worried for me when I am traveling alone to places where the weather is not fine, when there are safety issues and places where there is no network. But eventually I make them understand that I can take care of myself and as well be fine even when I am alone. I ensure, I call them from time to time and keep them informed about my daily travel plans.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Jyothi :** I love every part of India because everything in our nation is unique and different. Every culture, every place has its own beauty. But, one place I would love going

back to again and again is Leh, Ladakh. The mountains, the snow, the architecture of the monasteries make it impossible for you to believe what you see with your naked eyes. There are so many colours you witness at each point, the air is so fresh, the people are so simple and kind that you would never want to come back. Every locality you meet up in the mountains has so many stories to share and it feels like you are so connected. The hospitality is marvellous. Something you would not experience while living in a city, because we all are so occupied in our lives.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Jyothi :** It's difficult to manage work & travel together but it's not impossible and like I mentioned in

the beginning I have always loved having a side hustle along with a full-time job.

It gives me less sleep hours, less time to rest but I am fine with it. Because I am able to do what I Love.

I always had savings from what I earned through my full time Job. And I managed my expenses from what I earned through my side hustle and that helped me fund my travels.

But, it's not necessary that each one has to have a side hustle to earn that extra income to travel. One can travel by saving wisely from his/her full-time job and utilise the funds smartly implementing "Budget Travel" which is my niche .

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Jyothi :** Yes, I have travelled solo and I have loved it from Day one of my first solo trip. For me, Solo travel means I am able to travel my way, spending as much time I want to, in any place I like to.

I don't have to worry about any other





individual traveling along and about their comforts, their boredom, whether the person is liking the food or not, if the person is wanting to spend the time I want to, talking to a local or just enjoying a view.

Solo travel also helps you evolve as a person, gives you so much exposure about the world, about people, places, their cultures, problems and lifestyle of a particular place/destination.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Jyothi :** Every place that I have been to in India & Outside has been absolutely beautiful more than what I had imagined. I went on a one month backpacking trip to Kerala and was astonished seeing the beauty of the place and realised how rightly we have named it as "God's Own Country". Kerala not only has Mountains, hills, Beaches, Tea Plantations and waterfalls but also the most kind hearted humans living across the state, who always welcomed me with a heart-warming smile.

**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time travellers?

**Jyothi :** India is safe and I realised it only after I completed a couple of solo trips across states. But yes, that does not mean all the evil has ended. A human being anywhere on earth (and in India) needs to be careful of the evil people who are surrounding us everywhere but you don't stop traveling because of them.

As per my experiences, Palampur (full of

defence retired personnel), Naggar (with the kindest people) and so many other places in Himachal are safe for solo travellers. However, the list does not end, there is Kerala, Jaisalmer, Udaipur and lots of other places which can be considered as a destination for first time travellers. The point here is, a place is not unsafe but people with wrong intentions make it so.

Ex: I felt super secure when I was in Palampur also because Vikram Batra belongs from that place. But that doesn't mean a man with wrong intentions traveling from another state would find it difficult to commit a crime, as every place in Himachal shuts max by 7PM in the evening.

So, whether it is Palampur or Goa (Because we have heard so many crimes being committed here) can be safe/unsafe depending on how carefully one is traveling while on a solo trip or in a group.

One should avoid walking alone in the dark streets of a new place with hardly any people around.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Jyothi :** One of my memorable

adventure experiences was from my Himachal trip. I had to climb 3 mountains to visit a village called Gargi (a village situated on the mountains close to Kasol) which is stunningly beautiful with a population of not more than 50-80 people. My first self-learning from this adventure was how much I needed to exercise on a daily basis to be able to travel the world, especially places which needed you to trek for hours, along with this, I realised having the right trekking gears (like shoes) are most important when you are walking for long hours.

Another eye opener was to carry snacks. Even if it looks like a 2-3-hour trip, you never know when you get hungry and feel sick if there is no food around.

The biggest impact this adventure created on me was on my body fitness because when I reached the village after a long trek, I was shocked to see a 70-year-old lady going down the mountains to Kasol and coming back to Gargi in half the time I took just to climb





to this village and since then I have been exercising regularly.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Jyothi :** Travel definitely changes an individual and his/her personality in a positive way.

One of the best things travel does to you is, you stop being judgemental. Eventually you realise happiness is about understanding people around you as human beings and letting your ego go away. You are able to accept every culture, caste, creed beautifully because that is what travel is all about. Travel makes you realise that life is not just your house, luxury, family or a job but it is a way beyond it. Travel makes you a carefree person. You become adaptive to any kind of environment, you become bold, open minded and always ready to step out of your comfort zone.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which regions in India would you recommend for more seasoned travellers?

**Jyothi :** Like I mentioned earlier every state in India is a must visit for a traveller, since there is so much to explore and every place has something different to offer.

South Coast places (Goa, Kerala, Udupi, Kanyakumari) in Monsoon, Rajasthan in Winters, Beach Places/ Mountains in Summer, Leh-Ladakh between June to Aug etc.

An advice for the seasoned travellers would be to attend the beautiful festivals organised by the locals, especially in some offbeat places in India, like Puli Kali – Kerala, Madai Festival – Chhattisgarh, Mim Kut Festival – Mizoram, Sekrenyi Festival – Nagaland, Sume-Gelirak Festival – Odisha and so many more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What advice would you like to pass on to women traveling on their own in India?

**Jyothi :** Never stop traveling or think twice to take that step, if your heart says do it, then just do it.

-Problems are going to be there; people are going to talk anyway but don't stop yourself from achieving what you want.

-But yes, if you are traveling, make sure you are keeping yourself safe. Make friends but not blindly, trust people but don't allow them to cross their limits.

-Book your stays after proper research (read reviews and check ratings before making the booking).

-Don't walk on empty streets (especially during odd hours)

and always talk to people and try to know them and their intentions, before you plan to travel around in a new place.

-Speak to the locals about the place, timings, safety for woman etc.

-Always share your location with one of your family members, in case you are completely new to a place.

-Have your family member contacts in your speed dial.

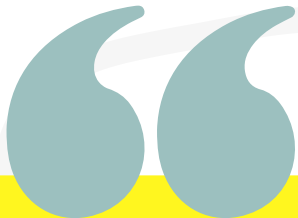
-Also, have one of the hotel manager contacts with you when you are traveling at a new place, in case you are lost/in any problem.





# THE SUNSHINE LADKI

SURYA - TRAVEL VLOGGER



**According to me, solo travel is empowering because we face a lot of challenges, from which we learn a lot. Challenges like safety concern, being a girl which is a very big challenge while traveling solo. So, I have managed it like I earlier explained, pre-inform to family friends, make review based bookings, research places, and keep pepper spray etc things with you.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start solo travelling?

**Surya :** I have been travelling from my college days, as I wanted to travel and explore every place, culture, people and their stories from my childhood. So, in college days I got little freedom from my family and earned some money through tuitions etc ; Therefore, I got an opportunity to execute my passion and then I started. India is a country where women are not exactly safe according to media and news and daily incidents. So, I thought why not explore this fear and then I started solo travel.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have your family and friends always supported you? How do you handle it when perhaps some people close to you don't agree with your decision to travel?

**Surya :** I am a small town girl whose parents never accept these things and never allow for solo travel etc. So, I have handled a lot, I have convinced my parents, showed my journey and also proved to them that now I am successful in what I want to do.





**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Surya :** I have explored India mostly and I like all the places in India because every place has its own charm. But yeah! I love the monsoon in Maharashtra, Snow & Autumn in Kashmir, spirituality and peace in Banaras.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you stay safe when you travel alone? Do you have particular safety tips that you stand by?

**Surya :** Whenever I travel solo, I make sure of a few things for safety like informing family and friends about the trip and location ahead of time, research everything about the location, choosing a place to stay based on reviews etc. These are a few certain points which are very important for traveling solo.

**Retro Kolkata :** When you first travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Surya :** Not exactly, it was totally different from expectations and the feeling was totally amazing as I feel being independent, how to meet new people, adventure etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** People often talk about solo travel being empowering. But what are the challenges and how do you manage them?

**Surya :** According to me, solo travel is empowering because we face a lot of challenges, from which we learn a lot. Challenges like safety concern, being a girl which is a very big challenge while traveling solo. So, I have managed it like I earlier explained, pre-inform to family friends, make review based bookings, research places, and keep pepper spray etc things with you.

**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time solo travellers?

**Surya :** I will recommend Kashmir, South India etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the challenges you faced as a solo woman traveller?



**Surya** : Challenges like safety concern being a girl which is a very big challenge while traveling solo. So, I have managed it like I earlier explained pre-inform to family friends, review based bookings, research places, and keep paper spray etc things with you.

**Retro Kolkata** : Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Surya** : It was my Jaisalmer trip, where I went for new year camping in sand dunes and there were no Indian tourists , I met only foreigners and it was like not feeling safe in my country. That was full of adventure and that day I realised a lot of things and prepared myself for more adventure and solo travel learnings.

**Retro Kolkata** : What was the best experience you had travelling solo?

**Surya** : The same experience of Jaisalmer also includes some little experiences like meeting local people, staying with them etc.



**Retro Kolkata** : How has travel changed who you are?

**Surya** : Travel changed me a lot, like I became more independent, fearless, adventurous, learned a lot of new things, helping people is my first priority.

**Retro Kolkata** : Which regions in India would you recommend for more seasoned travellers?

**Surya** : Kashmir, Nagaland , Meghalaya, Ladakh

**Retro Kolkata** : What advice would you like to pass on to women traveling on their own in India?

**Surya** : The only advice I will pass that "You can do it". Just make sure your safety and just do it girls.





# MEET TRAVEL VLOGGER SANA CHIKHALIA

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Yes, Japan. I wasn't expecting the people to be too friendly but the Japanese were super humble and even though English isn't the first language they go out of their way to help others, this surprised me.



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start with the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with travelling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Sana :** As a child, my family often took us for holidays in and around India, but as we grew older travelling internationally became easier due to the ease of the internet which eventually helped me to understand more about different cultures, and places and this enthusiasm made me study travel and tourism. This ultimately became my passion, to discover the world.

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you decide to become a travel blogger & influencer?

**Sana :** I didn't actually, it just fell into place. I loved to share my tips on travelling, sharing hidden gems and talking about unique destinations which essentially led me to my first few press trips but even before that travelling just came secondarily to me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Sana :** I loved visiting Finland due to its dynamic landscape and Australia because of its closeness to Mother Nature, and lastly New York due to its fun city vibe!

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Sana :** I work hard and save for my travels, look out for catchy deals and sometimes even reach out to brands which I can relate to and who would love to collaborate with me as well.



**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Sana :** Yes, I have but I do not enjoy it as I love to share the experience with my family and there is no other joy than to be surrounded by your loved ones on a great holiday.



**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Sana :** Yes, Japan. I wasn't expecting the people to be too friendly but the Japanese were super humble and even though English isn't the first language they go out of their way to help others, this surprised me.





**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time travellers?

**Sana :** Italy, I love the food, and the people, and there is so much to see and do. You can never go wrong with it.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Sana :** I am not a person who loves car rides but driving across America and seeing how distinct each place is made me want to do road trips more often. I would highly recommend a trip there, and hopefully, it's my dream to drive across all 50 states.

My drive from Los Angeles to San Francisco is very special and close to my heart, we did the drive for over two days, saw some fantastic places and ate delicious food.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Sana :** It has taught me to be more grounded and also to see how different we as people are, but one thing which has been a bonding factor with strangers in different places is the food, it connects us. I have also learned to be calmer and enjoy the moment then rushing with the time.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where is your favourite place in the world? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

**Sana :** There are many places which I love but currently, I would like to go back to Australia, loved the country, and the balance between the city and nature. My three bucket list places currently are South Korea, Iceland and South Africa.

**Retro Kolkata :** Blogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel blogging in 2022 and further?

**Sana :** If you are consistent and passionate about it, I would highly suggest you go for it and sooner or later you will see the rewards but be in it if you enjoy it and not for the sake of it.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list the top 3 reasons for your success as a travel blogger, what would those be?

**Sana :** Consistency, Honesty, and dedication

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring travellers?

**Sana :** Start with travelling locally and documenting each of your trips and slowly move onto bigger destinations, also be consistent and honest with your followers as ultimately they are your audience.





Interview with

Zoha  
Jalal

@Travelocorn

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Every place has a special place in my heart, but I think Nagaland is one of my favourite places, followed by Thailand, and finally a small village near Dharamshala. I'm not sure what the name is, but it's nice and has some nice birds. So, I believe these three locations are my favourites, especially, Nagaland and Thailand.

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# ZOHA JALAL

@TRAVELOCORN

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start solo travelling?

**Zoha :** So when I was a kid, I was always very keen and interested in travelling, but because my parents were always working and we never really had that much financial strength, I wasn't able to travel as much as I wanted to. However, when I went to college in Dehradun, I had my first opportunity to travel outside of my hometown and that made me realize how much I love travelling, I used to like travelling since I was a kid, but I never did. I was in Law School at the time and had really bad mental health, and travelling was the one thing that I chose. My therapist asked me what I wanted to do, and I said that I didn't want to be a lawyer. I stated that I didn't want to see myself as a lawyer in the future and that I would prefer to do something that would allow me to travel. So she suggested starting a travel page, and I did, and then I dropped out of college and enrolled in BBN tourism management, and that's how the journey began., And that's how I started travelling. The main reason I travelled alone was that I didn't want to be dependent on anyone around me. If one person went on a trip with me, I couldn't go. That's why I started doing it on my own. I enjoy my company. I'm not an introvert, but I enjoy being alone. I enjoy spending time alone with my thoughts, so travelling solo came naturally to me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Zoha :** So every place has a special place in my heart, but I think Nagaland is one of my favourite places, followed by Thailand, and finally a small village near Dharamshala. I'm not sure what the name is, but it's nice and has some nice birds. So, I believe these three locations are my favourites, especially, Nagaland and Thailand.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you stay safe when you travel alone? Do you have particular safety tips that you stand by?

**Zoha :** I think it's really important to stay safe while travelling solo. You should practice it first, like in your hometown, because when you're travelling solo in your own country, people generally won't even notice that you're an outsider. But when you're travelling somewhere outside of India, people will figure it out that you're from another place, so it's very important to practice it in your own country, in your city - a place where you know people. You know how to do errands alone or go for a walk alone--do it slowly and steadily, and once you get confident, 50% of the problem is already solved. Because when people see that you're confident enough, they won't approach you in a bad way in general. But in this case, I always send my location to one of my friends or someone in my family.



So if something goes wrong, they can always track me. Second, I recommend keeping a pepper spray, but only using it when it is necessary and, most importantly, when something bad is happening. Don't freak out; simply use your brain at that time. Because what happens if you panic when something bad is happening? Your brain stops working. You have to keep yourself calm and appear unafraid. Being confident is the key, I would say.

**Retro Kolkata :** When you first travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Zoha :** So when I started travelling solo and on my first trip, what I had in mind was this very good thing- like..Oh! I will enjoy it. I will meet so many new people. I will make friends, I will talk to strangers. What happened was that I was having fun, enjoying the place more than the people, because when you are alone, you are free to do whatever you want to do., You are free to go wherever you want to go; there is no restriction. It was like this, but actually, I felt lonely, even though I love my own company.



You know, on social media you see that solo travelling is just fun and they send that, but at times you are human beings., We are all humans so we sometimes need that personal connection. And when you are on your initial few trips, I think it's really hard to make friends because you're not always so open to talking to new people. Sometimes you will think that how will this person turn out to be? So that comes with time. I think, with time and practice, and gradually you take this more comfortably and it keeps getting better.

**Retro Kolkata :** People often talk about solo travel being empowering. But what are the challenges and how do you manage them?

**Zoha :** I would say solo travelling is empowering because once you start doing it, you know on your own that you start gaining more and more confidence and you get this feeling that, "Oh, I am self-sufficient and I can do whatever I want to do in life. I can do it all on my own. I don't need any external help or support." That build-up with time, but then I say like there are problems., As you know, you will feel lonely and then all the responsibilities are on your head. But as for me, I enjoy all these things.

I like to take initiative. I like the leadership thing. So it's the best point for me and I don't have many problems apart from feeling lonely sometimes and missing my friends like when I went to go solo I wanted to meet new people and have friends but then you know I did not have friends and that felt quite a vacant. How I manage it is like I try to keep in touch with my friends over the phone or something like that, and the main thing that I do is always



stay in hostels and make a lot of good friends there. Then we can travel together and do stuff like that. So, I think that is a great point like hostels. I would like a series for us. Solo Traveler.

**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time solo travellers?

**Zoha :** For your first time, I would suggest you start with Himachal if in India because it's very friendly. You will feel the warmth of the people, who are welcoming. It's nice and budget-friendly, and it's quite safe. Then I would say Thailand and Vietnam is also nice option. But I think Thailand is very travel-friendly and it's quite budget-friendly as well. Then, you have quite a lot of rules and regulations. If you know how to keep yourself safe, then I think it's a really good destination for a solo trip.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the challenges you faced as a solo woman traveller?

**Zoha :** I will share one incident when I was coming from Gorakhpur, my hometown, to Delhi. This time, I wanted to try the sleeper train. I had never ridden in a sleeper train before, so it was a new experience for me. Anyway, there was a guy who was being here and there around me, and he was sitting in front of my seat. So, at night he came there and sat next to me. And he just lay there on her seat, and I just panicked badly. I anyway made noise and told him to get off but later the people also threw him off but the train was moving. He was still on the train and later my train reached daily around 3 AM, it got delayed by 6 hours. And when I took off to the station, he started to follow me and he was saying, "I'll handle your bag" and I was saying, "No, no, no, no," but I just pretended to talk to my father on the call. Then I saw him following me and I panicked. I got afraid, but then luckily, There were two police officers. So, I reached out to those men and they told me to sit in the waiting room nearby. The main thing is if you ever feel unsafe or something like that, reach out to whoever person is near you or if there's a shop, just enter the shop and tell the shopkeeper. Just try not to run in an empty area, try to run in a crowd that can help you and always ask for help - don't hesitate.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Zoha :** My most memorable adventure would be my first ever trek to Triund. Before that, I always fantasized about trekking and hiking, but I had never done it before, so I didn't know what to expect. I was very unfit physically and started hiking in Triund. , I was supposed to stay there at night. It was like just a hike from here to the base camp, you know - from the base to the top. But then I started walking and everyone reached there 3 hours or something and it took me like 6 hours. That day, while I was climbing, I thought I would never trek again., I will only do city travel; I will never do a trek again. But then, as I reached the top it was almost sunset time, it took me almost 6 hours. And then, I was just very tired; I couldn't even see the sun., I just sat there and after sitting for two minutes, I just opened my eyes and saw the sunset there. And then, I got shocked.,I had no idea that you knew the six hours that I walked, losing my breath and I think this is my most memorable moment. After that, I did it eleven times and I think that changed my whole perception about travel.,





Travel is not about your comfort; it's about expanding your horizons. You'll always feel like you're taking a risk, and you'll get tired while travelling, but at the end of it you'll feel that it was worth it.

**Retro Kolkata :** It seems like you have a deep connection to nature and that this has sparked your love for photography. Apart from Travel Vlogger, you are a photographer also. How important do you believe it is for a photographer to love the outdoors, not just the results?

**Zoha :** I think photography is just an art like any other art like sketching, drawing, or anything. You must have heard a lot of times that when the painter paints something, it's not the painting, it's the emotion that he is taking out in his paintings. The same goes for a photographer. I would say so. I feel very, very calm and I feel very nice. I'm out in nature and I feel like I belong there. I don't like city life as much. I'm more of a countryside person. So when I feel good, the pictures come out that way. If I'm feeling happy, the Pictures will be more creative, and they will have a more happy vibe to them. If I am feeling sad, the pictures will be moodier, and editing also plays a part in the process. So, I think being in love with nature has a huge role in turning out to be a good photographer because your love for nature will show through your pictures.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have there been times that you've had to revisit your favourite places many times to achieve the required result? Can you tell us more about your method of working?

**Zoha :** As I told you in the previous

answer, I have been to Triund eleven times, but still don't have a proper Vlog about it. At first, I didn't Vlog my experiences; I just made small snippets. But then I decided to Vlog it properly, so I went there and Vlogged the whole process. And then what happened, while returning, I was shooting on my phone, and my phone hung. I lost all the data, so after maybe a month I went there again. This time I felt too tired and I couldn't Vlog the whole process. That kept on going every time and I couldn't just vlog the clip that you know, the thing that I wanted to cover., I just couldn't do it and as it is, it takes almost 1 to 2 days to do the whole trek. So, it was not an easy task but I still have not got the results that I wanted. So, yes, sometimes it happens. Travelling is all about moments, if it passes, you can't capture them.

I generally do is when I visit a place and I think it's worth photographing or shooting, the shot which always has in my mind, that can come out well and I just take the shot, I don't overshoot and then I put the camera aside and chill. I keep the camera inside and I will just sit and chill so that you know.

Because I do this because I like to travel, and photography comes second.

My love for travelling comes first, but lately, it seems like photography is my main interest because I enjoy doing it. But I always make sure that I'm enjoying the place and its vibe more than just shooting pictures.







# MEET THE TRAVEL VLOGGER SANSKRITI RAMTEK

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Some of my favorite places come from Rajasthan, I think I will never get tired of Jaipur and Udaipur in India. Then comes the mountains, the Himalayas and the Western Ghats.





**With time, I came to understand the importance of traveling and how effectively it improves mental wellness. I slowly wanted to start encouraging people to travel, but soon discovered that it isn't that simple for everyone. People are dependent on others and don't know how to travel independently, so I took the opportunity to provide them with the knowledge they need to organize their own trips and create the best possible memories.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Sanskriti :** As an adult, traveling was an escape from the challenging times of my life; only to discover how small my problems are in comparison to what is out there. Slowly traveling became my therapy and it healed me in a way I couldn't imagine. Every day, I am inspired by the young me who desires to travel the world.

**Retro Kolkata :**How did you decide to become a travel blogger & content creator?

**Sanskriti :** With time, I came to understand the importance of traveling and how effectively it improves mental wellness. I slowly wanted to start encouraging people to travel, but soon discovered that it isn't that simple for everyone. People are dependent on others and don't know how to travel independently, so I took the opportunity to provide them with the knowledge they need to organize their own trips and create the best possible memories.

**Retro Kolkata :**What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Sanskriti :** Some of my favorite places come from Rajasthan, I think I will never get tired of Jaipur and Udaipur in India.

Then comes the mountains, the Himalayas and the Western Ghats.



**Retro Kolkata :**How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Sanskriti :** My job as a corporate trainer has so far helped me pay for my travel expenses. I've been able to balance the two, thanks to Work from anywhere (WFH). I do paid collaborations and also reach out to hotels, brands, etc for a stay in return for deliverables which will help build their social media account as well as mine.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Sanskriti :** Yes, I travelled to Dubai solo and explored some of the places all by myself. Even if my research was thorough, I was out of my shell and had a lot of anxiety about being in a foreign country. A woman imagines the worst-case scenarios while traveling and it's wise to be prepared for such things. Luckily, I had a very great experience as a solo traveller as UAE is pretty safe for female travellers and it helped me gain a ton of confidence.

**Retro Kolkata :**Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Sanskriti :** Oh yes, my father served in Air Force and as a child, I lived in Rajasthan when he was posted there. Rajasthan was always just a place of sand in my mind, but after visiting and discovering it as an adult, my perception was altered, and Rajasthan quickly became one of my favourite places. Rajasthan has a lot to offer, including historical heritage, cultural diversity, and stunning landscapes. Rajasthan's world-famous cuisine captures the richness of traditional Rajputana delicacies prepared in royal kitchens.



**Retro Kolkata :** What destination(s) would you recommend to first-time travellers?

**Sanskriti :** Rishikesh, Manali, Jaipur, Kerala, and Goa would be perfect to make first-time travellers fall in love with traveling.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Sanskriti :** There are two actually and both of them were equally memorable. Paragliding in Bir-Billing; I literally cried for a moment out of happiness when I was in the sky because I am very scared of heights. The second one is the World's longest Zipline in UAE and I was blown away by the adrenaline rush it gave me. I can now say I am not scared of heights, in fact, I am considering becoming a Paragliding pilot.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Sanskriti :** Traveling helped me learn about myself, my comfort levels, boundaries, things I want to achieve, and how happy it makes me be in a completely different place with strangers. I feel empowered and have a sense of accomplishment every time I am able to figure out something in a new city. And I learned how to utilize time and resources to create the things that I want.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where is your favourite place in the world? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

**Sanskriti :** Currently, Paris is my favourite location. I've been there once, but it wasn't enough to fulfil my heart. And my bucket list is pretty huge; you should see the pinned locations on my Google maps. On top of it, I have Iceland, Indonesia and UK.



**Retro Kolkata :** Blogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel blogging in 2022 and further?

**Sanskriti :** I am absolutely positive it will never get old and newbies will always have the opportunity to take it to different levels. People are constantly looking for unfiltered, fresh information. Simple example: When searching for videos on YouTube, we tend to choose the most recent ones.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list top 5 reasons for your success as a travel blogger, what would those be?

**Sanskriti :** The reasons would definitely be:

1. Being myself
2. Focusing on providing valuable and quality content
3. Interacting with my community and understanding them well
4. Being consistent and
5. Not taking things for granted

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring travellers?

**Sanskriti :** If you are passionate about something, give it your everything. Fail, but do not give up. Like they say "Rome wasn't built in a day"





## The Top Ten Most Breathtaking Hill Stations in India

As somebody who loves to travel, I'm always on the lookout for new and exciting places to explore. And, India is a country that definitely never fails to disappoint in that regard. There are so many different and amazing places to see in India, from the bustling streets of Mumbai to the stunning Taj Mahal. But one of my favorite things about India is its hill stations. India is home to some of the most beautiful and breathtaking hill stations in the world, and in this blog post, I'm going to be counting down my top ten favourites.

SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET'S GET STARTED!

### 10. OOTY

As somebody who loves to travel, I'm always on the lookout for new and exciting places to explore. And, India is a country that definitely never fails to disappoint in that regard. There are so many different and amazing places to see in India, from the bustling streets of Mumbai to the stunning Taj Mahal. But one of my favorite things about India is its hill stations. India is home to some of the most beautiful and breathtaking hill stations in the world, and in this blog post, I'm going to be counting down my top ten favourites.

### 9. SHIMLA

Shimla is a hill station located in Himachal Pradesh, northwestern India. It was formerly the summer capital of British India and is today a popular tourist destination due to its cool climate and Victorian-era architecture. Some of Shimla's notable landmarks include The Mall Road and Christ Church.



## 8. COONOR

Coonoor is a hill station located in Tamil Nadu, southern India. It's known for its production of Nilgiri tea as well as its panoramic views of the Western Ghats mountain range. Coonoor is also home to several tourist attractions, such as Law's Falls and Sim's Park.

## 7. KODAIKANAL

Kodaikanal is a hill station located in Tamil Nadu, southern India. It's known for its scenic views of the Palani Hills mountain range as well as man-made lakes such as Berijam Lake. Kodaikanal is also home to numerous tourist attractions, such as the Bryant Park and Kodai Lake.

## 6. NANDI HILLS

Nandi Hills is a hill station located in Karnataka, southern India. It's known for its panoramic views of the surrounding countryside as well as its many temples and monuments dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. Nandi Hills is also home to several hiking trails and waterfalls, such as Dodabetta Falls and Raja Falls.

## 5. MUSSOORIE

Mussoorie is a hill station located in Uttarakhand, northern India. It's known for its views of the Himalayas mountain range as well as its numerous educational institutions such as Mussoorie International School and Woodstock School. Mussoorie is also home to several tourist attractions, such as Gun Hill Point and Kempty Falls.





## 4 . DARJEELING

Darjeeling is a hill station located in West Bengal, eastern India. It's known for its stunning views of Mount Everest as well as its variety of Indian teas, Darjeeling is also home to several tourist attractions such as Tiger Hill and Batasia Loop.

## 3 . LONAVALA

Lonavala ,is a hill station located in Maharashtra, western India., It's known for ,its production ,of chikki candy ,as well ,as, its proximity to several popular trekking trails, such as Rajmachi Fort Trek , Lonavala is also home to several tourist attraction such as Lion's Point and Bhushi Dam.

## 2 . MAHABALESHWAR

Mahabaleshwar is a hill station located in Maharashtra, western India. It's known for its proximity to the Kaas Plateau Nature Reserve and many waterfall, such as Venna Lake Waterfall. Mahabaleshwar is also home to several tourist attractions such as Table Land and Wilson Point.

## 1 . SRINAGAR

Srinagar is a hill station located in Jammu & Kashmir, northern India. It's known for its beautiful views of the Dal Lake and its variety of houseboats .Srinagar is also home to several tourist attractions such as Mughal Gardens and Shankaracharya Temple.

HAPPY TRAVELS!



# GIAN LUCA SGAGGERO

## MEET THE TRAVEL BLOGGER

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Gian :** I've always travelled a lot since I was a really young; my parents are from Sardinia, but we live in Piedmont (North Italy), where we still live, so Sardinia was our best destination for vacation and also to find relatives and grandparents. My first trips around the world started when I was 18 years old; I was eager to discover new places (Egypt, Cabo Verde, Canary Islands).



I'm totally in love with Thailand, especially the northern regions where you can find authentic cities, pristine forests and amazing people. Mexico stole my heart, I had one of my best adventures traveling through Yucatan, Chiapas and Quitana Roo. In Europe I love to explore Greece, Portugal and Spain. Africa is an unbelievable land, but many countries are not friendly with LGBTQI+ people, so we stopped to visit it and miss it a lot.



I got married when I was 27th, my marriage lasted only 3 years, but we had travel addiction in common, so we started to travel in Asia, Central America and more Africa destinations. After we divorced I continued to travel by myself, every time without plans, I just buy the flight ticket and then the adventure starts. After some months I knew Lele and my life changed, we are living together since 13 years now and we travel every time we can. Our gaylife is so amazing.



**Retro Kolkata :** How did you decide to become a travel blogger? Was it a thoughtful choice behind setting-up 'viaggiaescopri'?

**Gian :** I really didn't plan to become a travel blogger. After I divorced, in 2009, I felt the need to fix my travel memories, one chapter of my life was ending and I wanted to save our travel memories together. In the beginning of 2010, I opened my first website to collect my travel pictures, after that, some people started to ask me information about those places, so I decided to write a little bit about them. I began to publish articles and people started to call me travel blogger, some months later I opened our Facebook page and Twitter profile, a couple of years later Instagram started to have success and Lele joined me with his videos feeding our YouTube account.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you keep yourself updated on the latest trends about travel blogging?

**Gian :** Honestly, I don't keep myself updated, since I am one of the first Italian travel bloggers, I know more or less every one of my 'colleagues', me and Lele use to attend to travel fairs, conferences and expositions, we were also invited as speakers in some of them.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some of your favourite places you've visited?

**Gian :** It's very difficult to decide, each place has something special that I miss. However, some places are unique for me and I miss them more. I'm totally in love with Thailand, especially the northern regions where you can find authentic cities, pristine forests and amazing people. Mexico stole my heart, I had one of my best adventures traveling through Yucatan, Chiapas and Quitana Roo. In Europe I love to explore Greece, Portugal and Spain. Africa is an unbelievable land, but many countries are not friendly with LGBTQI+ people, so we stopped to visit it and miss it a lot.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Gian :** At the moment traveling is my job, we often travel because of promotional projects and all the costs are covered by the customer (tourism boards, hotel chains, companies, etc...) that provide also a fee for the contents we produce. This allow us to travel also when we are not working and sometimes we find new customers along the road.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Gian :** Sure, it always happens when you expect little from a destination. One of the best examples is Romania. When we travelled to Romania for the first time we were in doubt because of a lot of prejudices that Italian have around that country. It was suddenly total love, we really loved Transilvania and Romanian people, our trip was unexpectedly wonderful. We came back to Romania many times and each time is unforgettable.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you had any bad experiences whilst travelling?

**Gian :** Sure, bad experiences can happen but they are not enough to ruin my travel dreams. In Andalusia a man tried to stole our bag but we caught him.

When we visited Tangeri from Tarifa they put us on a bus and 'kidnapped' us without possibility to leave the group and visit the city by ourself, it was a horrible experience. Fortunately, our trips are mostly positive, but this things are useful to collect experience and be smarter in the future.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Gian :** One of my best travel memories is linked to Macedonia. I travelled to Skopje because I found a really cheap flight, so I decided to spend some day discovering this city. I was amazed by their story, by their feeling to be European but also strong linked to their Octoman traditions. I really loved the experience, more than the city itself. Sometimes I felt not totally safe, but I realized I had nothing to be scared about, it was all in my mind. This taught me not to judge people or places without knowing them first.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Gian :** Travel allowed me to feel who I am, I think I didn't really know myself before to travel alone and sometimes I understood that you are less alone when you travel alone than when you travel with someone. Being alone encourages you to know more people and put you totally in touch with local culture and behaviours.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where is your favourite place in the world? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

**Gian :** My favourite place in the world is Porto Pino, in South Sardinia, where my grandparents belong from. My travel dreams are to visit India (Lele is not too much on it) and Australia (but it's really expensive for Italian travellers).

**Retro Kolkata :** Blogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel blogging in 2022 and further?

**Gian :** I think we need new blogger for sure. Since 2010 my travel habits changed and I have different needs when I travel. While my generation becomes older we need new generations to replace us (not immediately) and to communicate with the language of young people. And after all the world is full of places that need to be discovered, the more we are the best we can reach the goal.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list top 5 reasons for your success as a travel blogger, what would those be?



**Gian :** First of all the authenticity, I always write about places I really visited and this is a must for a good travel blogger. Then you should be patient, you have to find your audience and let it grow before to be considered also an influencer. For sure we have been advantaged because we were among the first travel bloggers in Italy, nowadays many young people read our blog and try to follow our steps. Take care of your content, to have passion for travels and for writing is not enough, you have to learn how to build and manage your website, SEO rules to optimize your articles and create a space for you outside the social medias channels. Remember that your blog is yours and only you could close it.





Stay updated, traveling is in continuous evolution, also technology and devices do the same. I started traveling using my reflex, now my iPhone works perfectly and is lighter. The same is with social media, once was Twitter, then Instagram, Snapchat arrived but Instagram evolved and now TikTok seems to be a new frontier. A travel blogger needs to adapt to new communication channels.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring travellers?

**Gian :** Never lose the desire to discover, be like a child, curious and without prejudice, be able to wonder yourself. This is my secret.





# THE TRAVEL TUBBY JAGRITI

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I quit my job to pursue my passion full-time. My goal was to travel extensively and determine whether I would love living this lifestyle. As I published my videos and photos on Instagram, blogging naturally grew. I didn't realize its full potential at the time, but after realizing the media's influence, I devoted my heart and soul to building my personal brand. Our travel community has grown from 10k people in February 2021 to 145k people now, and our material now reaches millions of people each month.

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Jagriti :** I was born in Dehradun and have always had a passion for the outdoors and travel, but for a variety of reasons, we were never able to do, either while I was growing up. As a result, I first started traveling when I started my first year of undergrad in Chandigarh. In 2017, I went on my first trek or travel adventure to Kheerganga. The entire experience was so breath-taking, that I began setting aside every penny I received to further my exploration of Himachal.





**According to me, the top 5 Places in India one should travel to at least once?**

- Spiti
- Trek to Hemkund
- Leh
- Kerala
- Jaisalmer- Jaipur

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you decide to become a travel Vlogger?

**Jagriti :** In February 2021, I quit my job to pursue my passion full-time. My goal was to travel extensively and determine whether I would love living this lifestyle. As I published my videos and photos on Instagram, blogging naturally grew. I didn't realize its full potential at the time, but after realizing the media's influence, I devoted my heart and soul to building my personal brand. Our travel community has grown from 10k people in February 2021 to 145k people now, and our material now reaches millions of people each month.

**Retro Kolkata :** What places have you visited till now, which is your favourite place among them?

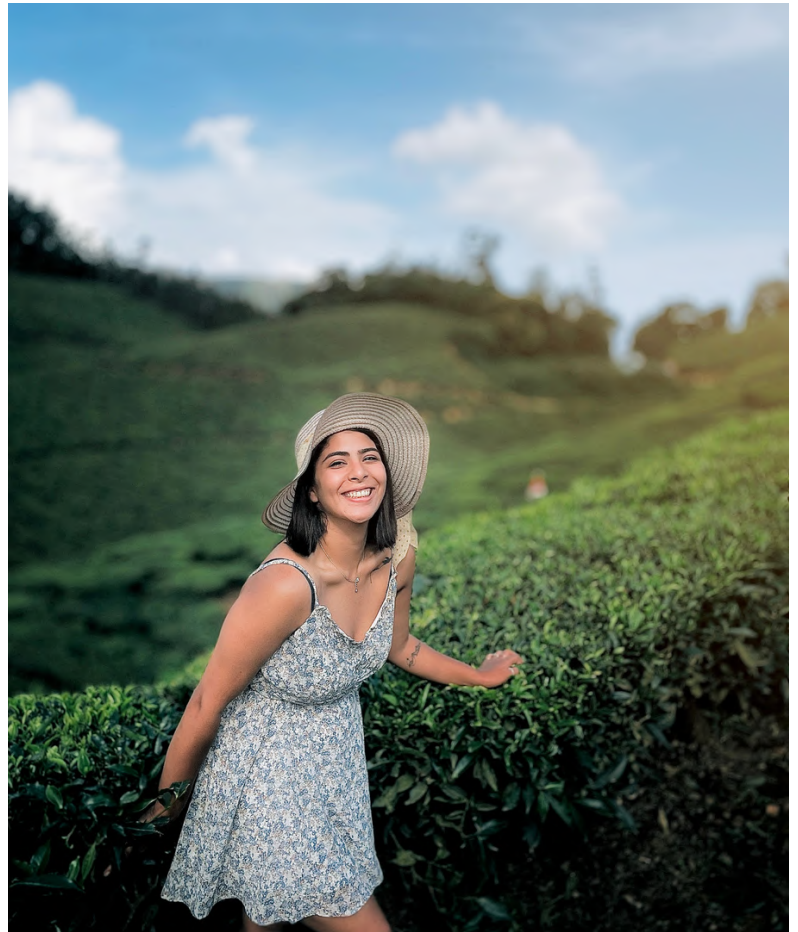
**Jagriti :** I've visited more than 30 places, including 3 international and 8 or more Indian states. That is a topic I have never been able to answer since every place is so different in the way it affects you and the way it makes you feel, but Spiti and Dehradun are two places that are really dear to me.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Jagriti :** I began paying for my travel out of savings, and as I grew, I began receiving sponsorship for some of my travel. Brand partnership followed, and while the first year wasn't very monetarily lucrative, things gradually improved. I currently take a couple of trips that are entirely sponsored in addition to travel that I pay for myself and I make a respectable living from brand partnerships.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Jagriti :** Well, two of these pilgrimage sites are in Uttarakhand: Hemkund and Kedarnath.



Fortunately, I visited these places as the 2nd phase pandemic was coming to an end, so there weren't that many people there and the entire experience was very spiritual.

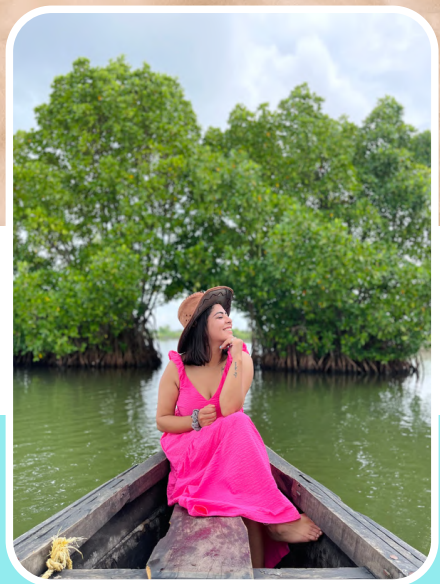
I never thought I would enjoy being at a pilgrimage site, to be honest, but these places are incredibly beautiful, especially Hemkund Lake, where you could probably sit there for hours just admiring the scenery.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Jagriti :** It has to be my two weeks in Spiti. Even though everything was so beautiful, there was a time when there wasn't any light for three to four days and there was no internet due to snowfall. Despite the beauty of everything, this experience taught me how to appreciate the basic amenities we take for granted in cities and forced me to interact with others, spend time in nature, and reconnect with myself, all of which we've kind of forgotten in today's fast-paced society. I urge people to go to Spiti for a longer period of time so they can genuinely spend time with nature and discover more about themselves.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel vlogging impacted both of your lives personally and professionally?

**Jagriti :** I feel it to be the finest thing that has ever happened to me professionally since it has brought me so close to achieving my dream of being paid to travel while generating content, but it also needs you to be constantly on your toes and pick up a lot of new skills. To travel most days, you need to be in good physical shape and be active. Sometimes, traveling and truly appreciating the location might take a back seat to create content. After working here full-time for about two years, I believe you need to create a balance between travel and off-travel days and between your work & personal life.



**Retro Kolkata :** According to you, the top 5 Places in India one should travel to at least once?

**Jagriti :**

- Spiti
- Trek to Hemkund
- Leh
- Kerala
- Jaisalmer- Jaipur

**Retro Kolkata :** Vlogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel vlogging in 2022 and further?

**Jagriti :** Since there is so much untapped potential in India's content market and so much good work that people can contribute, there is still room for everyone. All it takes is for you to tap into your own creativity and offer something fresh. However, keep in mind that all of this creative development takes time and years.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list top 5 reasons for your success as a travel vlogger, what would those be?

**Jagriti :** I think I only have two main points to make:

1. Posting content consistently will improve both your work and the algorithm.
2. Make a deliberate effort to learn and hone new skills.



# APOORVA RAO

THE TRAVEL STORYTELLER



**I always had an inclination towards a career in travel. But the main turning point was when I went backpacking across Europe, for the first time without family in 2015, for a month. This was the first time I travelled like a proper traveller. It was very hectic with a lot of tedious travelling, sightseeing and adventure involved. This trip made me realise that I wanted to pursue travel full time.**



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Apoorva :** My dad is my biggest travel inspiration. He loves driving and I recall taking spontaneous and unplanned road trips across South India as a child. Also, when kids my age were watching Cartoon Network, I was always watching travel shows. I knew very early that I wanted to do something in travel.

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you decide to become a travel Vlogger?

**Apoorva :** I always had an inclination towards a career in travel. But the main turning point was when I went backpacking across Europe, for the first time without family in 2015, for a month. This was the first time I travelled like a proper traveller. It was very hectic with a lot of tedious travelling, sightseeing and adventure involved. This trip made me realise that I wanted to pursue travel full time.

**Retro Kolkata :** Before venturing into Travel Vlogger, was there any restriction from the family side because you have to travel around the country and abroad

and you travel the whole world as a girl, then permission was given from the family?

**Apoorva :** I've been pretty lucky that my parents have always given me the freedom to choose my career and passion. I've never had any restrictions from them. They are definitely concerned about my safety though, especially with solo trips. But with permissions and restrictions I've never had a problem.

**Retro Kolkata :** What places have you visited till now, which is your favourite place among them?

**Apoorva :** I have travelled to 38 countries and 17 states. Every place I have visited is quite special. If I had to choose, it would be Kashmir and Kerala from India and Bali.





**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Apoorva :** Initially I had to work, save up and travel. Now I fund my trips through my travels. After years of hard work, my Travelblog is now my main source of income.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Apoorva :** I have travelled solo, it was way more challenging than what I'd expected. I can safely say that it has been my best teacher. It teaches you a lot about your true capabilities and makes you self-reliant in the truest sense.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you been anywhere which turned out to be totally different to how you imagined? If so, how?

**Apoorva :** Yes, the iconic Ba Na Hills in Vietnam turned out to be way too crowded and much smaller than how it is projected in pictures online.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you.

**Apoorva :** Taking a bike trip across Ladakh is my most memorable adventure. From creating memories, getting lost amidst the mountains, absolutely scenic routes, crossing landslide avalanche prone areas was a complete adventure.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel vlogging impacted both of your lives personally and professionally?

**Apoorva :** Now, Personally and professionally I'm working more towards my passion for travel more than ever before.

**Retro Kolkata :** According to you, the top 5 Places in India one should travel to at least once?

**Apoorva:** Sundarbans, Ladakh, Pahalgam, Varkala, Nilgiris.

**Retro Kolkata :** Vlogging is increasingly becoming competitive. Do you think it will be a good choice for newbies to opt for travel vlogging in 2022 and further?

**Apoorva :** Absolutely! 2022 or anytime is the right time. Only important factor is to be truly passionate and have a lot of patience with it. Without passion, if





somebody is entering this just for the goodies and other reasons, this is not an easy field to sustain in. It takes a lot of time to build a community and have a set of audience that admire your work.

**Retro Kolkata :** If you were to list top 5 reasons for your success as a travel vlogger, what would those be?

**Apoorva :** 1) Passion – Pursuing a career in a field like travel requires passion

2) Patience – It is not always fun and games. Patience is one of the key factors required for this field. Patience to get the right shot, patience to commute between places, patience to do justice to a shot.

3) Perspective – This is the main factor of connecting with your audience and makes you and your craft stand out.

4) Consistency – Being consistent with travelling and uploading content is important

5) Constantly stepping out of my comfort zone and thinking out of the box

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any advice or tips for aspiring travellers?

**Apoorva :** Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. The best experiences test your maximum capabilities and you learn a lot about yourself in the process.





## Meet

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# DEVANG SHARMA

## Travel

**Retro Kolkata :** Please say something about you. About your career, about your interest?

**Devang :** I am Devang from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, and my roots are from Rajasthan. I love exploring new cities, meeting new people and to know about different cultures and traditions. I did my bachelor's and post that I was working as a social media manager, while working I got to know that I can showcase my passion through a platform and hence the journey of "Ghumakkaddog" started. 4 years back I didn't knew I could achieve so much (though I'm still in the learning phase and a lot needs to be achieve and explore)

**Retro Kolkata :** How did you get started with traveling? What inspired you to start travelling?

**Devang :** Since my childhood I used to love exploring and travelling but coming from a business family it was not possible everytime that we could go on a family trip or something. The first trip that I did alone was after my class 10th exams to Bengaluru at my uncle's place which helped me gain confidence in travelling solo, and post that trip I made up my mind to travel and explore more without depending on anyone.







**Retro Kolkata :** How do you fund your travel (savings/work whilst travelling/other)?

**Devang :** I do savings for travelling and I spend the major part of my income on travelling. The best part is that I feel happy about it and it gives me confidence to work and earn more. Also because of my page I get Staycations in various renowned as well hence that helps lowering my expenditure on stays etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you ever travelled solo, was it what you expected?

**Devang :** Yes I do solo travelling and I really love it because I can explore places as per my wish. People say that solo travelling is boring but according to me it is not because you get to know yourself and you face all the challenges while travelling by yourself.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about one of your most memorable adventures, and the impact it had on you

**Devang :** December 2021 was one of the best time of my life since I got selected by Gujarat Tourism to promote the Rann Utsav at Kutch, it was one of the best and the most memorable trip of my life. Rann Utsav was on my list since years but I didn't knew that it will get ticked off in this way. The best part was when I saw the white salt dessert through my eyes, I just cannot forget that moment. Also I got to see the vibrant Gujarat, the culture, traditions and much more. I just cannot forget that trip I was an experience of a lifetime for me.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel changed who you are? What has travel taught you?

**Devang :** Everytime I visit a new place I get to learn something new. Travel has taught me to be kind with anyone and everyone you meet in any phase of your life , you never know who will help you out when you are into any problems. Travelling has taught me to do things on my own without getting dependent on anyone hence enhancing me overall as a person. I was more of an introvert earlier but now I really love connecting with people and know their stories.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your favourite destinations? Do you have a bucket list? If so, what is on it?

**Devang :** So talking about my bucket list I really wish to cover the beauty of the 7 sister states, and the vibrancy of West Bengal during the time of Durga Puja. Another place that I wish to visit is Dubai and dine in at the Burj Khalifa. I believe a lot in destiny so let's see when this and a lot of other stuff in my bucket list gets fulfilled.

**Retro Kolkata :** Give us 5 fun facts people might not know about you yet.

**Devang :** Well not many fun facts about me can just remember 3 of them so mentioning here:

1. My pet name is "Debu"
2. I can eat Dal Baati Churma anytime of the day.
3. I'm a late riser

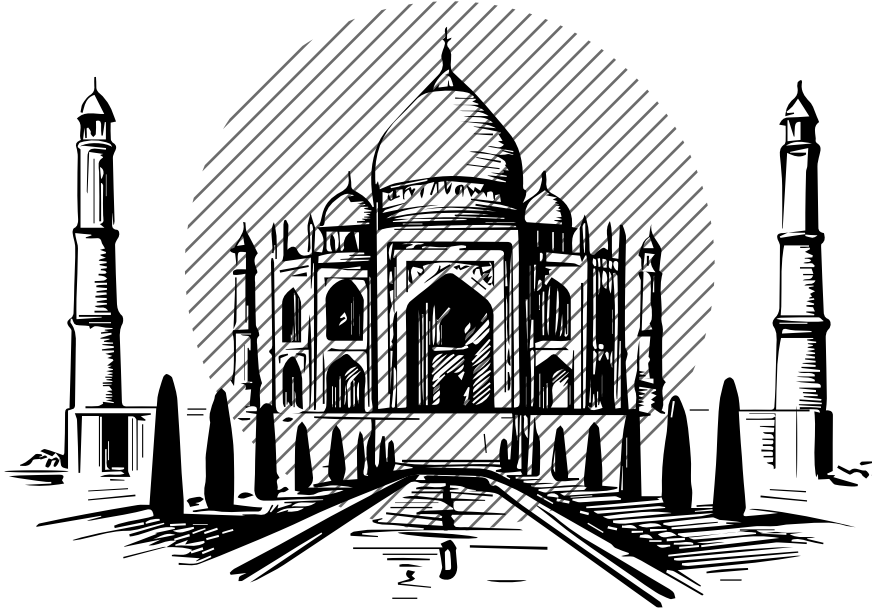


# ARTIST

RETRO KOLKATA MAGAZINE

**GREEN  
EDITION**





## The Beauty and Spirit of India through Art

India is a land of immense diversity, and this is reflected in its art. India has a rich history of art and culture, dating back to prehistoric times. From the earliest cave paintings to the intricate carvings of the Taj Mahal, Indian art is characterized by its vast array of colors, themes, and mediums.

Whether it's a painting of a Hindu god or an elegant sari, Indian art captures the country's Beauty and spirit like no other. The colors are always vibrant, the designs are intricate, and the subjects are often deeply spiritual or meaningful. Indian art is not only about aesthetic value; it's also about conveying important messages and stories.

One of the most popular forms of Indian art is Madhubani Painting. Madhubani paintings are traditionally done on walls and floors using natural dyes; they often depict Hindu gods and goddesses. The colours used in Madhubani paintings are very bright and vibrant, which is said to represent the energy and vibrancy of India.

India has a long history of Cave paintings that date back to Prehistoric times. These paintings can be found all over India in various places such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. The paintings typically depict animals such as bison, elephants,

tigers, and rhinoceroses. Some researchers believe that these paintings were used as part of hunting rituals or as a way to tell stories about great hunts.[1] However, their true purpose remains unknown.

Another popular form of Indian art is Kushan Art. Kushan Art originated in North India during the time of the Kushan Empire (1st-3rd century CE). This type of art is characterized by its use of narrative scenes and human figures in profile.[2] Kushan artists often depicted religious scenes from Hinduism and Buddhism. One famous example of Kushan Art is the Gandhara Buddha Statue which combines Greek influences with traditional Buddhist iconography.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in interest in traditional Indian art forms such as Madhubani painting and Kushan Art. This is due in part to the growing popularity of Indian culture around the world. As more people become interested in India, they are also becoming interested in its art and culture. This trend has led to increased demand for traditional Indian art forms, which has, in turn, led to a revival of these forms among contemporary Indian artists.

Whether it's a Madhubani Painting or a Kushan statue, Indian art captures the beauty and spirit of the country like no other. With their bright colors, intricate designs, and deep symbolism, Indian artists have been captivating audiences for centuries.





**GUEST ARTIST**  
**CONSTANCE REGARDSOE**



MEET THE ARTIST

# CONSTANCE REGARDSOE

**Constance Regardsoe is an artist specialising in capturing water and figures in water in oil paint. The fleeting moments captured in each of her paintings juxtaposes with the time consuming painting process she employs, and the moment is painstakingly recreated over weeks, like an insect being preserved in amber. The use of a figure in her painting serves to remind the viewer of our collective smallness; in her more abstract pieces, the form of the figure is radically altered, a visual reminder of our own ephemerality and the inevitability of being changed by our surroundings.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. It's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. Do you remember your first interaction with art? When did you decide you wanted to become an artist?

**Constance :** My first interaction with Art - I definitely owe some credit to this to my parents. I was the first person in my family to go to university, but I remember from a very young age, my mother taking my sister and me to local museums and galleries - particularly the Harris in Preston where I grew up, something I am immensely grateful for by Waterhouse, and I remember becoming fascinated by representational paintings. We were often attending free workshops run by the museum, and I really think it is so important for local government to invest in arts and culture, it definitely helps foster a creative mindset. Both my parents could draw, so it was a way they entertained us as children, we were often encouraged to sketch or do creative activities like make models. I became really interested in being an artist young, probably early high school or even earlier, but it was one of those things that you considered as 'out of your league'. I didn't know any professional artists growing up, and it seemed unattainable. It was until I was in my twenties when I began to seriously consider it as a viable choice for a future life. I'd attended Nottingham University to get an English degree, graduated, and started working for a university, but I slowly realised that art was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. So, I got a part time job, studied art part time for a year, painted as much as I could, and gradually, became an artist.





**Retro Kolkata :** What role does drawing have in your creative process and what's in your sketching "toolkit" right now?

**Constance :** I'll be honest - I don't sketch so much these days, but I invested a lot of time honing drawing and observation in my early practice. Basically all my tube journeys in my early twenties were sketching time, and I'd work in biro to force myself to learn strict accuracy (you can't erase so you had to get it right). These days I mostly get stuck straight into full scale paintings. I do however teach a beginner art class one day a week. I think there's something really valuable in the skill of observation, looking at the work of others, checking angles and alignment to keep those observation skills razor sharp.

**Retro Kolkata :** What do you consider to be the ingredients for a strong composition?

**Constance :** I think I'm quite instinctive. I use photographs that I either take myself or model for as a basis for paintings. Generally, I just look at them, and 'know' what will work on canvas. But I suppose in the background I'm thinking about lightsource, focal points, the rule of thirds, a sense of movement and narrative, tension, temperature and colour. Tension and movement are very important for me, a lot of my work tries to capture the sense that we are seeing a frozen split second.

**Retro Kolkata :** Can you talk a little bit about your painting technique and method? How do these great artworks come about?

**Constance :** So I mentioned that photography is the first stage, and it's an important and technical one. I paint people in water, and this can be tricky in the UK, in terms of lighting, and also taking steps to keep models safe and warm when working outside. I was in the sea for a shoot in Canada just a fortnight ago, and was really trying making myself think 'right, you can't feel your fingers anymore, you need to get out of the water'. I use an SLR camera and dry bag. Once I've gotten the images, I work straight on to canvas. I don't grid or project my work. I suppose this might change, but right now, I feel like these methods would rob the image of part of their organic quality, the little mistakes and compromises the human hand is forced to make. I sometimes use





underpainting but not always. When I started painting I was very 'tight' and controlled, depending on small brushes, often focusing on patches of detail at a time. I'm slowly incorporating looser strokes and more gestural marks into my work - which just feels like I'm unlocking so many possibilities about how to paint and how paint operates as a substance - I think it's going to be a really interesting time in my practice.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you view the concepts of the real, the hyper-real, the authentic and the imagined playing out within your works?

**Constance :** I think when I was still developing as a painter I was very interested in hyper real and photorealist painting. I'm still very impressed by the skill of these kind of works - I understand what it takes, and there is always something intrinsically impressive about it. Now though, I can't help but question the value of an artwork designed to solely mimic an image produced by a sophisticated machine. I'm interested in painters who blend

elements of real and unreal. Alyssa Monks looser marks and intermediary surfaces, Anna Wypch's blending of hyper-real and surreal dreamlike elements. The reason I like to be present for the photography, is that you have a memory as well as the image, and a sense of the place and mood of the moment you captured the image. This gives you something to use other than just the photograph, and something to try and draw into your work other than the image right in front of you.

**Retro Kolkata :** Your pieces are incredibly detailed. How long does it take to create a single piece and what is the process like?

**Constance :** A large painting (a meter by a meter say) used to take approximately 100 hours. I am managing now to maintain the same level of detail but work much quicker. They will never be a fast process however. I like to work a minimum of 8 hours painting a day.

**Retro Kolkata :** You seem to be interested in reflections on water, water splashes, bubbles—is this a

technical curiosity or something else? What is the relationship between your figures and the water?

**Constance :** I absolutely love water. When I'm not painting, I'm often swimming, and swim outdoors in my local river once a week, even in the winter. For me, water is a great way to express ideas about time and impermanence; if I posed a model in a living room, I could paint them, and pose them the same way a year later and produce an incredibly similar result - but the distortion and refraction you get between the interplay of light, body and water, is so specific and unique to a single moment of capture - and this fascinates me, the fleetingness of it.

I also think there's something about the physical sense of it, water can make you feel powerful, a muscled streamlined body cutting through a moving solid, but at the same time, it is dangerous and reminds you of its power and your fragility. I like this tension. A lot of my work features a submerged figure, and I'm very interested in the idea of a swimmer pushing themselves to uncomfortable levels - holding their breath - but ultimately having the power and autonomy to set that limit.





**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us more about your workspace. What is the funniest or weirdest thing that happened to you in the studio?

**Constance :** During the lockdown I painted in the converted loft above a garage. One day a very large dragonfly came in and kept me company.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's the latest project you are working on?

**Constance :** I've just completed a month long residency in Canada. It's been incredibly exciting, and having a big designated space to paint in has done some really interesting things. I've gone bigger than ever before, one 1.5 meter by 1 meter painting, and one even larger 160x120 cm! Working at this scale forces you to adopt some new techniques and methods.

**Retro Kolkata :** Artists and art lovers often have one painting by a great artist that has especially influenced them or holds special meaning. What is the one painting that had the biggest impact on you as you were beginning your career, and why?

**Constance :** It's really tough to pin it down to one. When I was younger it was probably John William Waterhouse. The Pre-raphaelite brotherhood, and particularly Ophelias, was one of the first ways I accessed art. From being a teenager though, I'd have to say Alyssa Monks. She is simply phenomenal, and I've really enjoyed watching how her work has developed and changed over the decade plus I've been following her. I got to see some of her pieces at the Pontone gallery in London in 2018, and I almost cried, it felt like a religious experience.

**Retro Kolkata :** What feelings or reactions do you hope to arouse in people who view your work? Are you surprised by the reactions that you get?

**Constance :** People relate to the work in different ways. Some of my favourite reactions have been "thank you, for bringing this into

the world" "Your work is like holding a breath and letting it go" and "damn, I only came here because there's supposed to be a really good burger van nearby, but this, this is really good, I wasn't supposed to buy art today". Some people enjoy the sensual nature of water. Some like the interplay of light. Some think about the healing nature of water and find the work cathartic in relation to old trauma. I like that it appeals in different ways.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have received several iconic awards in Painting. Has there been any accomplishment that you are especially proud of?

**Constance :** I was in a bit of a dark place in the Autumn/Winter of 2020. The lockdowns had been hard and I was struggling to balance painting more professionally with the job I had at the time. In the middle of that I got a call saying that I had won the Bath Society of Artists Young Artist award, and the grand prize (I entered two artworks). It was the only time an artist had won both in the society's 115 year



history.

I really haven't entered many awards this past year, and I must get back on it.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any words of wisdom to aspiring artists who want to pursue a similar career?

**Constance :** Someone wrote to me a while ago, asking for advice on how to sell their paintings, saying they needed to do so 'desperately'. It was a little heart breaking to write back, but I don't think it's possible to make your best work from a place of desperation. I worked really hard and lived really carefully for several years before I took up studying art so that I would have a cushion to prevent me from being desperate. If you don't want it badly enough to do that, you

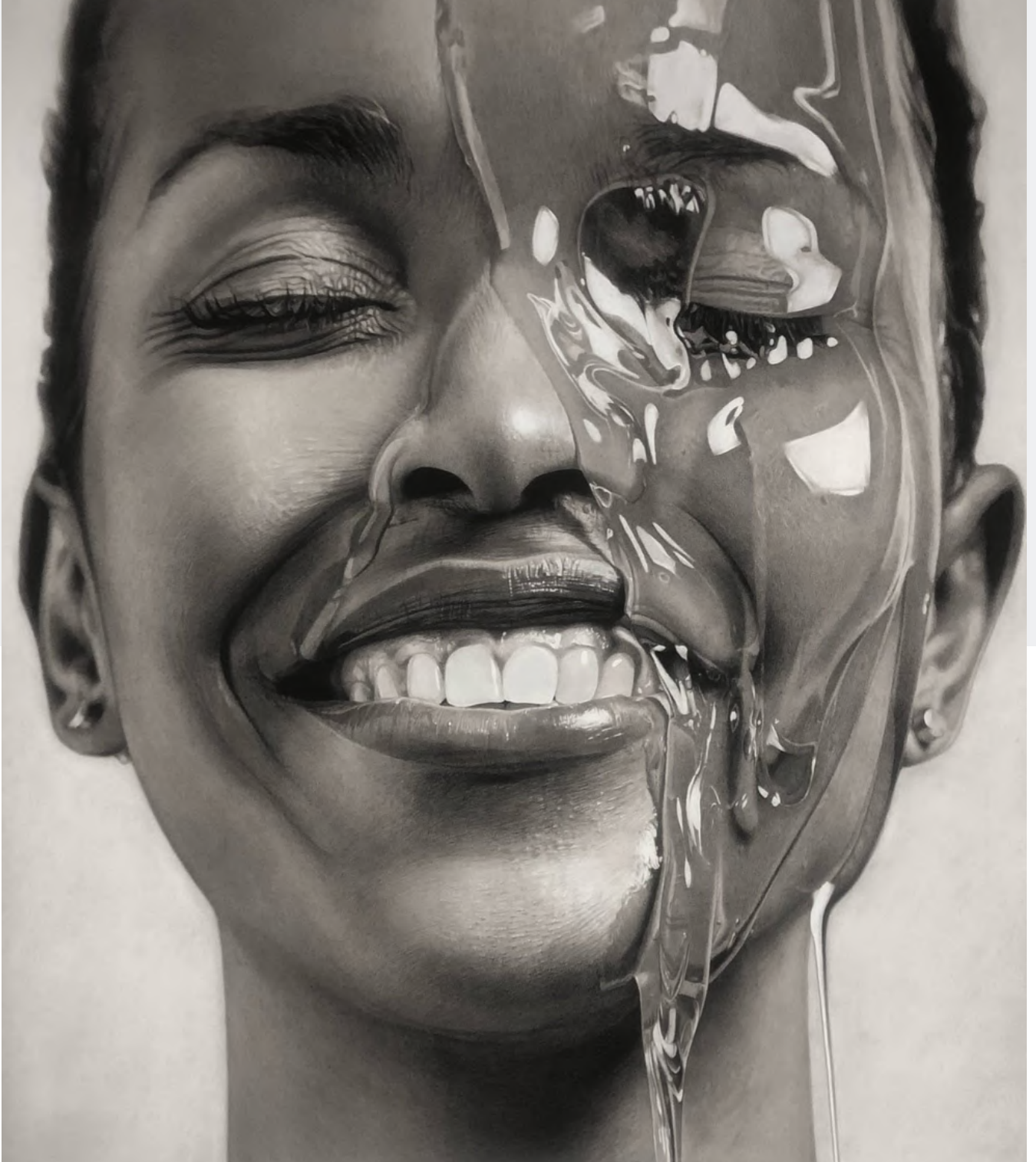
probably don't want it badly enough. It's not a fun answer but it is an honest one. You need to be willing to give, not all, but really the better part of yourself to doing this.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Constance :** Many thanks for trying to share the work of artists with the wider community, it's getting harder for artists to be seen these days. Thank you for finding importance in the work out artists. I have to disagree a little though, artists are not the most beautiful creation, we are just trying to reflect back the beauty and complexity in the world around us.







**GUEST ARTIST**  
**ELIZAVETA POLUYANSKAYA**



# MEET THE ARTIST ELIZAVETA POLUYANSKAYA

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**Poluyanskaya Elizaveta is a Russian artist who specializes in photorealistic art. Photorealism is a movement that heavily depends on using photographs as a reference for the work. Artists use the photographs of real-life places or structures and recreate them onto a canvas with exceptional accuracy and precision. Through her art, Elizaveta portrays how truly beautiful this world is as well as the people who reside in it.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. Do you remember your first interaction with art? When did you decide you wanted to become an artist?

**Elizaveta :** I got acquainted with art in childhood when I saw a painting (landscape) in the apartment where I lived, and it inspired me to become an artist. And it was an adult, conscious decision, which I recall vividly even though I was only three years old at the time.

**Retro Kolkata :** What role does drawing have in your creative process and what's in your sketching "toolkit" right now?

**Elizaveta :** I use the drawing to think about a new picture, as well as at the beginning of drawing a large hyper-realistic picture. I always first thoroughly draw



all the details of the picture with a pencil. I use either black graphite or charcoal pencils for sketching.

**Retro Kolkata :** What do you consider to be the ingredients for a strong composition?

**Elizaveta :** For a complete composition, the compositional center should always be highlighted in the drawing - what will attract the viewer in the picture in the first place. But at the same time, all the other parts of the picture should be balanced with each other, there should be harmony in the picture.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has the public reception been for Realist art?

**Elizaveta :** I think that the public likes realistic art, because it is very clear and pleasing to the eye, because it reflects reality, and can also show what an artist is capable of in his skill.

**Retro Kolkata :** Your pieces are incredibly detailed. How long does it take to create a single piece and what is the process like?

**Elizaveta :** Thank you. Yes, I like detail in my work, one big job takes from two weeks to two months. I love this process of detailing, for me it's a kind of meditation, I seem to disappear from the real world at these moments.

**Retro Kolkata :** Can you tell us about some of your great paintings like 'Pleasure', 'Temptation', 'Magnificence' that looks more real than a photograph?

**Elizaveta :** My first (namely, a large) realistic charcoal painting is called Magnificence. This painting means a lot to me, because it showed me that I am capable of more, I stepped to a new level in my skill and found my technique. And then I drew pictures of Temptation and Pleasure in the same technique. For me, these paintings are not so much about the mastery of realistic technique, but more about the emotions they evoke in the viewer. These emotions reflect the names of these paintings.

**Retro Kolkata :** Hyperrealism certainly has made a comeback over the last couple of years. What would you attribute this to? Where do you see the position of Hyperrealism in the art world in the next 5 years? 10 years?

**Elizaveta :** Hyperrealism is developing now and will develop further and better in the next 5-10 years, because it shows what a person can be capable of, how much I can develop human skills and capabilities in mastery. And we now live in such a time - a time of rapid development in the world.



**I LIKE DETAIL IN MY WORK, ONE BIG JOB TAKES FROM TWO WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS. I LOVE THIS PROCESS OF DETAILING, FOR ME IT'S A KIND OF MEDITATION, I SEEM TO DISAPPEAR FROM THE REAL WORLD AT THESE MOMENTS.**



**Retro Kolkata :** Artists and art lovers often have one painting by a great artist that has especially influenced them or holds special meaning. What is the one painting that had the biggest impact on you as you were beginning your career, and why?

**Elizaveta :** I have a favourite painting - "The Demon Seated" by Russian artist Mikhail Vrubel. This is a very deep and beautiful picture, looking at it, I understand that it is about me, about my inner world and the eternal search for beauty in the external world. I am also very inspired by the works of the contemporary American artist Casey Baugh, he is an amazing realist artist.

**Retro Kolkata :** What feelings or reactions do you hope to arouse in people who view your work? Are you surprised by the reactions that you get?

**Elizaveta :** Yes, I am always very surprised when people write to me in comments and messages that I am the best artist, because I don't think that about myself. But I am very pleased that they write to me like this. And also, most of all, I am pleased when aspiring artists say that my work inspires them, it is very nice to be useful to people and to hear such feedback. I hope that looking at my paintings people get the emotions that I wanted to convey in the paintings, and I also want my works to inspire people to be creative too, because there is nothing more beautiful than to create.

**Retro Kolkata :** Any words of wisdom to aspiring artists who want to pursue a similar career?

**Elizaveta :** For novice artists, I will give this advice: do not copy someone else's style of craftsmanship, look for your own way, experiment with different materials and ideas and eventually you will find your own, your own style. And in this world, everything is possible, the main thing is to love what you do and practice a lot.





**GUEST ARTIST**  
**MARINA CHISTY**

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## ARTIST

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# MEET THE ARTIST MARINA CHISTY



Marina Chisty is a Russian-American artist who currently lives and works in NYC. Her abstract and figurative paintings embody the dynamism and multiple faces of the city, trying to grasp their distinctive differences and substantial equality as human beings.

Marina approached art from a very young age, fostering her talent in children's art school in Russia. Her Russian roots are relevant in the development of her creative identity, bringing her closer to abstraction and the symbolic use of color. Throughout her studies, Marina reflected that art was her true purpose and continued to hone her expertise.

Her portraits represent very different women, characterized by peculiar backgrounds and varied circumstances. However, Marina Chisty's art practice challenges racial, socio-economic, and physical barriers, emphasizing the common need for equal perspective and mutual support.







**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start from the first question... Let's jump into the past. Do you remember your first interaction with art? When did you decide you wanted to become an artist?

**Marina :** Thank you for having me - it's my pleasure to speak with you and your audience. I don't recall any galleries or any art museums in the city where I grew up - it was a relatively small city in Russia. However, my father was my early art career patron who bought a couple of drawings from me when I was around 7-8 years old. This was the beginning of my art journey.

I remember my first trip to St. Petersburg a few years later which was a truly eye opening experience: Museums, galleries, and theaters were everywhere. In my teenage years I began traveling internationally and became obsessed with visiting museums. After that, I moved to New York, a City quite rich in it's artistic and cultural offerings, and after a few years I was finally ready to pursue a full time career in art.

**Retro Kolkata :** What role does drawing have in your creative process and what's in your sketching "toolkit" right now?



**Marina :** I love making sketches to organize the composition and create an idea for a series of paintings. I use a small notebook which is easy to carry. Drawing is a great practice when you capture moving human bodies. The small size of the notebook allows me to catch a movement and gesture right away on the spot.

**Retro Kolkata :** What do you consider to be the ingredients for a strong composition?

**Marina :** The idea, light structure, and of course the technique and mastery of an artist.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's your philosophy on the nature of the portrait? What do you think it fulfils within society and what should its purpose be?

**Marina :** Since its early days, the function of a portrait has evolved from being a family record of a person's appearance to something more conceptual. Personally, for me, the purpose of a portrait is the emotions and feelings the portrait evokes in the observer. It is less about the person in the photo, and more the mood that it conveys. The person in the image is a medium for the artist to express their message.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you view the concepts of the real, the hyper-real, the authentic and the imagined playing out within your works?

**Marina :** I try to be authentic, imaginative and playful. Although I have an initial idea when I begin a work, I find it important to leave room for serendipity - oftentimes, discoveries are made and ideas are found in the midst of the creative process. For that reason, hyper realism is a bit too rigid for my taste.

**Retro Kolkata :** Your pieces are incredibly detailed. How long does it take to create a single piece and what is the process like?

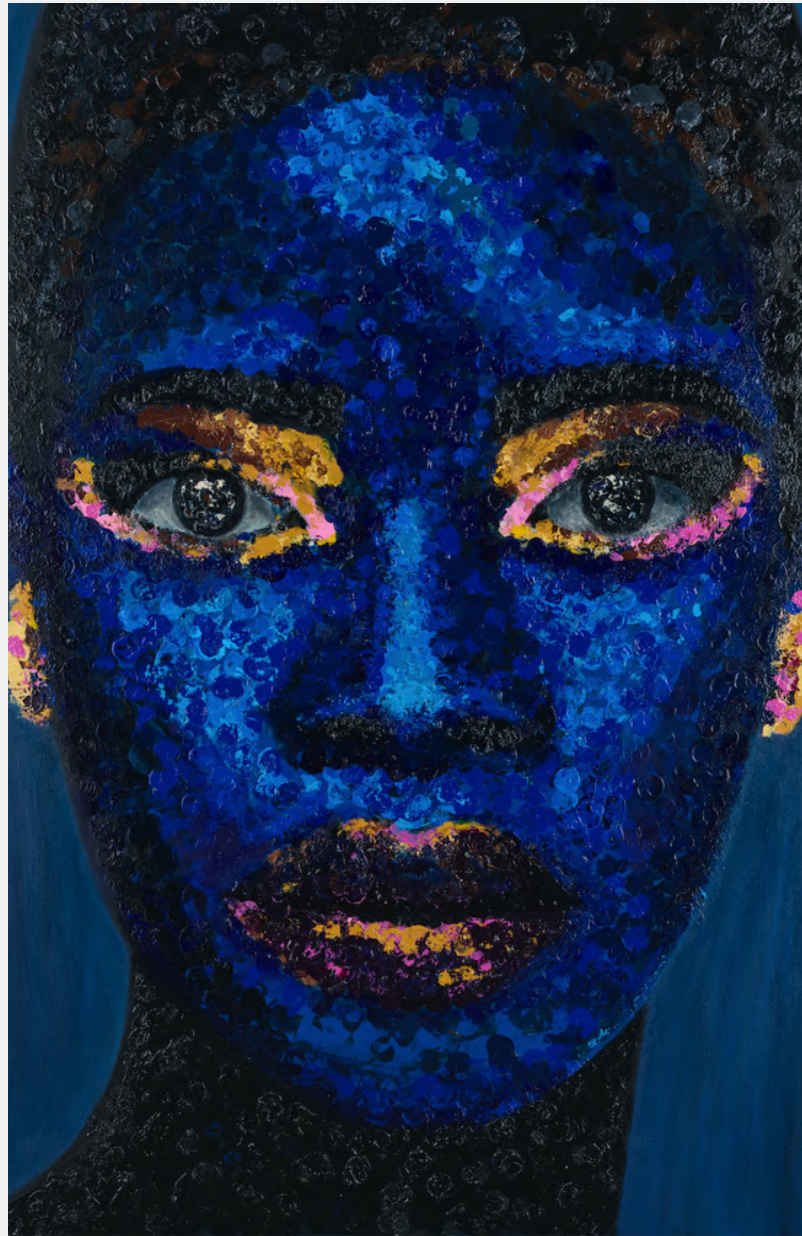
**Marina :** First, I come up with the idea for the series, then sketch and create. This is a very simple process at its core, but once I begin, I make adjustments, and then my initial idea can change into something bigger than my original intent. For one painting it could take from a week to multiple weeks, depending on the size, idea, and complexity. I find immense value in being able to live with a piece for a few weeks after I think it is complete, as oftentimes I see opportunities over time, as opposed to in the initial moment.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us more about your workspace. What is the funniest or weirdest thing that happened to you in the studio?

**Marina :** I have just recently moved into a new studio space, in New York City. I must say, it is a bit of a struggle for artists to find good space in a densely populated environment, like NYC. Fortunately there are some buildings that are geared just towards supporting visual artists, though we, as a city, could certainly use more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's the latest project you are working on?

**Marina :** I am working now to finish up my current series - the faces of women of many different ethnicities. For my next series, I am interested to 'zoom out' so to speak, and



explore more figurative and environmental studies.

**Retro Kolkata :** Artists and art lovers often have one painting by a great artist that has especially influenced them or holds special meaning. What is the one painting that had the biggest impact on you as you were beginning your career, and why?

**Marina :** I recall being particularly inspired early on, by the paintings of Paul Gauguin. His studies of the anonymous female forms of Tahitian women resonated with me, and led me to learn more about his story. Perhaps then his story began to inspire me even more than his works... the idea of uprooting and embedding oneself within, and celebrating, another culture.

**Retro Kolkata :** What feelings or reactions do you hope to arouse in people who view your work? Are you surprised by the reactions that you get?

**Marina :** I would be happy if a person glanced at least twice:) In our fast-paced modern environment, we move quickly, and even a glance is a compliment. My main goal is to provoke positive emotions and so far, based on the reactions I get, I believe I'm on the right path.





**Retro Kolkata :** Any words of wisdom to aspiring artists who want to pursue a similar career?

**Marina :** Dream big, believe in yourself, and be open and ready for challenges and remember that art is not just a creative process, it's a whole set of marketing, business, and communication skills.

Retro Kolkata : We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most

beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Marina :** I find the initiative of Retro Kolkata to be an inspiring one, and I agree, artists the world over should be supporting each other now more than ever. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today - I send my best regards to you and to your audience.

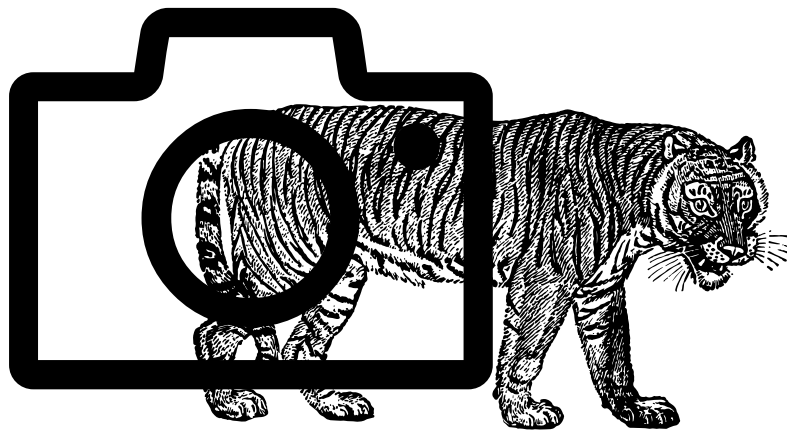
RETRO KOLKATA MAGAZINE

# PHOTOGRAPHY





# EDITOR'S NOTE



## How Photography is Helping to Conserve Wildlife

As a photographer, you might not think that your work has much of an impact on the world beyond capturing a moment in time. However, the truth is that your photographs can be used for much more than simply filling up frames on walls or filling up albums. In fact, your photographs can play a vital role in helping to protect and conserve wildlife all over the globe. Here are five ways photography is helping to make a difference.

### **Photographs can be used to raise awareness**

One of the most important things that photography can do for conservation efforts is raise awareness. With enough exposure, a photo can bring attention to a cause that might otherwise go unnoticed. And once people are aware of a problem, they can be part of the solution. For example, after seeing photos of starving polar bears, people might become more invested in taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint and slow down climate change.

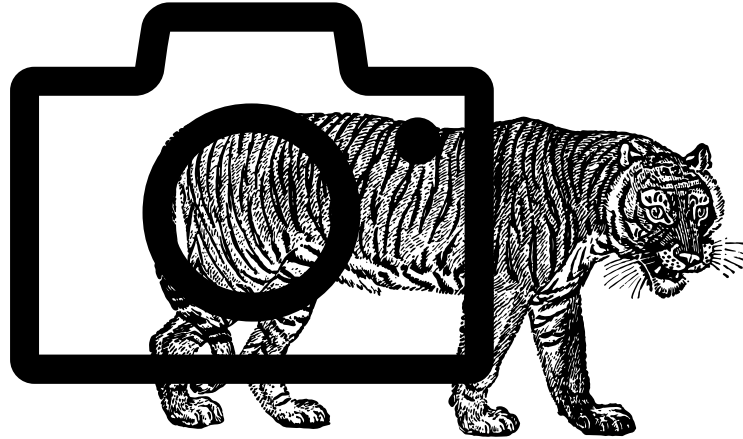
### **Photographs provide evidence**

In some cases, a picture really is worth a thousand words—literally. When it comes to things like illegal wildlife trade or habitat destruction, often times the best way to bring about change is to provide authorities with hard evidence that these things are happening. Once they have photographic proof, they can take steps to shut down illegal operations or put pressure on those who are responsible for destroying natural habitats.

### **Photographs help track groups and individuals**

Certain species of animals are easier to conserve if we know where they are and how many there are. That's where photography comes in. By snapping pictures of individual animals (from a safe distance), researchers and conservationists can get a better idea of which areas need protection and which populations are at risk. For example, photographers have been instrumental in monitoring the decline of African lion populations by taking photos of Lion ID spots (a system of notch markings on their ears that act as sort of a "fingerprint").

# EDITOR'S NOTE



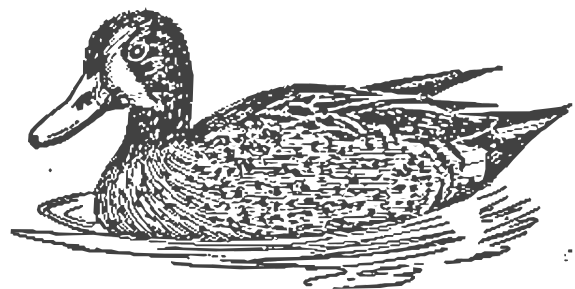
## **Photographs aid in scientific research**

In addition to providing information about population numbers and locations, photographs can also help scientists learn more about an animal's behavior and ecology—information that is essential for developing effective conservation plans. By studying photos of animals in their natural habitat, scientists can gain insights into everything from what they eat and how they hunt to how they interact with other members of their species.

## **Photographs inspire people to take action**

Perhaps one of the most important things that photography can do for conservation is inspire people to take action. A powerful image has the ability to touch people on an emotional level and motivate them to want to make a difference—whether it's by donating money to a cause or simply voting for politicians who have pro-environmental policies. So next time you're out shooting nature photos, remember that your work could be playing a vital role in helping to protect the very thing you love so much—wildlife!

The next time you're out shooting nature photos, remember that your work could be playing a vital role in helping to protect the very thing you love so much—wildlife! Through raising awareness, providing evidence, tracking groups and individuals, aiding scientific research, and inspiring people to take action, photography has become an essential tool in the fight for conservation. So keep clicking away—the future of our planet depends on it!





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**ALISSA THAKKER**

Kenya



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**APARUPA DEY**  
India



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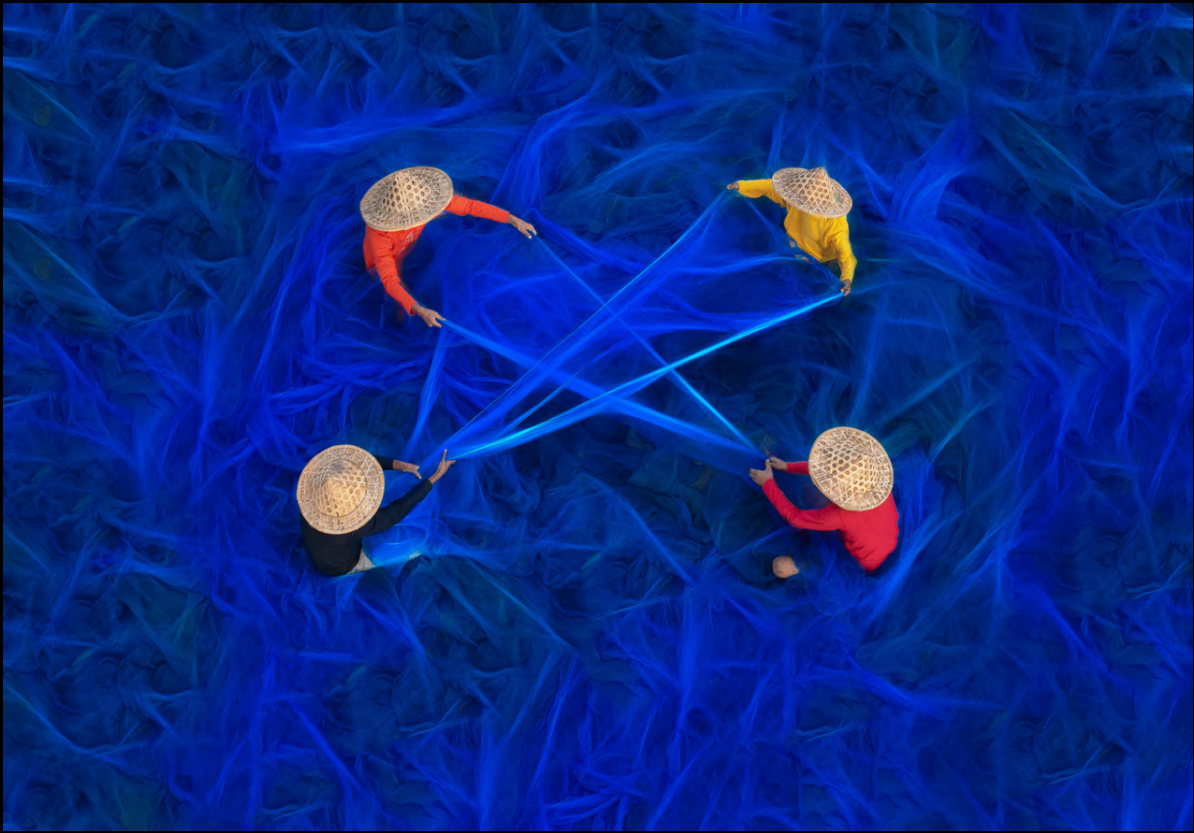
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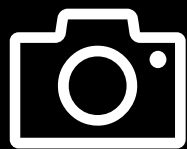
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Germany

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**HAPPY MUKHERJEE**  
India



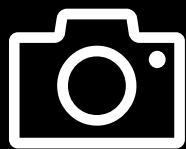
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**DEVENDER MEENA**

India



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# INTERVIEW WITH ALISSA THAKKER

Wildlife



Photography





# ALISSA THAKKER



“  
Wildlife and natural habitat conservation is extremely important. As a photographer, I strive to educate myself and my audience on the importance of appreciating our wildlife. I want to recognize conservation efforts and depict the beauty of any wild occurrence. I want to establish that connection between people and wildlife, and if my photos have the ability to do that, and spark interest in conservation and travel then that’s my goal.  
”



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview as our Guest Photographer. Let's have a jump into the past. When did you first know that you wanted to be a photographer and how did you go about pursuing this dream?

**Alissa :** Once the pandemic hit and international travel was restricted, I decided to explore the national parks in my own country - Kenya, and take up photography more seriously as it had always been something that I knew I loved to do. My family and I planned many trips out to the Maasai Mara National Reserve where I got the opportunity to expand on my photography skill set and develop my love for the wild.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you had any formal photography training and if not, how did you get to where you are today?

**Alissa :** I have been trained by wildlife photographer David Lloyd and Pareet Shah, who served as brilliant mentors for me - teaching me the ins and outs of wildlife photography and conservation. Apart from going on photo safaris with them, I find the best way to learn and grow within the niche of wildlife photography is to just keep practicing and experimenting. I experiment with different methods in post-production, which allows me to grow my artistic skills. I also play around with my camera settings and figure out the optimal settings for shooting different scenes.







**Retro Kolkata :** Why did you choose wildlife photography in particular?

**Alissa :** I was introduced to wildlife at a fairly young age, being brought up in Kenya I was fortunate to have such an early exposure to Wildlife and national parks. My family and I have always been big fans of the Maasai Mara, so game drives quickly became one of my favourite activities.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which part of the world have you found most exciting as a wildlife photographer?

**Alissa :** I have only explored wildlife in Kenya. I have been to several national parks, including Amboseli, Maasai Mara, Nairobi National Park, Samburu, and Ol Pejeta. The Maasai Mara has always been my favourite, as it is extremely dense with game and the savannah landscape is stunning.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important ? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Alissa :** Wildlife and natural habitat conservation is extremely important. As a photographer, I strive to

educate myself and my audience on the importance of appreciating our wildlife. I want to recognize conservation efforts and depict the beauty of any wild occurrence. I want to establish that connection between people and wildlife, and if my photos have the ability to do that, and spark interest in conservation and travel then that's my goal. Right now, it's just about sharing my stories from the wild and showing people that these animals are worth saving, and we should really do all we can to maintain their ecosystem.

**Retro Kolkata :** How much research do you do prior to going out on the field? Is it important to know a lot about animal behaviour to get the perfect shot?

**Alissa :** Understanding animal behaviour definitely helps with wildlife photography. For example, knowing how many times a leopard yawns before they come down a tree can help with the timing aspect - so that you are aware of when you need to concentrate on getting the perfect shot. Knowing animal behaviour also allows you to understand the subject better, which can yield better images.



**Retro Kolkata :** What's your go-to gear setup when out in the field?

**Alissa :** My current go-to gear setup when out in the field is two camera bodies - typically the Canon EOS R6 and the Canon 7D Mark II. The EOS R6 is usually assembled with my telephoto lens which can shoot up to 600mm, and the 7D Mark II is attached to a wide angle lens, which can shoot as wide as 18mm. I've found that this setup allows me to be more versatile, as I can quickly change from shooting up-close to shooting wide.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the main challenges that you face as a wildlife photographer?

**Alissa :** The main challenge I face as a wildlife photographer is patience. Oftentimes, wildlife photographers take huge risks on weather, location, and animals and more often than not we are left without our expectations met. Some days, you will have a large number of high quality sightings in the span of a couple hours, but other days you will drive for hours in the scorching heat with no game in sight. Waiting hours for an animal to wake up, or come out of a bush can lead to magical experiences and even more magical photo opportunities. Patience is a virtue, and definitely pays off.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the rarest animal you photographed? Are there any on your wish list that you have yet to see?

**Alissa :** My dream sighting is the elusive black panther. I have always wanted to see a black panther, and I am currently planning a trip to Kabini Wildlife Sanctuary in southern India as they have more sightings of black panthers and tigers - which are also on my bucket list of sightings. I would also love to see the black panther who was recently spotted in Loisaba, Kenya. Caracals remain on my list of animals I wish to see.

**Retro Kolkata :** What would you say your most remarkable wildlife encounter has been?

**Alissa :** One of my most remarkable wildlife encounters has to be a sighting with a famous male lion named Half-Tail. I remember looking through the viewfinder at this male lion and making eye contact with him for a couple of minutes. There was this mutual respect, and understanding. I understood my place as nothing but a visitor in his world and I wanted to replicate those feelings into the composition and final edit. I emphasized the contrasting highlights and shadows. On the right side, I wanted to tell a story of his strength, his power, his danger, and his significance - which is why I darkened that side. But I also wanted to reflect his



beauty on the left side. His gorgeous golden mane, his striking eye contact, his whiskers, the blades of grass. When I look at this picture I see both sides of this male. His beauty, but also his darker sides. (attached below, titled 'The King')

**Retro Kolkata :** What advice would you give to young photographers who are just starting out and considering pursuing a career in wildlife photography?

**Alissa :** I would say keep going, growing, shooting, and creating. I would encourage young photographers to break boundaries and to not be afraid to experiment and find new and unique ways to capture moments.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Alissa :** This is a great initiative by Retro Kolkata, their mission to support content creators is inspiring and truly impressive.



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# INTERVIEW WITH APARUPA DEY

Wildlife



Photography





# APARUPA DEY



“ Every aspect of wildlife is exciting and unique to each other. Even if you go to the same place to capture the same species you would return with some different photos everyday and that is exciting. Every moment is precious, every action is precious and going through the process of getting unique clicks is precious. Still, I must say India being a megadiverse nation and housing around 10% of the world's species has never failed to excite me in my journey. ”



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview as our Guest Photographer. Let's have a jump into the past. When did you first know that you wanted to be a photographer and how did you go about pursuing this dream?

**Aparupa :** Thanks to you for inviting me. Honestly, I have no idea "when" but certainly I can tell "How". In my case, a series of events had decided what I wanted to be, rather than a single point of time. Being an ardent bird lover, it all started with simple bird watching and enjoying nature. Slowly I started capturing them for memory and then wanted to become good at it. And there you go, the process started to pursue my dream.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you had any formal photography training and if not, how did you get to where you are today?

**Aparupa :** No I have not taken any formal training from any university but this does not mean I have not learned or taken help. Endless YouTube seasons of various professional photographers and on field experiments have shaped my knowledge and led me to where I am today.

**Retro Kolkata :** Why did you choose wildlife photography in particular?

**Aparupa :** It's something I have not chosen in fact. It's something I have enjoyed. I enjoyed watching wild nature, I enjoyed the hustle of the wind, I enjoyed the rain and the mist. And I enjoyed capturing all of them in frame. So, I would rather say I chose to enjoy it with my camera rather than merely photographing it.







**Retro Kolkata :** Which part of the world have you found most exciting as a wildlife photographer?

**Aparupa :** Every aspect of wildlife is exciting and unique to each other. Even if you go to the same place to capture the same species you would return with some different photos everyday and that is exciting. Every moment is precious, every action is precious and going through the process of getting unique clicks is precious. Still, I must say India being a megadiverse nation and housing around 10% of the world's species has never failed to excite me in my journey.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important ? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Aparupa :** The answer needs quite a deliberation. But speaking about wildlife and natural habitat, I would say that Natural habitat is the place where a species can live freely and reproduce without being threatened.

Conservation is really the need of the hour. In the past few decades, the human population has increased exponentially there by reducing the natural habitat of

many floras and faunas. Many of them are extinct and many are on the verge of extinction. And many will become extinct, if proper policies are not formed. But no policy can be effective till people put their soul into it. And here comes the role of photographers and cinematographers. They and their work bring the message of awareness and coexistence to the common masses which develops empathy. It develops a natural tendency to care and thereby creating an environment of harmony and coexistence and reduces human-animal conflict.

**Retro Kolkata :** How much research do you do prior to going out on the field? Is it important to know a lot about animal behaviour to get the perfect shot?

**Aparupa :** I would consider them as homework rather than research. It is very important to know what kind of species the place is going to offer and the behaviour of those species before you go to shoot them. It helps you predict the next movement that the species would do. For example, in the case of a kingfisher, most of the time it returns to the same perch where it was sitting earlier after making a kill. So even if you have a low end camera you can easily get a flight shot just by predicting the next move of



the kingfisher.

And the knowledge of behaviour is very much required as without knowing it, you may break its circle of fear where the species may feel threatened. So, it helps in maintaining a safe distance.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's your go-to gear setup when out in the field?

**Aparupa :** It always depends on the situation. However, currently I love using the Nikon Z9 and the Nikkor 400mm F 2.8 along with the Nikkor 70-200mm. They are my go to gears.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the main challenges that you face as a wildlife photographer?

**Aparupa :** Making a career through wildlife photography is itself a challenge. And challenges increase especially when you are a female wildlife photographer. Safety and Sanitation always remains a concern. For that you can't delve into the jungle on your own where exotic species live. Alone you can't always go to remote places in pre-dawn or stay till late evening when golden light falls. And even if you do all of them and it's appreciated then many times credit goes to you for becoming a girl and not for doing all the labour. So that's very challenging.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the rarest animal you photographed? Are there any on your wish list that you have yet to see?

**Aparupa :** It has to be the Red-necked Phalarope of Arctic regions, quite a rare bird in India that I shot at Gajoldoba, West Bengal in January 2022. Yes, Himalayan Brown Bear, the critically endangered subspecies is on the top of my list.

**Retro Kolkata :** What would you say your most remarkable wildlife encounter has been?

**Aparupa :** Definitely it's the encounter with the Royal Bengal Tiger at Kaziranga. Tiger in Kaziranga is quite rare and we got to witness that in April this year. It was walking straight to us and there was no vehicle nearby either. It's just us and the tiger. Really a mix of emotions of joy and fear.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are your upcoming travel plans?

**Aparupa :** I will be going to Nepal on a Red panda expedition and to the Jim Corbett National Park in upcoming days.

**Retro Kolkata :** What advice would you give to young photographers who are just starting out and considering pursuing a career in wildlife photography?



**Aparupa** :Wildlife photography is a very money intensive passion. It requires a lot of costly lenses and cameras. Even the tours are not that cheap. So if you enjoy doing wildlife photography I would rather suggest that you keep on enjoying it without sacrificing your study or job. I would definitely suggest completing the studies and engaging yourself somewhere. Earn from there and pursue your passion thereafter. But leaving everything and focusing solely on becoming a wildlife photographer is not recommended.

**Retro Kolkata** : We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony.

Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Aparupa** : That is absolutely fantastic. I have gone through many of your articles and found them very informative. I also came to know about the daunting journey of others and their perspective on life and the form of art they are pursuing.

I would tell my followers that every artist's life journey and perspectives of life are different to one another. You may have your journey to success and somebody will have his own journey to his success. The paths are quite different but the process is quite the same. That is to keep the passion going and follow it through every hardship. And at last you will be where you want to be. So it is important to focus on the moment and make decisions which are fit for the moment. Thank you for your love and support.



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MMET THE WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

# JAYANTA GUHA



**Photography**





# JAYANTA GUHA



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**Nature is eternally beautiful and wildlife is everywhere. But, on top of that, I like freedom, I do not like rules & deadlines. If I would be a wedding or model photographer, I had to follow all these. In nature, you have complete freedom to explore and show your creativity. I love to travel, Nowadays, I travel a lot, at least one place in a month, so I get many subjects to capture and I can fulfil my cravings while traveling to different national parks and sanctuaries.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview as our Guest Photographer. Let's have a jump into the past. When did you first know that you wanted to be a photographer and how did you go about pursuing this dream?

**Jayanta :** I started clicking pictures with my smartphone a long ago but never thought to be a wildlife photographer at that time. I used to capture landscape, random moments from the street of Kolkata, macro, etc. It was 2018 when I felt the limitations of mobile and felt the urge to buy a camera. I bought my first camera Nikon D7500 and an 18-140mm lens. I had not taken any images of wildlife before 2018. One day I visited Maidan for refreshment and to capture some moments. I was with my friend Raja, who had a Nikon 70-300 Lens. I tried to shoot a Black Kite in low light and I was supposed to delete that image. But, before deleting that I tried to check that in photoshop. After making some basic changes, I was stunned by the result. From that day, I started wildlife photography and I am enjoying capturing wildlife.

Wildlife Photography is an expensive hobby. To pursue this hobby, you need to have a good financial backup. Not only gear and lens, but you have to pay a lot for travel and safari. By profession, I am an entrepreneur, running an IT company in Kolkata. So, I get financial backup from my business. Besides, I organize wildlife photography workshops in different national parks and also teach post-processing and basics of wildlife photography.

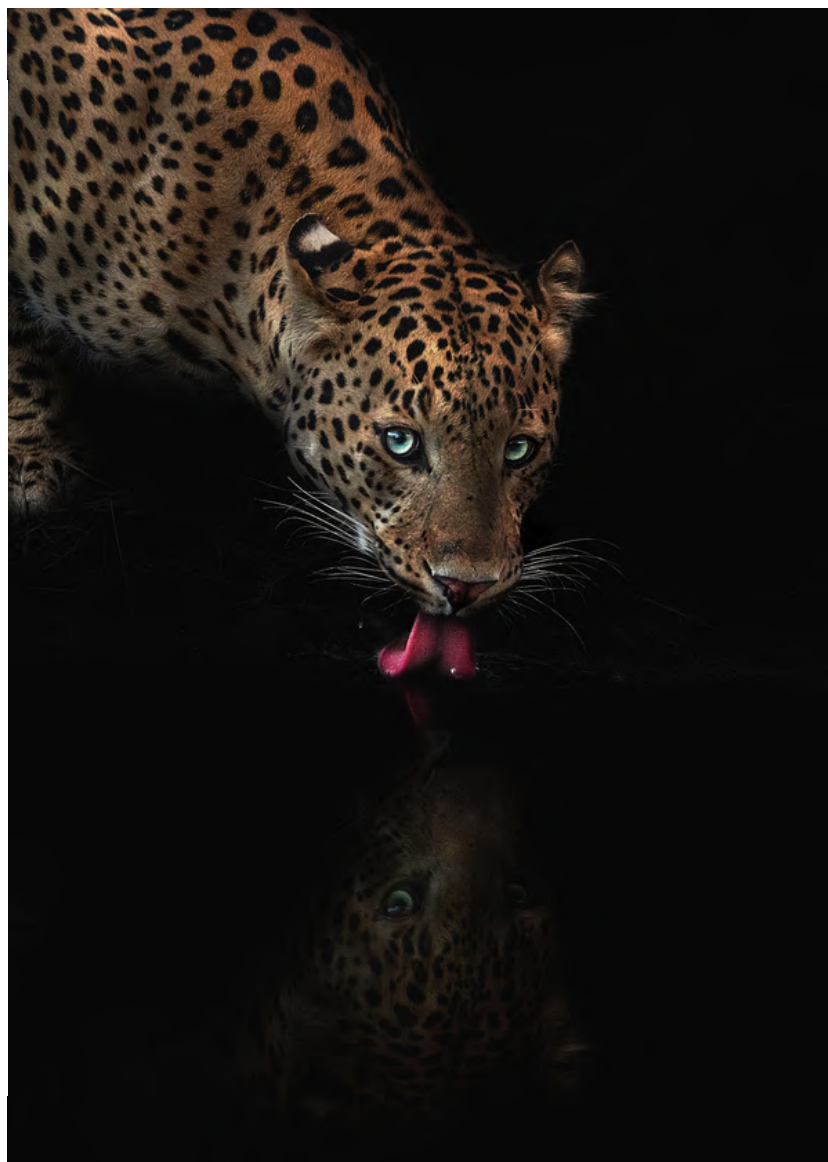
**Retro Kolkata :** Have you had any formal photography training and if not, how did you get to where you are today?

**Jayanta :** I am a self-made photographer, but yes, I joined an online wildlife photography course by Sudhir Shivaram Sir to learn the technique of wildlife photography.

I used to check others' work on social media such as Instagram, and Facebook to learn the composition, colour, angle, etc. By that, we can understand what we are missing. I love to participate in photography competitions, so that I can see how progressive my works are, and exactly what are drawbacks of mine. This is how I am improving my work as a photographer.







**Retro Kolkata :** Why did you choose wildlife photography in particular?

**Jayanta :** Nature is eternally beautiful and wildlife is everywhere. But, on top of that, I like freedom, I do not like rules & deadlines. If I would be a wedding or model photographer, I had to follow all these. In nature, you have complete freedom to explore and show your creativity. I love to travel, Nowadays, I travel a lot, at least one place in a month, so I get many subjects to capture and I can fulfil my cravings while traveling to different national parks and sanctuaries.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which part of the world have you found most exciting as a wildlife photographer?

**Jayanta :** I have not visited any country outside India, apart from Nepal during the Red Panda expedition. As per my experience, Kaziranga National Park and Keoladeo National park are two of my first choice in terms of flora and fauna. As I've told you previously, I love to watch others' works, and I found some interesting places over the world while checking their photographs - Tanzania, Madagascar, Borneo, Masai Mara & Costa Rica are on my upcoming hitlist.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Jayanta :** Whatever is raw in nature, that is wildlife. Though we are making it artificial by doing several changes. I have seen controlled burning; it is good for nature but at the same time we kill many underground species because of this fire. We shall not try to control nature.

Over 7,000 species around the world are being considered endangered. As a photographer, we are trying to make people aware. A maximum of species are endangered because of habitat loss and poaching. When wildlife photographers visit national parks, they are contributing an amount to that forest. We can see many anti-poaching camps built in the forest. When we tell a story about an animal by showing the image of the same, some people may understand the value of them.



**Retro Kolkata :** How much research do you do prior to going out on the field? Is it important to know a lot about animal behaviour to get the perfect shot?

**Jayanta :** It is very important to be aware of the places before visiting. You can save time and make good compositions. I do some research on social media, searching on google about the species of that particular place. When you know what you can get, you can visualize the frame. But in the end, it's nature and you can not predict. Yes, We are supposed to have good knowledge about the behaviour of the animals, it helps to capture the perfect moment. In wildlife, every second matters. We can not miss a moment that will never come twice.

**Retro Kolkata :** What's your go-to gear setup when out in the field?

**Jayanta :** I use Nikon gears and Lenses - Z6ii & D7500 with 200-500 f/5.6 & 70-200 f/2.8. I prefer manual settings with auto ISO. I do not use any tripod for wildlife, I prefer handheld, and beanbag for videography.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the main challenges that you face as a wildlife photographer?

**Jayanta :** My main challenge is time. I have to manage my business and photography at the same time. Other than

that, there are some challenges in nature that I love to face, such as changing light at every moment, low light conditions, and definitely the random fluctuations of climate weather.

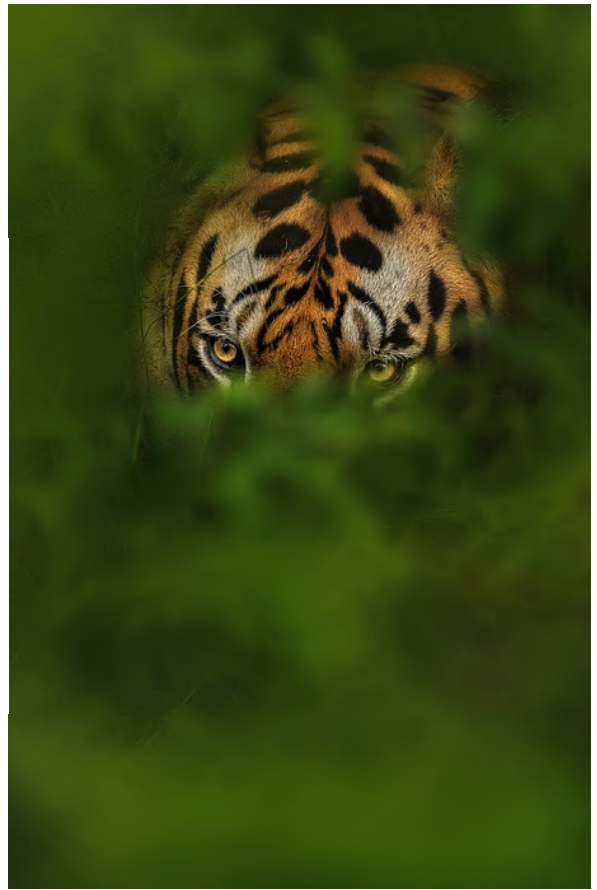
**Retro Kolkata :** What is the rarest animal you photographed? Are there any on your wish list that you have yet to see?

**Jayanta :** I have captured Red Panda, which is endangered and legally protected in India, Bhutan, China, Nepal, and Myanmar. And, Hoolock Gibbon - the only Ape found in India. There are others on my list - Snow Leopard and Himalayan Brown Bear in Spiti Valley.

**Retro Kolkata :** What would you say your most remarkable wildlife encounter has been?

**Jayanta :** It was 2020 in Kaziranga National Park when a mother one-horned Rhino chased our gypsy to protect her baby. The mother Rhino crossed the road, but the baby was on another side of the road. At that time mother started running towards our gypsy from the front side, A Rhino can run 50-55 km/hour. we had to move our gypsy in reverse. The same incident happened again in 2021.





**Retro Kolkata :** What are your upcoming travel plans?

**Jayanta :** There are few places to conduct Wildlife Photography Tours on my list.

August: Jhalana Reserve Forest

September: Red Panda Expedition

October: Red Panda Expedition

November: Sundarban National Park

December: Kaziranga National Park

**Retro Kolkata :** What advice would you give to young photographers who are just starting out and considering pursuing a career in wildlife photography?

**Jayanta :** First, you have to respect nature and wildlife. Do not disturb them to capture a good image. Nowadays, many photographers are getting closer to bird nests and destroying nest along with the babies.

Second, Wildlife is an expensive hobby. So, if you want to make your career in wildlife, you have to spend a good amount of money and time on it. Be prepared for that.

Third, if you do not have a good financial backup, start with basic gear and lens. You do not need to go to any national parks, instead explore your locality, waterbodies, and backyards.

Fourth, do not wait. Start clicking. Unless you start making errors, you will never learn. Learn from your mistakes, and must not repeat them.

Fifth, do not follow rules - as they are made to be broken. But, before breaking the rules, you have to learn them properly. Pablo Picasso once said, 'Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.' As an artist, it is your art, and you have the flexibility to make it presentable to the audience.



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MEET THE ECOLOGIST, NATURALIST & CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHER

# CYNTHIA BANDUREK

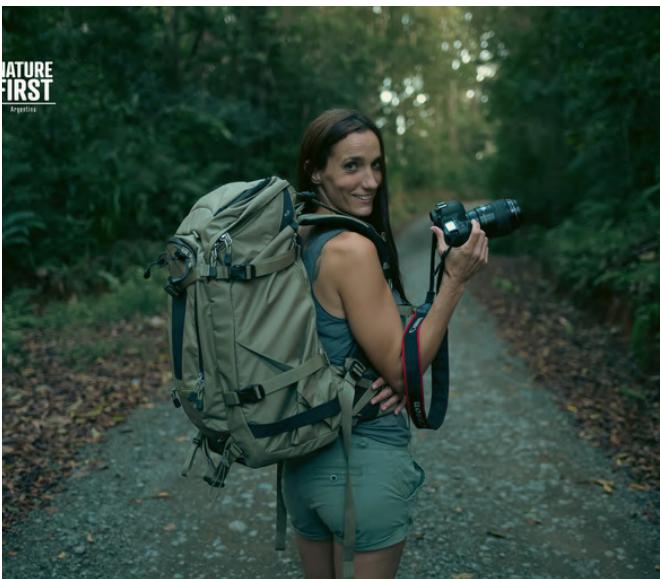


**Photography**





# CYNTHIA BANDUREK



**When I discovered photography I was studying frogs in the field for my Career, so that fact led me to start with macro photography at night, and at that moment I realized that macro photography allows us to enter a completely new world that our naked eyes don't see. I fell in love with photography even more deeply.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview as our Guest Photographer. Let's have a jump into the past. When did you first know that you wanted to be a photographer and how did you go about pursuing this dream?

**Cynthia :** I think the interest in wildlife is innate in me. Since I can remember, I felt attracted to nature and I was concerned about the impact we as humans produce on the environment. Even as a child, I read several books about environmental conservation. I decided to study Ecology first and then have a career as a naturalist. Being a naturalist led me to get involved in several conservation projects, as it also allowed me to work for more than 11 years in the Museum of Natural Sciences of Buenos Aires, becoming involved in environmental education projects and interpretation trail design. My passion was so strong that I never had doubts about what my personal and professional paths would be.

I discovered photography while I was studying for my second career as a field Naturalist in 2007. First, it was a tool to record the animals or plants I was studying in the field. But when I started to shoot, I fell in love with photography and started to learn more and more as a self-taught.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have you had any formal photography training and if not, how did you get to where you are today?

**Cynthia :** I have learned alone, and I still do. Today is easy to find information about almost everything. The knowledge is out there, just you need to be curious, determined, and constant and yes, everything is possible.

**Retro Kolkata :** Why did you choose Macro photography in particular?

**Cynthia :** When I discovered photography I was studying frogs in the field for my Career, so that fact led me to start with macro photography at night, and at that moment I realized that macro photography allows us to enter a completely new world that our naked eyes don't see. I fell in love with photography even more deeply.

**Retro Kolkata :** The detail you capture in your photographs is insanely sharp, what gears do you use to capture your photos?

**Cynthia :** As I always teach in my courses or workshops, you do not need the best equipment, you can get excellent results if you learn the technique and practice a lot.







I have now, a Canon 6D with a Canon 100 mm macro lens, and I also use a when I need more magnification a Raynox DCR 250 close-up lens. I use a flash and a diffuser.

I started with a Sony Cyber-Shot Camera, and I was able to get amazing shots with that, and you can find some of those shots in my book that I published in 2017. "The world of small. An approach to the universe of arthropods from an artistic, visual and evolutionary perspective"

**Retro Kolkata :** Is it enough to have the right gears to be a good Macro Photographer or are there any other areas of knowledge that are critical? As a Macro Photographer, which aspect is the most important to capture images creatively?

**Cynthia :** As I mentioned earlier, the result does not depend on the gear we have. It is really important we master the technique, we practice, practice and practice. Something that I believe is important to improve our frames and grow our portfolio is learning about the behaviours and ecology of the animals we want to portray.

I think we need to allow ourselves to try different things to get creative frames, and just play, for instance with the taking angle, the composition, and lighting.

**Retro Kolkata :** Is there any particular photo that stands out as a favourite? If so, what's your story behind it?

**Cynthia :** There is a picture of Golfo Dulce poison frog with the tadpoles on its back that I like a lot, but also because of the behind-the-scenes, that shows how difficult it is sometimes to get the shots. Of course, when you work in natural conditions and you are trying to show behaviour and the biology of the species.

"I was looking for these frogs in the place where they live, but they are difficult to see in their environment, near streams and generally in caves. I found this little guy at the entrance of a little cave on a slope in the middle of the forest!

The conditions to take the photo were complicated. I had to set myself in an uncomfortable position, balancing on the slope, and I put my arms on the floor of the jungle, on the leaf litter to stay at the level of the frog. I was taking pictures, and suddenly I saw one of my arms full of army ants. There were a lot of them all together doing a big red spot on my arm. I was lucky that they did not bite me. Imagine if all this amount of



ants bites you at the same time. (For that reason I carry on my backpack with my photo gear an antihistamine injection just in case, you never know...)

I took off all the ants and I tried again from the other side of a little shrub, where the ants weren't. Again I set myself in an uncomfortable position on the slope, and I was taking the pictures again, suddenly my camera turned off.. I slipped on the slope and slid down on my belly, my legs and arms, and yes I was in shorts..."

**Retro Kolkata :** Are there any special scenic geographical locations that you prefer to shoot at?

**Cynthia :** I always feel amazed by the tropics because of their biodiversity. Rainforests are an open laboratory where you can discover the magic of nature and the magic of biological processes. As a passionate biologist, seeing the evolution and ecology of the tropics is an inspirational place for me to live and work.

But the good part about macro photography is that you can find small models everywhere.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any preferable seasons or times of the year for shooting Macro subjects?

**Cynthia :** When I was living in Argentina, where I am from, the best season for macro is spring, because all the insects

are all around flowers and out doing their thing, but now that I am living in the forest of Costa Rica, you can find small creatures, because of the even temperatures.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have been published by several iconic publishers in Photography. Has there been any accomplishment that you are especially proud of?

**Cynthia :** Any recognition is special, not just for the hard work behind our work, but mostly because my work tries to show aspects of the natural world that are little known, but I believe they are still amazing. So every opportunity to show the beautiful creatures that share the planet with us is important for me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Cynthia :** Conservation is the care and protection of natural resources so that they can persist for future generations. It includes maintaining the diversity of species, genes, and ecosystems, as well as functions of the environment, such as nutrient cycling. As a humanity, we are generating a big impact on the ecosystems and on the species that some of them already disappeared forever and a lot of them are at



risk. That is important because every creature has the right to live, but it is also important because our lives depend on the well functioning of every ecosystem and every creature that lives in it.

The core of my photographic work is conservation. I believe that the power of images can be used to change attitudes and behaviors toward the natural world, visuals can bring people closer to nature. I think that the impact can be deeper if we add the scientific knowledge and make people know the importance that every living being has in the intricate network that allows the fragile balance of life and how magnificent their lives can result. – a complete universe of life that remains hidden from most eyes.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are the main challenges that you face as a Macro photographer?

**Cynthia :** The complexity of macro photography, especially of living beings like arthropods is because all the variables are on limits. Depth of field is practically inexistent, the lack of light especially in big magnification is really evident, the possibility of trepidation is big, the working distance is short, and of course, in most cases, the animal doesn't stop moving. I think the best way is to have control of all the parameters of the camera, the only ones we can control... nature has its own rules.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from Photography, you are also a beautiful painter and illustrator. What do you consider to be the ingredients for a strong composition in painting?

**Cynthia :** I like to paint wildlife, and I think one of the most important things, is to pay attention to the eyes, to transmit that the animals are alive, but then speaking about composition there are several resources that we can use to transmit a message, and are the same that we can use with photography. The visual language.

**Retro Kolkata :** What advice would you give to young photographers who are just starting out and considering pursuing a career in photography?

**Cynthia :** The best advice I can give is first, study, in a deep way to understand and made all the technical parts of the technique part of you. Then practice, and practice and practice, Be curious and try new things, play with everything, the camera is just a tool to explore our creativeness. And then study other things that can help you to establish yourself as a photographer and as an entrepreneur, for instance, marketing, storytelling, writing...

Be patient and never give up.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Cynthia :** First of all, I have to thank you for having me as a photographer guest on your amazing platform. As a photographer and an artist, I find the initiative really interesting where different kinds of artistic expression can converge in the same place. I believe that inspiration can come even from a completely different aspect of art and life. Thanks for such an amazing project, that also can serve us to grow our networking connecting with other creatives and artists.



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# INTERVIEW WITH DEVENDER MEENA

Travel & Landscape



Photography





# DEVENDER MEENA



I believe, outdoors gives one the opportunity to explore and learn about very little Details, From how light and shadow plays to how colors and contrast can lift your pictures and gives one the insight to minute details of very basic photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. What first attracted you to photography? When did you start shooting and how did this love for photography happen?

**Devender :** I'm Devender Meena, and currently based in Delhi. I am a Travel and landscape Photographer and Photography Mentor . I was mesmerized by how nature turns its colours and that kind of pulled me into Photography and I have been capturing and chasing sunsets since 2014.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography for you? Would you have imagined a few years ago that this passion would have played such an important role in your life today?

**Devender :** It's an integral part of my life, on some days it's my passion and on other days when life seems dull, it puts in its colors and makes life a little easy and happening. To be honest, I had not

imagined photography to play such an important role in my life, back then I was just chasing sunsets because "acha lagta hai".

**Retro Kolkata :** Who and what inspires you to keep creating and exploring?

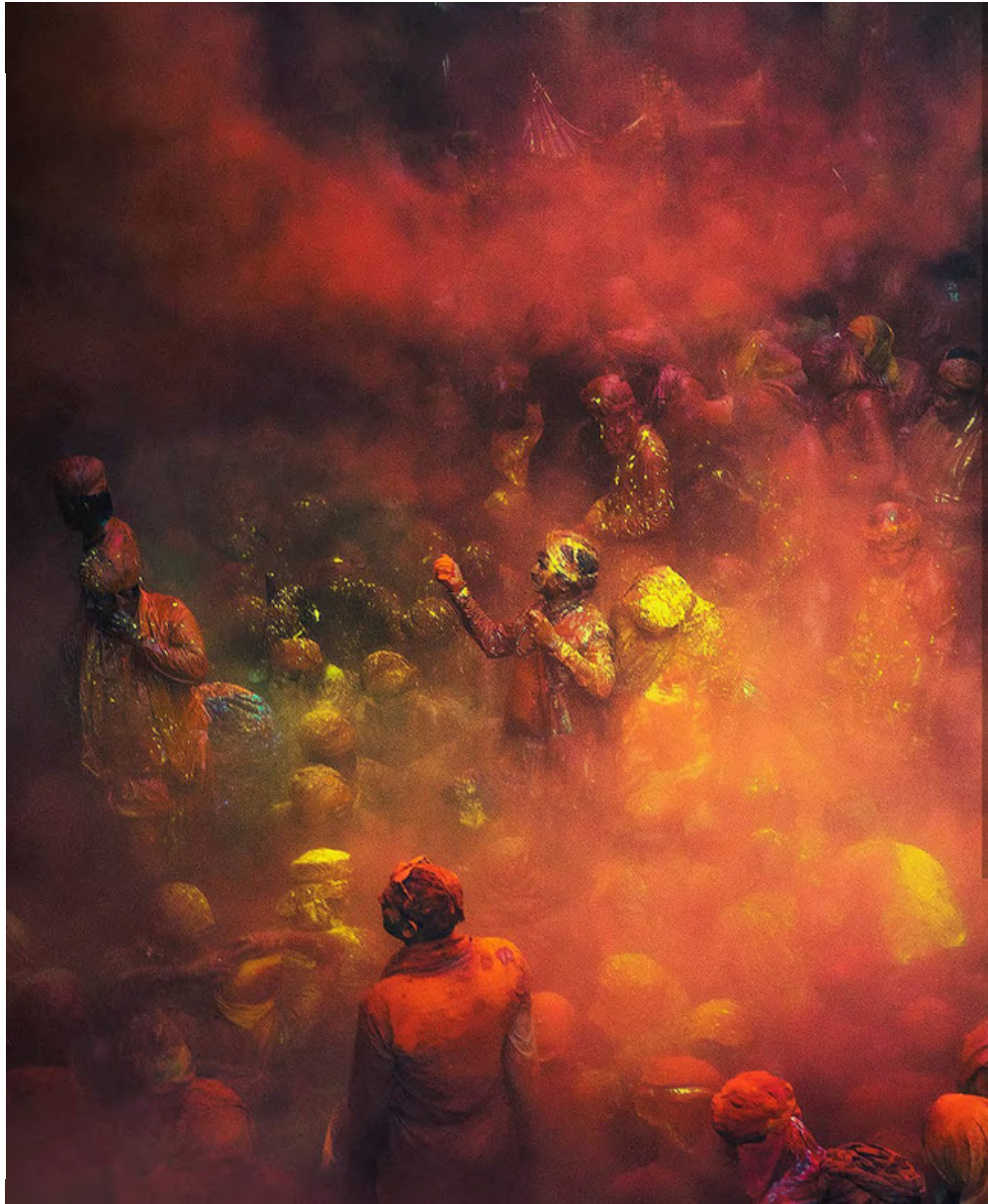
**Devender :** Nature and its landscape have been my biggest inspiration to create and to explore more.

**Retro Kolkata :** It seems like you have a deep connection to nature and that this has sparked your love for photography. How important do you believe it is for a photographer to love the outdoors, not just the results?

**Devender :** I believe, outdoors gives one the opportunity to explore and learn about very little Details, From how light and shadow plays to how colors and contrast can lift your pictures and gives one the insight to minute details of very basic photography.







**Retro Kolkata :** What makes landscape photography so special for you?

**Devender :** It's the journey of reaching the view point and first capturing how the scene turns with your own eyes and then to capture it with a lens that makes it special. Each viewpoint has a story attached to it and a history attached to it.

**Retro Kolkata :** In terms of camera equipment, what are you currently using and what do you hope to add to your camera bag at some point in the future?

**Devender :** Currently I'm using a Canon 1300D, 18-55mm and mobile phone. As a matter of fact, the equipment does not really matter, what matters is how the person perceives and works with what's in hand. If the need comes to having a gear of a sort then in future I hope to use any camera which has good low light performance capabilities .

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you pre-visualise and plan your shoots down to the smallest detail, or do you prefer to create images spontaneously?

**Devender :** Yes, everything is planned. I pre-visualize the whole scene as it matters what the viewpoint is, and also the timing of sunrise/sunsets play a very important role in my schedules.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have there been times that you've had to revisit your favourite places many times to achieve the required result? Can you tell us more about your method of working?

**Devender :** I have been visiting Pushkar for the last 3 years to capture a variety of clouds. In the first 2 years the clouds weren't there much, but now I have been getting the desired results. And as said earlier, I pre-visualize the whole scene as it matters what the viewpoint is, and also the timing of sunrise/sunsets play a very important role in my schedules.

**Retro Kolkata :** In your opinion, what makes a great image stand out from the good ones?

**Devender :** It's the perspective of the viewer that matters, otherwise each and every image is unique in its own way. But, an iconic image would be one which represents the photographer's style. It could be an image or an entire project too.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your dream assignment?

**Devender :** I would like to capture monuments across India with the perfect lighting and for that I would love to collaborate with Incredible India in the future.



**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from photography, do you have interest in other creative activities?

**Devender :** As of now, no. Photography still tops the list of my creative pursuits.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any pieces of advice for young photographers interested in photography but who want to earn a living?

**Devender :** The only advice would be to have your basics strong and to keep working on your skills. And on a side note, don't run towards the trends. Make your skill a trend and keep chasing it.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Devender :** You guys are doing a wonderful job curating this stage for the artists and I hope this reaches a lot more people. And a message for my followers would be to "Keep clicking, keep improving."

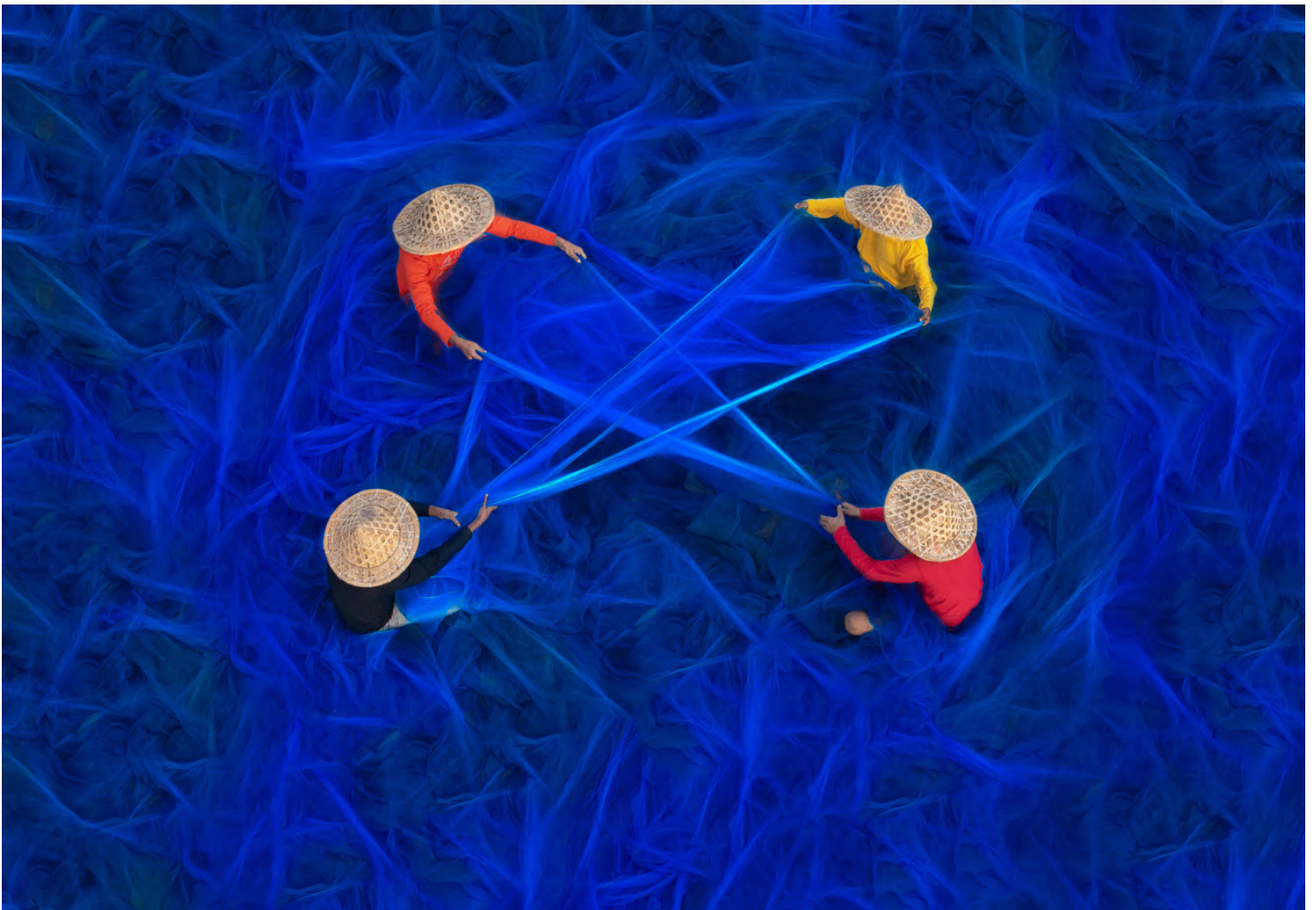




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# INTERVIEW WITH HAPPY MUKHERJEE

Travel & People



Photography



# HAPPY MUKHERJEE



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I need to travel a lot to different places of India. I love to connect and communicate with the natives of these places, love to learn their cultures, daily life and to capture them through my lens. My photography has given me opportunity to know people from different provinces, know their festivals, their livelihood, their art forms, and their history & heritage.



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. What first attracted you to photography? When did you start shooting and how did this love for photography happen?

**Happy :** I am Happy Mukherjee, a professional freelance travel, people and documentary photographer and mentor from India. I worked as an Economics teacher for more than ten years, which I left to pursue full-fledged photography. I also judge national photography competitions. I am honored with prestigious distinctions EFIP, AFIAP. Till date my work has been awarded and exhibited in more than sixty countries and I also got acknowledged sixteen times Best Photographer in different National and International Photography Competitions. I have bagged more than 450 awards for my work throughout the world. My work has been published in VOGUE, Chiiz magazine, Smart Photography Magazine, Viewfinder, Asian Photography Magazine, The Times (UK), Anandabazar Patrika, Bartaman Chatursparni and many more. I am winner of Prestigious EISA Maestro Photography International Contest 2022. My photograph won Lalitkala National academy award along with many competitions like

renowned World Photographer Club contest, 35 awards etc. My photo was selected as finalist in Siena Awards Contest. I got very prestigious FIAP BLUE PIN from Georgia.

I love painting from my school days and wanted to pursue studies in fine arts, somehow that did not happen that time. I think this drove me passionately towards this another art called Photography. I started photography long back as a traveler and from there the journey went on.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography for you? Would you have imagined a few years ago that this passion would have played such an important role in your life today?

**Happy :** I left my more than ten years of school job to pursue photography wholeheartedly and full time. Then photography was my passion not profession still without thinking about monthly salary habit I put down my pocket and took up camera as my love.

Actually from my childhood I always engaged myself in different art work and enjoyed my time with them. After that when I started clicking I enjoyed to be behind the camera. I love to see things differently from the camera lens. I felt it is importance in my life that's why I took such big decision about my previous job, and I feel that was my best decision ever.







**Retro Kolkata :** Who and what inspires you to keep creating and exploring?

**Happy :** I could not take any name who inspires me to create and explore, though my husband's enormous support encourages me a lot and rest is my nature. I am an avid traveler and always love to connect with new people and enjoy their culture.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has travel photography enabled you to connect with locals and their cultures on your travels?

**Happy :** My genre is travel and people photography, so I need to travel a lot to different places of India. I love to connect and communicate with the natives of these places, love to learn their cultures, daily life and to capture them through my lens. My photography has given me an opportunity to know people from different provinces, know their festivals, their livelihood, their art forms, and their history & heritage.

**Retro Kolkata :** Are there any unique challenges and hazards as a travel photographer when it comes to your gear? For instance, keeping your batteries charged in remote locations and preventing theft and damage.

**Happy :** As a travel photographer I always carry 5 to 6 fully charged camera batteries with me. I also carry a fully charged 20000mah power bank with me. I always carry a rain cover, plastics, Umbrella to handle sudden rain. Carrying a 5-point extension cord helps me for getting all my batteries charged at one go, wherever possible. While doing travel photography carrying two cameras helps me a lot.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have a lot of really great portrait photography. What drew you to focus on portrait photography? What value do portraits have in travel photography?

**Happy :** I feel portrait photography is an integral part of travel photography. Every place or province where I travel has their native population which is symbolic of that place. Through portraits I can capture different moods, actions, expressions of these people beautifully. It also helps me to capture the unique features and characteristics of their faces without which I feel Travel photography is incomplete.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your dream assignment?

**Happy :** I want to keep capturing, keep learning and keep growing in this field of photography throughout





my life. Ready to do all the assignments which comes thereby.

**Retro Kolkata :** In terms of camera equipment, what are you currently using and what do you hope to add to your camera bag at some point in the future?

**Happy :** I am using Nikon Z6II and Nikon D750 with Tamron Lenses. In near future I want to upgrade my lenses.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from photography, do you have interest in other creative activities?

**Happy :** I love to do painting.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any pieces of advice for young photographers interested in photography but who want to earn a living?

**Happy :** Love your Photography passionately and be honest towards it. Decide your genre and be focused on your genre. Create your professional portfolio.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Happy :** A great initiative indeed and photographers like us should whole heartedly support you. Such single stage helps us to interact, learn, explore, get inspired and influenced from other fellow photographers.

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# INTERVIEW WITH LUCA RENNER

Travel & Landscape



Photography





# LUCA RENNER



**Travel photography creates a deep sense of grounding myself to the nature because when I experience sunrises with no people around at majestic places if feel like a small piece of this universe. As well travel photography is pushing me out of my comfort zone on a regular basis to see and experience places near or far away.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thank you for accepting our invitation for an interview. Please say something about you. What first attracted you to photography? When did you start shooting and how did this love for photography happen?

**Luca :** Hello! my name is Luca Renner and I'm Travel photographer from Munich in Germany. I'm attracted to photography because I want to show the most beautiful places on earth to large community and raise awareness about the beauty of our nature around us. My photography journey started at the beginning of 2019 and because of some Travel Photographers like Jord Hammond , Emmett Sparling, George Steinmetz and many others I thought about working full time as the travel photographer.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography for you? Would you have imagined a few years ago that this passion would have played such an important role in your life today?

**Luca :** For me, actually photography is a very very important part in my life and it's well about my passion for traveling the world. Through my photography, many people can experience my experience, other cultures all around the world and most importantly for me may beautiful landscapes all around the world.

Before 2019 I never had imagined that photography is such a huge passion for me and that it will be are really big part of my life.



**Retro Kolkata :** Who and what inspires you to keep creating and exploring?

**Luca :** I am always inspired by other travel photographers, who show landscapes beside the known places like Iceland, Bali, Italy etc. I want to show many different places like China who are less known in the western photography hemisphere.

I am as well always inspired by other cultures, other landscapes, other food and many things traveling to distant places is brings to me.

**Retro Kolkata :** It seems like you have a deep connection to nature and that this has sparked your love for photography. How important do you believe it is for a photographer to love the outdoors, not just the results?

**Luca :** I think for nature photographers it's a very important part for creating a deep intrinsic love for showing the nature through their emotions to the viewer.

In other parts of photography, I think a special love for nature isn't really needed.

**Retro Kolkata :** What makes travel photography so special for you?

**Luca :** Travel photography creates a deep sense of grounding myself to the nature because when I experience sunrises with no people around at majestic places if feel like a small piece of this universe. As well travel photography is pushing me out of my comfort zone on a regular basis to see and experience places near or far away.







**Retro Kolkata :** In terms of camera equipment, what are you currently using and what do you hope to add to your camera bag at some point in the future?

**Luca :** Currently camera setup is a Sony Alpha 7iii, three lenses which consists of a 14-24 Sigma Art, a 24-70 Sony GM and a 100-400 Sony GM. As well I have a Sony 1.4 converter and some polarizers. My drone equipment consists of a DJI Mavic Pro 3 and 2 with some Polarpro filters. I hope I can switch my main body for a Sony Alpha R iv.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you pre-visualise and plan your shoots down to the smallest detail, or do you prefer to create images spontaneously?

**Luca :** I mostly plan my shoots with location scouting before and planning the sunset, sunrise with the PhotoPills app. With this app you know exactly when the sun is at which place during every minute.

**Retro Kolkata :** Have there been times that you've had to revisit your favourite places many times to achieve the required result? Can you tell us more about your method of working?

**Luca :** I have been travelled to many important places in the dolomites, Iceland, Indonesia again to create better images of already photographed places.

If I am not happy with the images, I had in mind before the trip to this place I try to get back as soon as possible. But learning from a few mistakes in the past I normally stay now 3-4 days a place's where I would need only one good sunrises for the case that the weather, the surroundings etc won't really fit my imaginations. But as well I try to don't perfectionist every shooting and go a little more with the flow in the future because the method before was kind of stressing too much.

**Retro Kolkata :** In your opinion, what makes a great image stand out from the good ones?

**Luca :** A very good image stands out because the viewer will immediately will get this "awe" feeling of how beautiful is this image and how in the world anyone could create this amazing piece of art.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your dream assignment?

**Luca :** A dream assignment for me would be a few months long National Geographic assignment about a relatively unknown place.

**Retro Kolkata :** Apart from photography, do you have interest in other creative activities?

**Luca :** I'm as well interested in cooking amazing dishes.



**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any pieces of advice for young photographers interested in photography but who want to earn a living?

**Luca :** Explore the nature around you, try to get better of creating similar images like your favourite photographers and don't expect anything to happen overnight. Real progress and success will need a few years.

**Retro Kolkata :** We (Retro Kolkata) are trying to build one single stage for all the artists, because we believe that artists are the most beautiful creation of God and geographical boundaries can never break their unity and harmony. Please say something about our initiative and any special message for your followers.

**Luca :** Thank you very much for having me Retro Kolkata Magazine and I am very happy about the opportunity by you of showing my way and my photos to many amazing readers of your magazine. Thank you for reading my story and I wish you all the best and stay safe!



RETRO KOLKATA MAGAZINE  
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# MARTIAL ART





## MARTIAL ART

# HISTORY OF KYOKUSHIN KARATE

## ➔ From the Beginning

Historically Karate is a martial art which was born on Okinawa Island. Earlier the Kingdom of Ryukyu was located on the island. It was an independent state which had its national peculiarities. At the end of the 19th century, it was included in Japan and at the beginning of the 20th century, master Funakoshi Gichin arrived from Okinawa to Honshu (the main island of Japan) where he began to popularize and teach karate. Later such masters as sensei Mabuni, sensei Motobu, sensei Miyagi Chojun and sensei Toyama also arrived from Okinawa on the main island with the purpose to teach Karate.

After the end of World War II, Karate has begun to develop very actively and has taken permanently the 3rd position in the Japanese martial arts world after Judo and Kendo. Initially, sensei Funakoshi Gichin taught karate based on kata only (Kata is a form of ritualized self-training in which patterned or memorized movements are done to practice a form of combat manoeuvres), while Kumite – sparring was not used. When karate began to develop actively, students wanted to take part in competitions to prove their strength. Then the competitions were held according to the sun-dome rules (without actual contact). These rules have received a wider spread and became the basis of holding Kumite competitions.

But after some time, sensei Masutatsu Oyama appeared who objected to the rules and formed his style named 'Kyokushin'. Initially, Masutatsu Oyama opened his first official dōjō – the Oyama Dojo – in 1953 to teach Goju-Ryu style of traditional Karate. Subsequently, Oyama's Karate theory would deviate from Goju-Ryu and would form into his style. His instruction was distinguished by goals of improving the strength in the actual battle by performing a Kumite that directly hits the opponent's body with a thrust or kick. This was unlike the other schools of Karate at the time. Over the next ten years, Oyama built his organization and demonstrated his karate around the world



Introducing

# SHYAMANTAK GANGULY

**In the inaugural interactive session with Karate Instructor, we have invited Shyamantak Ganguly, the Asian Karate Champion, Ambassador of 'Fit India Movement' & Da One Sports, 3rd Dan Black belt holder and the son of Hanshi Shivaji Ganguly.**

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all, thanks a lot for accepting our invitation for an interview. it's a great pleasure to have you as our Guest. Let's start with the first question. What was your dream since you were a kid? ...what would you like to do?

**Shyamantak :** Since I was a kid, you could say that I used to see my father and brother wear karate uniforms and go for karate training. I always wanted to wear the karate uniform seeing them, so then at the age of 2 or 3, you could say that I wore the karate uniform and went with them to the karate class. I used to sit and see the karate training and slowly interest and passion for karate and combat



**Retro Kolkata :** You are the 5 times national champion, Junior Asian Full Contact Karate Champion, 2nd place holder in the International Championship, Brazil,2019 and 5th place holder in International Dream Cup,2018, South Korea.

**Shyamantak :** Yes.

**Retro Kolkata :** Can you describe your favourite experience or memory from competing around the world?

**Shyamantak :** For me, all are memorable. But the most memorable one is fifth place in South Korea. That's because it was an open-weight tournament, where there were no weight categories. I, being a 73 kg fighter, fought with 90kg and 120 kg fighters as well. When I won fifth place, my father lifted me - not only because I had won, but also because it was after twenty years that India had won an international Trophy in a different country: It was India's first international trophy in the open weight category outside India and I fought and won against a Japanese. So he was just so happy that he lifted me. That day I will not forget.

**Retro Kolkata :** You are the son of Shri Shivaji Ganguly, the pioneer of Kyokushin Karate in India, you have also dedicated your life to continue the work of your father. What's the greatest and the most important lesson you've learned from your father? Do you pass it to young generations? How do you feel when you train students with your father who is a living legend of Karate?

**Shyamantak :** He always tells me that success trains and failure complaints. This quote always motivates me, and he also says that there is no alternative to hard work. I always pass that to my students; if they want to be successful in whatever they do, there is no alternative to hard work. It's a different feeling. I feel lucky and blessed that I can teach students with my father."

**Retro Kolkata :** What would be your advice to anyone thinking of training and competing in Karate?

**Shyamantak :** If you have a 3 D in life dedication, determination, and discipline in life you can achieve anything in life. You should have the fighting spirit in you and the never give up spirit. In karate knowing new techniques every day is not the key to success but practising the same techniques, again and again, will take you ahead.

**Retro Kolkata :** You're not only Asia Champion, but also a great coach. What are some "secrets" to becoming successful as a trainer? How have your teaching methods changed over the years??

**Shyamantak :** The first thing you need to do when a kid comes to your training center is to bond with him, so that he becomes comfortable and starts sharing



his thoughts and likes with you. For that, at first don't force any kid to do karate - just let him do what he wants. If he runs around, run with him. If he sits down, sit with him and try to talk. The moral of the story is that you have to be a kid with a kid in order to understand him better. We focus mainly on the fitness part, with different functional activities, different games and animal walks which they enjoy. For adults, we have to focus on their strengths and make them more strong, as well as work on their weaknesses to make them better.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you feel that Karate can change a person and what responsibility does an instructor have to the student?

**Shyamantak :** Yes, karate can change a lot in a person. I have seen this in many students; some are now graduating from college. The instructor has a lot of responsibilities which they have to remember; because the instructor will be someone the student will follow.

**Retro Kolkata :** How has karate helped you grow as a person?

**Shyamantak :** Karate has helped me stay humble every time and has also made me a confident person.

**Retro Kolkata :** What are some common mistakes you see when people try to practice?

## HISTORY OF KYOKUSHIN KARATE

to spread it.

On December 6, 1959, Hirofumi Okada was the first person to practice at the Oyama Dojo that was granted a black belt (first dan), and was listed as the first in the official yearly promotion register of the Kyokushin Kaikan.

In 1964 Masutatsu Oyama formed Kyokushin Kaikan, officially the International Karate Organization. Previously, this institution was known as the Oyama Dojo. Since 1964, the style has continued to spread to more than 120 countries, becoming one of the largest martial arts organizations in the world.

Kyokushin Karate came to India in 1977 and Hanshi Shivaji Ganguly, an avid football player and eminent sportsman was drawn to this in 1982 he completed his Shodan and won the 1st runners trophy in Asian Championship in Singapore which highlighted India on the map of Kyokushin karate. He was awarded the 5th Dan in 1991 at the Ugawara Camp in Japan. Now he is the only Indian to have received his 9th Dan Black Belt and also the only Indian to have been appointed the Branch Chief of India by Sosai.



sports started to grow. I told my father that someday I would surely highlight my country's name on the world map in Full Contact Karate.

**Retro Kolkata :** When and why did you begin Karate? Did you win tournaments directly from the start?

**Shyamantak :** At the age of 2 or 3, as my father always said, I wore the dress So I started going to karate class and I started seeing my father Hanshi Shivaji Ganguly and my brother Sensei Shibayan Ganguly.

I didn't win from the beginning. When I started the first few tournaments, I lost but then I started to win. My first junior level big win for my country was in 2008 in Junior Asian Championship in Sri Lanka and from then it is still going on. Winning and losing are part of my journey.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is Kyokushin karate for you?

**Shyamantak :** Kyokushin karate is the way of living to me. It has not only taught me kicks and punches, but it has also taught me how to live a proper life and how to be a good human being.

**Retro Kolkata :** At what age did you get your first dan rank? Can you remember the experience? How was it?

**Shyamantak :** At the age of 9+, I appeared for my shodan or 1st dan Black belt at Digha in All India Summer camp. I gave the exam with other senior adults and at that age itself, I did all the techniques required for the 1st dan exam which includes 100 each of 5 main kicks and 100 each of each main hand technique, 100 squats, kata etc. Being Hanshi Shivaji Ganguly's son he didn't give me any advantage and I am blessed and lucky that he didn't give me any advantage that's why what I am today is only because of him. Big Osu to him.



**Shyamantak** : The common mistakes are they don't have patience and they want to learn all the techniques in 2 days. Don't be in a hurry. Take your time, understand and practice which is very important.

**Retro Kolkata** : How do you stay motivated and focused to hit your fitness goals?

**Shyamantak** : Success trains and failure complaints keep me motivated every time.


**Retro Kolkata** : You are the inspiration for many Karate Sportsmen and women. How do you motivate your students to not give up?

**Shyamantak** : Whenever we lose, we tend to give up. But you have to remember that every failure is your step to success. Fall seven times, but you have to rise eight times.

**Retro Kolkata** : Lastly, what's your hope for the future of Kyokushin Karate and if you could give one final piece of advice to people who want to achieve greatness in Karate, what would it be?

**Shyamantak** : Kyokushin karate is not only about fighting or sports. Kyokushin karate will help you change your life.





The world of  
reality has its  
limits: the world  
of imagination is  
boundless.

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU



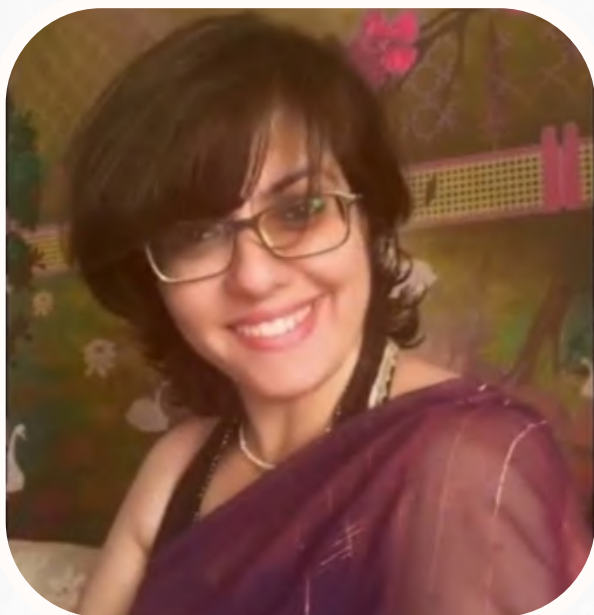
# Eshika Amarnani

## किस ओर तू चला है बावरे

किस ओर तू उडा है बावरे  
हर फिजा में तेरी ही छवि है, और हर छवि में वोह हर शकस है  
जिसे तलाश हर वक्त है, पुकारती है मंजिले जिसे बेहद है  
किस ओर तू चला बावरे, किस ओर तू उडा है बावरे  
कतरा कतरा जीता क्यू है?  
फिर कतरा कतरा मरता क्यू है?  
बिखरते सवालो सा तू क्यू है?  
उलझे जवाबो सा तू क्यू है?  
जब खुद मे है बुलंद अस्तित्व तेरा, फिर हर जगह भटकता तू  
क्यू है?  
किस ओर तू चला है बावरे?  
किस ओर तू उडा है बावरे?

**“SURVIVOR POETESS “  
ESHIKA AMARNANI**





## MEET THE POET

# ESHIKA AMARNANI

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you start writing? Do you remember the first time you wrote something?

**Eshika :** Its been 4 years and above when I started writing post my accident, while I was bedridden state and my first poetry was " kis Ore tu chala hai baware" out on media when I was motivated to get up n perform.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about how your work has developed or changed since you first started writing?

**Eshika :** Yes,my work has developed n changed as my inner journey is changing itself by learning each day in life the struggles that I'm going through and overcoming the odds ,which is reflecting in my writeups.

**Retro Kolkata :** What was the source of your inspiration earlier? Did it change with time?

**Eshika :** My source of inspiration was the spiritual book " Autobiography of a yogi" by Paramhansa Yogananda (whom I fondly call as baba) and my gurudev, words of wisdom with my own experiences are my source of inspiration now and then.

**Retro Kolkata :** What does poetry mean to you? Why do you write?

**Eshika :** Poetry for are self reflecting thoughts that are expressed through the power of the words with the sense a responsibility as a human to bring a revolution amongst others by your vivid experiences of life to uplift each other for good.

My purpose of this journey as a writer is to invoke self love and never give up attitude with my own survivor journey.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which poets have inspired you? Do you feel yourself ever influenced by the writing style of a poet?

**Eshika :**Rumi,sufi, Baba Bullehshah, Amrita Pritam ji, Nida Fazil Sahabh, Gulzar Sahabh and lots of other Urdu poets work I read and influence me as a writer.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about your typical process for writing -- from idea to final draft?

**Eshika :**Writing is process a journey in itself where nothing is planned ,it comes like a whiff in the air and takes shapes to the final draft as the thoughts n emotions seek refuge within the heart n mind of the creator...I'm mere a medium, it is the divine lord that is working its magic n weaving it through me, is what I believe in!

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you beat writer's block?

**Eshika :**By exploring my limitations and overpowering my fears in expression, hence doing what a free spirited writer should do....Write. Write and write!

**Retro Kolkata :** Please let the readers know about your projects for the future? Are you working on any project? Please share any stanza you have written and you repeat it most of the times.

**Eshika :** I am planning to give another dimension to my craft by shaping its flow and exploring it lyrically with our profound music heritage and there is this favourite lines of mine I keep reciting it like a mantra" KHUDH SA ISHQ ,KABHI KHUDHKO DIKHA...CHAL TU BHI KABHI KHUDHSE THODHA ISHQ LADHA"







# Feeling lonely? Chill! You are not alone!

**ISHITA GANGULY**

Loneliness is often associated with a fear of being left alone. That's why most of us do not want to be lonely. We are scared of being left out and so desperately seek company even from toxic people. On the other hand, staying lonely is not bad. Unless you label it as a dead depressing thing to deal with!

When you are alone you can see the world in a different light. Instead of being paralyzed by fear, understand that when you are left to your own devices you can go anywhere you want, and do things as you desire. It's up to you to decide whether you want to be miserable being alone or you want to enjoy your life to the fullest!

Also, you can reflect on your life and make some serious decisions when alone. You will also get some brilliant ideas in your solitude. If you work on those ideas you will definitely reach greater heights. Artists and writers prefer some seclusion to create good art.

Loneliness should not be feared. Accept it. At some point, you have to be alone. If you are someone who constantly seeks company you should learn to stay alone at least for a while. No one can continuously provide companionship to you. Also, some moments can't be shared with others even your loved ones.

But if you are burdened with loneliness definitely seek professional help. Go out, reach out to people! If loneliness is costing your mental health you should be proactive and ask friends and family for meet-ups.

My point is that loneliness is not a scary Devil! And at some point in life, you will have to deal with it, but if you are wary of staying alone go out with friends and have fun! Life has every shade to choose from and you can always choose your favourite colour!



Ishita Ganguly, a published author, poet, freelance writer, and editor from Kolkata, India. She writes in both English and Bangla. Writing is her passion, obsession and now a full-time profession. She is the author of the book, "Stories from the City called Kolkata". Her articles have been published in prestigious Indian newspapers like The Times of India and The Hindu. Over 100 articles and poems written by her have been published in several renowned international magazines and websites. Her writing courses are available on Udemy. She has been interviewed by youth magazines and featured in podcasts. She is also a co-author of five international anthologies and the editor of the international poetry anthology, "Expressions from the Heart."

# Who are you trying to please?

ISHITA GANGULY

**“Write to please just one person. If you open a window and make love to the world, so to speak, your story will get pneumonia.” – Kurt Vonnegut**

**While it's an amazing idea to please one person or your primary reader as Stephen King puts it, the problem with most new writers is they don't even have that one reader!**

**Also, when you set an intention to please even one reader you will be anxious and nothing else! It's difficult to write an honest story if you are anxious that your ONE reader might not be pleased with whatever you are going to write.**

**I can't write when my mind is constantly trying to attract someone's attention. My mind does not effectively work then. So, I have released the weight of trying to persuade even ONE person to sit and read my work. I write to please myself. Yes, that way I am that ONE reader. And this knowledge doesn't paralyze my mind - it sets me free.**

**My creativity starts flowing effortlessly when I realize I don't have to satisfy anyone's taste other than myself. If I am pleased with what I write at the end of the day I am grateful. If not, I try revising it again. If I am still not satisfied with my work I part ways with that writeup. I don't have to always write something to please myself as well. I just have to write. Otherwise, what's the point of being a writer?**

**Practicing the craft of writing in itself is a craft. You have to observe the craft more to observe better. You have to write more to write better. Keep studying the craft. Keep perfecting it. Put your full attention to it.**

**At your home create a space to sit and learn about writing. Let it be your place of solace, your sanctuary. Sit at your desk and fully dedicate yourself to your craft. Polish it, keep polishing. Hopefully, someday you will “earn” more than just one reader! But don't worry about him now. Write for yourself. At times just pour down the words just because you have to.**

**Forget the reader, forget the world. Forget yourself. Of all the artists, only the writers aren't given a stage to perform. Because we don't need one. We just need some paper and a pen. How many people in other professions can claim that?**



**Retro Kolkata :** When did you start writing? Do you remember the first time you wrote something?

**Ishita :** My parents always said I started writing as soon as I could wield a pencil. That was when I was a toddler. I used to snatch pens or pencils from my father or sister

and scribbled on any paper I could get my hands on! When I was about 5 or 6-year-old I had a diary where I would write down poems. That's the first memory of me pouring my thoughts on paper and cherishing the whole process of writing!

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about how your work has developed or changed since you first started writing?

**Ishita :** As a child I was an impulsive writer. I would write when I was hit by a sudden urge or an inspiration. After that when I was working in the corporate sector in the Edutech industry for about 5 years, I got the responsibility of creating academic content for the schools. I had deadlines to hit and at the time I realized writing is something that doesn't need to wait for inspiration. You can write when you want to write.

And later, when I became a freelance writer I was sure of this fact! Because I was then creating specific content for clients and brands and meeting strict deadlines all the way. Over the years, I have discerned the technicalities in different forms of writing. And this has helped me polish my work. I understood the most important thing about writing - you don't need to wait for inspiration to hit you! A writer can write if they want to write.

**Retro Kolkata :** What was the source of your inspiration earlier? Did it change with time?

**Ishita :** Different life situations have inspired me. People have inspired me, art, photography, music, poetry, stories, artists, writers, so many things have been my source of inspiration. Most importantly, life





was and is the biggest source of inspiration for me. Yes, inspiration keeps changing. Inspiration comes and goes. You can forget what inspired you to write something in the first place! The main thing is to be a good observer of life and inspiration will come to you. But like I said, I don't wait for inspiration. I find out if I have to. I keep writing as I am a writer.

**Retro Kolkata :** You have penned multiple books so far. Your articles and poems e have been published in several renowned international magazines. You are also the co-author of five international anthologies and the editor of the international poetry anthology, "Expressions from the Heart. Tell us about your journey so far as a writer.

**Ishita :** My journey as a writer is also the journey of me as a person. Over the years, my life has changed so much and so has my craft. I have evolved as a person. As a child I got intense story ideas but I was not sure how to put it on the paper. Even now, I am often not sure how to tackle complex concepts but I just give it a try. I keep experimenting with different forms of writing. I try pouring my ideas on paper even when I feel it's an extremely difficult job. From writing poems to micro fiction, from articles to short stories, from content writing to script writing I try to evolve as much.

**Retro Kolkata :** Let's talk about your book 'Stories from the City called Kolkata'. What is the book all about and who would you recommend it to?

**Ishita :** "Stories from the City called Kolkata" is a collection of 10 short stories written in the backdrop of the metro city, Kolkata. The stories are based on urban middle-class life. These are simple tales portraying love, joy, hope, heartache, and loneliness of city people – their struggles, frustrations, ambitions, and 'never say die' attitude. Each story has a unique plot twist. The emotions expressed are relatable and the characters although fictional, are fleshed out of the real world. Each of the

stories has a message to give and a connection to make with the readers. This book is dedicated to the spirit of the Indian middle class people and their zeal to survive and continue their life journey.

This book is for anyone who enjoys reading stories based on reality.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which amongst your books is your favourite and why ?

**Ishita :** I have been a ghostwriter for long. And then I have been a co-author of multiple books. My first published book in my name is "Stories from the City called Kolkata". Naturally, it has and always will have a special place in my heart.

**Retro Kolkata :** What does poetry mean to you? Why do you write?

**Ishita :** Poetry is the most direct form of creative expression. Poetry builds a soul to soul connection. I like to put it this way – Life is larger than poetry but poetry lives longer than life.

I write poetry because it comes to me. I don't know what better way is there to express my feelings than penning down poetry. Though I keep most of my poems to myself.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which poets have inspired you? Do you feel yourself ever influenced by the writing style of a poet?

**Ishita :** Oh, there are so many poets who have inspired me to name a few! Still, I would mention Emily Dickinson and Mary Oliver.

I don't know. Maybe I am influenced by many poets. Consciously I never want to be influenced by any particular style but subconsciously I am sure I get influenced by the poets I read the most.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about your typical process for writing -- from idea to final draft?

**Ishita :** I just write in a flow. I am certainly not a plotter and so I don't plan or plot. I love writing as it comes and finish the first draft. I keep it away for a few days and then start rewriting and editing my work. I edit several times to get the final draft.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you beat writer's block?

**Ishita :** I don't believe in writer's block. I believe I am a writer and I can write if I want to. At times, I might not enjoy reading what I have written but I can either edit to make it a pleasurable read or move on to write something new.

**Retro Kolkata :** Please let the readers know about your projects for the future? Are you working on any project? Please share any stanza you have written and you repeat it most of the time.

**Ishita :** Currently, I am working on multiple projects. My upcoming works are coming in books, magazines, comics, newspapers and also on major OTT platforms. Sharing with the Retro Kolkata readers my poem, "The Sleeping River" from the book, "Expressions from the Heart".



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# Ishita Ganguly

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## THE SLEEPING RIVER

The sleeping river emerges  
from the depth of my heart,  
passing the crevices and safely reaching out to the  
world.

People long lost resurface  
in my dreams  
and flow with the river  
that dried up ages ago  
in a forgotten summer.

Faces reappear,  
so do the memories.

I drown in the river  
in my dream.

I ask for help  
seeing the known faces  
standing absently on the shore  
looking at me  
like I am a stranger to them.

I beg for forgiveness,  
they don't look at me –

their stony faces don't reflect any mercy.  
'But I have forgiven you all, won't you forgive me?' I  
ask.

They don't blink or look at me  
while I keep drowning in the river.

Some nights I die in the dream,  
some nights I float on the surface of the sleeping river.



## THE MOON GOT STAINS

At the time of spine chilling winters,  
The moon light gleams up the valley, With all its  
mystic radiance,  
Being a mum spectator to an ally!

The neighbours of a varied clan, Screams up with  
arms and knives in their hands,  
Becoming bloodthirsty of their own kith and kin,  
Expelling them away hand to hand..

The glittering white serene moon,  
In the realm of darkness,  
Sheds its rays on ice layered lake in valley,  
Paving the way for the rise of the ruthless!

The stain the moon got now,  
Can never be forgotten by the innocents,  
In a jiffy of moments, their homes were set ablaze,  
And their throats were slit apart hundred percent.

The women got their skin and chaste shed off,  
The children and infant became homeless,  
The old got tortured everywhere,  
Who would knew they would become sudden fate-  
less?

All the time, the moon remained mum,  
All the time it witnessed the bloodshed;  
Oh they cursed the moon to be impotent,  
For not coming up with brilliant lightshed!

## **THE PAIN OF THE MARTYR'S BELOVED**

DEBYANI MUKHERJEE

A beloved awaiting for  
Her lover to return  
Her heart sobs and sinks  
Everytime to see this parting.  
She sighs long desperately  
And eager to meet with him.

But one day  
An unfortunate news  
Knocks the door  
Chilling down her spines  
Breaking all of her hopes  
She sees the coffin flured With the tricolour  
Sees her mortal one being  
Burning on the fire pyre  
His ashes being assimilating  
Moment by moment...

This throbs her heart in pain..  
Oh brave women!  
Salute to you!  
You're too no less than a warrior  
Waiting for your beloved to return from the battle field.  
Yet you see him burning on fire  
But yes, you kept your love pure and intact for him  
And you're just proud of him  
To see his valour everywhere..  
You're an example of true lover  
Waiting for her parted beloved forever.





**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about your typical process for writing -- from idea to final draft?

**Debyani :** I usually prefer to saturate my raw ideas and put them into creative sentences. Then I finally start writing in my notepad making the final draft.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you beat writer's block?

**Debyani :** Daily experiences change the scenario, inspiring me to write more perfectly on a particular topic, using freely used poetic devices and new appropriate vocabs.

**Retro Kolkata :** Please let the readers know about your projects for the future? Are you working on any project? Please share any stanza you have written and you repeat it most of the time.

**Debyani :** I have submitted my poetry on child labour to the Anthrops India Foundation as well as submitted a story to Shri Hindi Publications. I have also submitted my compositions in the form of a book to Shabd.in. Also, I have been given a platform by Amar Ujala to write poems in their Kavya portal. In the future, I am thinking of some collaborations with authors and poets and to publish all my writing pieces in the form of a book.

**Two stanzas I repeat most of the time are:-**

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you start writing? Do you remember the first time you wrote something?

**Debyani :** I started writing when I was in 8th standard back in 2013.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you talk about how your work has developed or changed since you first started writing?

**Debyani :** I have written some musical compositions and rap music when I was young and then I started writing shayris as well as poems based on real incidents.

**Retro Kolkata :** What was the source of your inspiration earlier? Did it change with time?

**Debyani :** My grandmother (dadi) was my source of inspiration as she was herself a poet and scriptwriter in Bengali film industry.. Her traits got inherited in mine. No it has not changed with time as she is still my inspiration and ideal person.

**Retro Kolkata :** What does poetry mean to you? Why do you write?

**Debyani :** I write to create an impression of realistic or nationalistic event among the mob mass. For me poetry is a tool to convey my innate feelings regarding a noble cause to the targeted audiences.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which poets have inspired you? Do you feel yourself ever influenced by the writing style of a poet?

**Debyani :** Mirza Ghalib, Rumi, Hafez, Daagh Dehlavi, Lalon Fokir and Bahadur Shah Zafar have inspired me tremendously to write poetry and yes I have followed Mirza Ghalib to adopt his writing styles.

**“In the battle of love and internal  
chaos of constant longing,  
I lost my inner self!  
The battle made me realise  
How you can shower someone with  
love  
And yet be exhilarated with  
Pain and regrets.”**

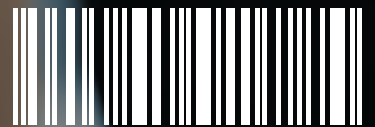
**“And a poet lives twice-  
In the garb of this worldly matter,  
One as a real ideal person  
And another as an utopic one!”**

# CORPORATE

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RETRO KOLKATA MAGAZINE

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## Corporate Leadership



**Introducing Mr. Ankush R. Chawla, Vice President - PR, AvianWE and Communications Lead for Samsung in India. He has over 19 years of sound experience in corporate communication and public relations.**

# Ankush R. Chawla

**Retro Kolkata :** Can you tell us a bit about your background and what you were doing before your current role as Vice President at AvianWE?

**Ankush Chawla :** My professional journey began close to 20 years back in the winter of 2003 in Delhi. Right after completing my post-graduation from Symbiosis Pune, I landed in Delhi in 2003 and joined my first workplace. A degree in mass communication and journalism and an effective campus recruitment drive ensured that I began on a strong footing. Within a short time, I was part of the team looking after the PR and communications mandate of a leading automobile brand. For the next three years, I worked very diligently and was fortunate to get a mentor early in my career from whom I learnt the nuts and bolts of brand management, PR & client servicing. I have always maintained that having a good mentor in the beginning of your career is of vital importance and plays a significant role in developing one's skill sets and temperament. Post this stint, I joined Discovery Communications and was looking after the marketing communications of popular television brands such as Discovery Channel & TLC. This stint of eight years gave me vast exposure and broad base understanding of business, brand management and public relations. I then went on to lead an Indo-US communications consultancy and was instrumental in building both revenues and people.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your greatest professional accomplishment till date?

**Ankush Chawla :** Well in a journey of two decades, a professional faces many challenges and has the opportunity to register a few accomplishments. However, if I was to pick one, it has to be becoming the head of a mid-size communications firm and growing it over the course of four years both in terms of revenue and resources. It was a challenge to get new business and diversify the bouquet of brands under management and at the same time get good quality talent on-board who could partake in the growth and work towards a common goal. Emerging as a trusted partner for the communication mandates of global brands relying heavily on our expertise, achieving results which help their business grow and building a team of young resources who are efficient and skilful was an achievement of sorts. I was greatly benefited by a management who gave me complete autonomy and was nimble enough to deploy capital as when the need arose and shared a common vision in building excellence for both the clients as well as for the organization. No achievement in the corporate space is possible without the support of colleagues and management and I was fortunate that both played their respective roles competently.



**Retro Kolkata :** In your professional career, you have witnessed the life cycles of leading brands. As a branding professional could you share professional insights on how to successfully market a business during a crisis market, such as COVID-19?

**Ankush Chawla :** The global pandemic came as a bolt from the blue. While the world at-large grappled with the brutal impact of the virus and went into long-periods of lockdown, consumer psyche took a beating and humanity reprioritized their lives. Organizations bore the brunt of depressed consumer sentiment and a medical emergency fast transformed into an economic crisis.

In such times, it is resilience and empathy that stands strong for brands. These attributes help position brands as responsible corporate citizens who are playing

Retro Kolkata : What has been the biggest roadblock during your journey? What has been your biggest learning?

**Ankush Chawla :** Irrespective of the assignment, to achieve the desired results one has to ensure that energies are being invested in the right direction. In the service industry, it is imperative to be able to manage expectations and provide clear visibility into the possible results while preparing for contingencies. In the marketing communications space, often the final outcome is dependent on many moving parts which are not entirely in your control, hence one has to plan and perform accordingly and has to be nimble to change.

One major impediment has been dealing with lack of clarity and conviction. Plenty of times and across levels I have had to encounter situations where there is

ambiguity on what path to take and how to map out a marketing & communication plan. This usually flows top down and has a ripple effect. Additionally, an absence of a strong narrative and a poor understanding of your target audience dilutes the brand and eventually hurts sale.

**Retro Kolkata :** How do you define success? What is your take on the ways to achieve long term success?

**Ankush Chawla :** Success in the realm of corporate performance is best defined when one can outperform one's caliber and meet targets in a timely and ethical manner. And success is enjoyed and multiplied when you empower others to achieve their full potential. When you generate opportunities and develop people.

The way to achieve long term success is to be passionate and perseverant. If your hustle is what your passion is, then the probability of outperforming is much greater. As one progresses in their careers, taking on greater responsibilities and providing solutions to complex challenges makes one stand apart.

**Retro Kolkata :** What effective strategies have you implemented/initiatives you have taken to achieve success?

**Ankush Chawla :** I am still in transit. I am still work-in-progress. But to achieve any kind of success and then to retain that success needs constant work and attention. Many moving parts must come together to achieve significant success.

In my case, I have heavily relied on taking ownership, deploying a proactive attitude and being decisive. These coupled with the desire to enhance understanding, identify opportunities and implement strongly help in growth and outperformance. One must maintain a sharp focus on the process, the product and the people to be able to accomplish strong results.

**Retro Kolkata :** What according to you makes for an inspiring leader? How do you integrate the same thought into your leadership?

**Ankush Chawla :** A leader is somebody who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way. An inspiring leader is one who can empower and inspire team members to achieve their full potential by providing a conducive environment and clarity of vision. The ability to motivate & mentor and recognize & reward are also of





utmost importance. The capacity to prioritize, recognize and energize is also a must.

A leader must be quick to identify capabilities and must be able to nurture talent and help them thrive.

My style of leadership includes being accessible and involved yet provide autonomy and space. Building trust, being a good listener and defining roles clearly with a glide path which is both opportunity laden and accountability driven are also areas that I tend to focus on. A leader must be calm, yet resolute and must realize that his or her conduct has a huge trickle-down effect. I also try and focus on the bigger picture and try and join the dots so that the final outcome is healthy.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SK SIDDIQUE ALI**







# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SK SIDDIQUE ALI

photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Siddique:** I mostly like street photography and portrait photography. Mainly exploring the streets helps me to learn about the history of the places and portrait photography helps me to learn their culture and their ethics....I have been inspired by many people's work but Sir Vineet Vohra's work has inspired me the most.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Siddique:** I use Canon 200d mark II and for lens I mainly prefer 18-55mm for general purposes, 50mm for portrait and 55-250mm for long range...

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Siddique:** In portrait photography, mainly people with diverse cultural value and ethics inspire the shot, searching for a story in my shot is the most important for me...every picture should tell their own story

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Siddique:** It depends on the picture itself, some time black and white tells the story, a colour picture can't and some the vibrant colours of picture tell the beautiful story, a black and white picture can't.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Siddique:** So far, for me as a passionate photographer the biggest project will be working with Retro Kolkata...It all started with Instagram when I saw a post of Retro Kolkata.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Siddique:** For me, in coming 10 years, I would like to be a photographer who can explore the world through the lens of the camera and improving myself as much as I can....I would start learning more and more about photography and work more on polishing my skills until I get it right.

**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Siddique:** Good day, everyone! My name is Sk Siddique Ali, I live in Kolkata. I am a Bcom student with a passion for photography... I was born and brought up in Kolkata, among these beautiful heritage buildings and roads, where each lane tells a little story and hides so many childhood memories.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Siddique:** Photography is my heartbeat; I love photography.... Every time I click a picture that I like, it puts a smile to my face and makes me happy.... My father was a photographer, and I remember seeing cameras and playing with them as a child. As I grew up, I started taking in photography, starting from a point and shoot to mobile and now on DSLR.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Siddique:** In my life, photography helps me to see things that most people cannot... It allows me to explore unexplored places through my lenses and inspires me to run through India's old lanes, discovering their stories.... It helps me to know new people, their history and their stories.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and what inspires you? Which masters of



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ROHITH RAJOTHAMAN**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER ROHITH RAJOTHAMAN

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Rohith R :** I am a computer student. Living in Kerala, Pathanamthitta, My dream is to become a wildlife photographer. Since I don't have any camera in my hand and I don't have the money to buy one, I take mobile photos.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Rohith R :** Today I am a person who thinks that photography is not just a dream but it is my life. So I will give my maximum effort for photography...I chose this because I love nature a lot.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Rohith R :** Nature

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Rohith R :** I love wildlife photography .Varun Aditya is my inspiration.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Rohith R :** I am using only mobile to capture moments. (Poco m2 pro).

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Rohith R :** Still trying to my dream comes true & never give up.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ATUL KUMAR YADAV**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER ATUL KUMAR YADAV

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Atul :** My name is Atul Kumar Yadav. I'm 19 year old. I live in Lucknow Uttar Pradesh. I completed my schooling from Rani Laxmi Bai Lucknow. Presently, I am doing bachelor in photography from AAFT college Noida (U.P).

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Atul :** Photography is very important to me as I am pursuing my career in photography I want to become a professional photographer and want to learn new things in future.

My interest in photography started since I was in school and during pandemic period social media has dragged me more closer towards it especially Instagram. I was much impressed by Vineet Vohra Sir.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Atul :** Initially, when I had started photography the reaction, the excitement, the applaud of people

motivated me and later I felt that what really motivated me was exploring new things, places, meeting people's, learning their cultures were the element that put me in right path in my journey.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Atul :** I like street and travel photography and the work of masters that motivated me is Vineet Vohra and Pubarun Basu.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Atul :** I use lumix S5 and the kit lens f3.5-5.6. I usually do street photography in daylight so I never used any lighting equipment.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Atul :** I like to play with shadow and light and what inspires me is to mould new creative images from it.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Atul :** I prefer colour images.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Atul :** I have worked on different college projects and lately I finished most remarkable project that is "Yamuna maange paani".

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Atul :** I see myself as a professional photographer with many awards and achievements.

To do so I will relentlessly do Hard work with punctuality and determination.





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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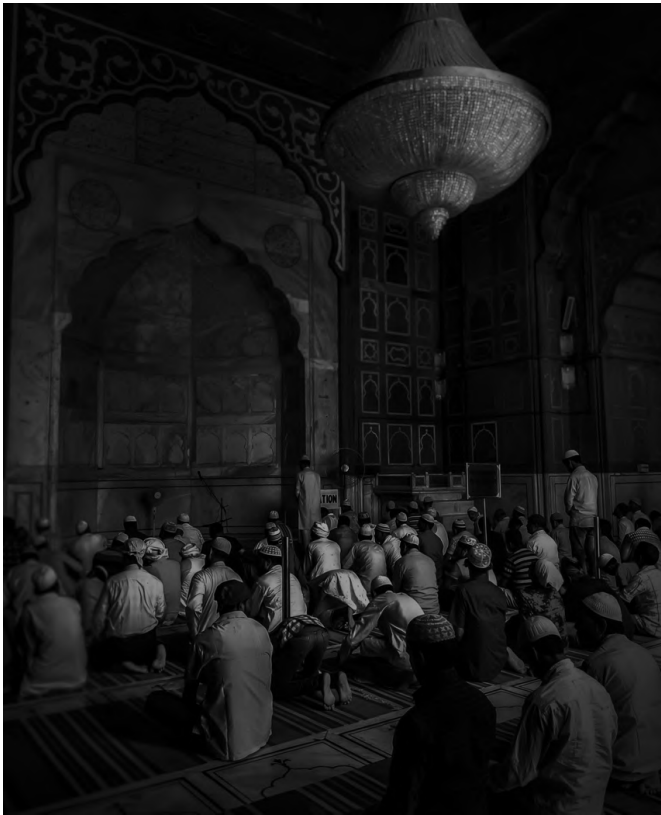
Meet the Photographer  
**CHIRAG BHATIA**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## CHIRAG BHATIA

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Chirag :** Thank you team Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. My name is Chirag Bhatia, Born, brought up, and lived with my parents in Safidon in Haryana, I've done Bachelor in Architecture in 2020 and also had experience working in Architecture & Interior design firms.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Chirag :** It is one of a way that I like to express my thoughts, what I see it maybe good or something bad sometimes, a moment or more than that when something is your way of expression it automatically becomes important to you.

I started photography in 2015, when one of my friends showed me his mobile photography skills, I got curious and started traveling to click good photos with my phone, that's how it started, and start learning it with time.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Chirag :** This world, people, nature, man-made things, everything around us happening, To capture it share it that tells a story , that make someone to think about it, that motivates me to do photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Chirag :** I like Architectural and Documentary photography most, My Love for architectural wonders makes me capture their beauty of them and their design details, In documentary, I like to capture portraits and their activities which tells a story itself.

Honestly saying I didn't follow anyone, I think my surrounding people wherever I travel, what they do, is my master of photography that inspired me in photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Chirag :** All I have Android Motorola Phone, I don't have DSLR, lens, or any other Lighting equipment.

I won 2 times Motorola Mobile Photography contests, where I won the Phone, which I used for Photography, so only using my Phone for Photography for the last 7 years.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Chirag :** People and their activities.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Chirag :** It depends upon the scene and picture which I shot, Black and white mostly to differentiate the contrast of shadow and light, to show some particular details, or can be used in where the subject is more important than colours.

People and their activities.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Chirag :** I participated in a contest where we have to submit a photo story about a Farmer, I documented it using my phone, talked to a farmer about it, and clicked with him and his family from early morning 5 am to night, how he and his family woke up and start working, that's basically to show the life of a farmer, the title of the story was " The Gentleman ".

It came in the Top 100 in India.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Chirag :** I would like to be in 10 years financially independent, more peaceful, and happy.

In the next 6 months, I'll start with a small business with the capital that I have and let it grow with my skills.

But I'll keep clicking that for sure I know.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SUSAVAN ADITYA**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SUSAVAN ADITYA

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Susavan :** My self Susavan Aditya, Originally from Burdwan, West Bengal, and stays in Bangalore. I am a professional VFX Artist, I work for Technicolor India Pvt. Ltd. as a VFX Team Lead. I basically work for Hollywood Movies.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Susavan :** I started Photography seriously few years back, when I visited Bandipur National park with a basic gears and only for family trip, there I captured few elephants and one tiger image and very next day I visited Ranganthittu Bird Sanctuary and those two days amazed me how crazy this field is and immediately I upgraded my gears and started study on photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Susavan :** I usually like to capture wildlife birds. And to grow my skill Mr. Sudhir Shivram helped me a lot. There are many more great photographers whom I follow regularly, Like David Lloyd, Roie Galitz, Felix Rome, Varun Aditya, Jayanth Sharma, Frans Lanting, Thomas Vijayan and many more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Susavan :** I am a Nikon person. I use Nikon D850 , D7500 and Z6 mark2 bodies and Nikkor 500mm f4 , 70-200mm f2.8, 200-500mm f5.6 and 35mm f1.8 lenses.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Susavan :** Any good frame or action or anything which I like I shoot.





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SOUVIK LAYEK**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## SOUVIK LAYEK



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Souvik :** Hello Retro Kolkata! Thank you Very much for giving me this opportunity. My name is Souvik Layek, basically from West Bengal, and professionally I'm a senior digital Artist working for movies. Photography has always been with me from my childhood. I loved painting landscapes, then from studies I learnt about composition, colour theory and all the other technical aspects, but the real magic happened when I bought my first camera a few years ago.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Souvik** Photography is very important to me as I feel, photography is the way to express my Art. After finishing my bachelor's I was too focused on my career as a digital Artist, then when I felt stable, I took my first pro camera Sony a7iii back in 2018, then started going on photo-tours, took in-hand training from professionals and started seriously.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Souvik** I love being outdoors, into the Nature. Colors of Nature, the changing of seasons change everything from lights, colors, everything. So the same location looks different every month, sometimes it looks so flat-boring and other days it looks so amazing, driving me to take out my Camera.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Souvik** I like Landscape, Nature, Astro and Portrait. I do follow many masters But I truly admire and Inspired by Daniel Kordan, Marc Adamus, Mads Peter Iversen, Thomas Heaton, Mark Galer, Alyn Wallace etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Souvik** I like being light, always with the least equipment. I do use Sony Full frame cameras, Sony A7iii or A7Riii, which are mirrorless systems, and lenses, Sony 20mm F1.8, 24-105 G f 4, 70-300 etc. I shoot in natural light mostly but sometimes I use my Godox 860ii flash for macro and portrait.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Souvik** Landscapes, Mountains, Jungle, Waterfall, lakes, Stars, Milky-way, Interesting people etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Souvik** I prefer Color, but sometimes I do black and white also.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?



**Souvik** Still now I don't have any paid professional project, But I'm working on my personal projects, mostly travel and landscapes of different places in India.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Souvik** I don't have any specific plan, but yes I will try to travel as much as possible and take wonderful photographs throughout the various beautiful locations in the world. For the upcoming 6 months I will travel through different states in India, India has a lot to explore and I want to cover India first.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ARMAAN NATH**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## ARMAAN NATH

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Armaan Nath :** Hey! I'm Armaan Nath from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. I am an undergrad student pursuing B.tech in computer science branch. I am a person who loves to try different things in life. I am a tech enthusiast who has a very keen interest in photography. For me initially photography started as a hobby but now it's something more than a hobby. I use my mobile camera to capture raw moments around me.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Armaan Nath :** Photography allows me to capture raw moments/happenings around me which is very interesting. It allows me to capture something which gives inner relief. I realised the importance of photography in lockdown, when I was trapped in my house and wanted to try different things so I started capturing with my mother's mobile camera and used some of my toys as the initial subjects. Later I learned some technicalities in photography and started following some of the YouTube creators in order to get some more insight into photography. Then, I started to explore different genres of photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

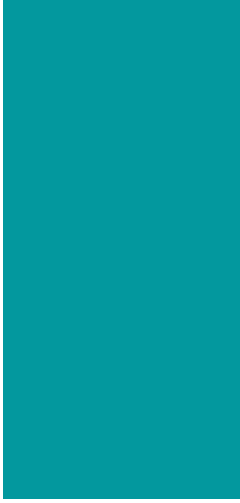
**Armaan Nath :** My shots are my motivation and inspiration. Capturing images with different perspectives motivates me to experiment more. Sometimes we think that a particular

shot is not going to work but while reviewing it once or while editing, it comes out to be something different that's what the inspiration is.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Armaan Nath :** I am still exploring different genres of photography. As of now I click what I like, as simple as that. My shots inspires me a lot and motivates me to capture more such shots. I admire the photographic works of Nimit Nigam and Kunal Malhotra as they were my initial mentors on photography.





**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Armaan Nath :** I haven't spend much on photography. Last year I upgraded my mobile to Moto edge 20 fusion. For lighting I have made a homemade softbox and a tripod.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Armaan Nath :** Sometimes in architectural photography, I look for human elements. To make a shot more engaging I look for human elements.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

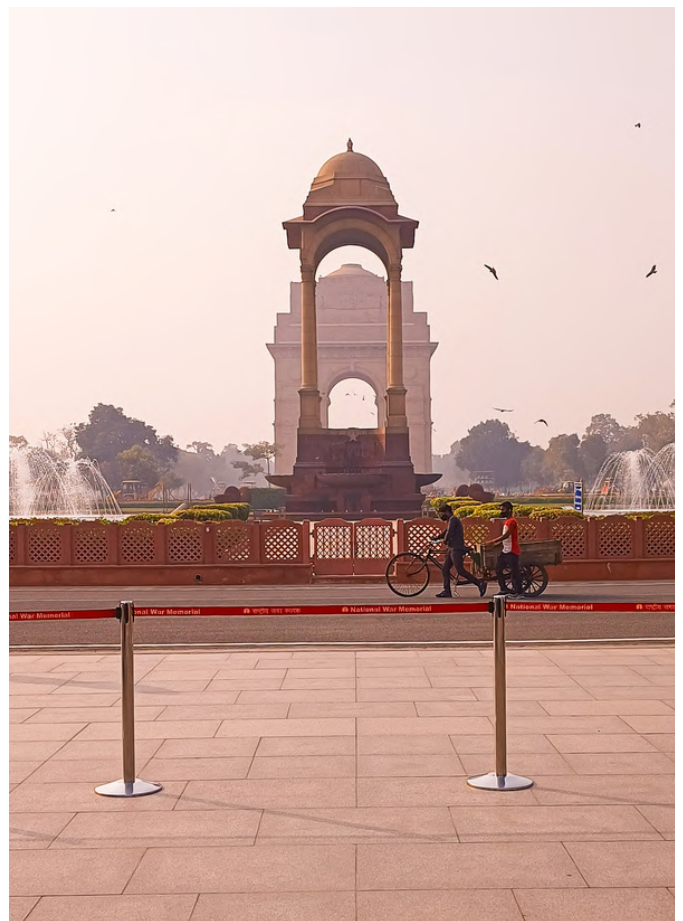
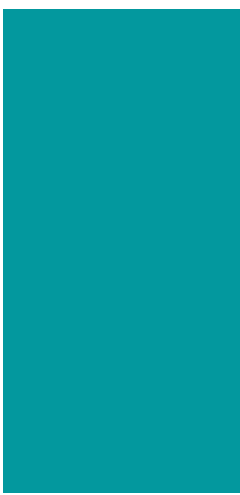
**Armaan Nath :** I usually prefer Black and white shots in streets as it gives us more details in the shot and colour shots to enhance the overall look of the shot.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Armaan Nath :** I have worked with a local newspaper and helped them to provide some photographs of our city. I got this opportunity through my Instagram handle.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Armaan Nath :** In next 10 years I wanted to be at a place where I can balance both my career and my hobbies. For which I will try my level best to get closer to that goal. In next 6 months, I will be mastering my photography and will be upgrading my gears.





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**PRASAD KN**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER PRASAD KN

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Prasad :** My name is Prasad, and I live in Thrissur, Kerala, with my family. I work as a pharmacist and I like to take photos in my free time.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Prasad :** Photography is a part of my life now. I spend most of my free time for photography. I started photography by attending a one day photography course I saw on facebook.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Prasad :** As a photographer I am interested in taking all kinds of photos. But I am more interested in taking action photos.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Prasad :** I mostly take wildlife photos. In that I prefer to capture action pictures. The photographs of many people have inspired me. I can't mention just one person's name because everyone's frame is different.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Prasad :** My first camera was Canon 1200D. Then I used Canon 70D. Now I use Canon 7D Mark 2 camera and Canon 400mm lens, 50mm, 70-300mm, and 18-135mm lens.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Prasad :** I want to capture unique and different pictures of wild animals. For example I like to capture the expressions of love between a mother and child.





**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important ? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Prasad :** Wildlife conservation is the effort to protect our environment and natural habitats, so that our planet maintains its balance and our future generations get to experience it.

By capturing beautiful images of animals and birds, a photographer can make people more aware about wildlife and help everyone develop more compassion towards the natural world. This is what I hope to achieve.



**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Prasad :** The best project I have worked with is the bird survey at Malampuzha in Kerala. I got this opportunity after receiving an invitation from a bird watchers group.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Prasad :** In the next 10 years, I would like to inspire many more young people to get into photography and become a reason for bringing more awareness towards nature and wildlife.

In the next 6 months, I want to improve my photography and produce my best work. Also, I hope to participate in a photography exhibition.

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**JAYESH RAJPUT**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER JAYESH RAJPUT

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Jayesh :** Hello. I am Jayesh Rajput, Nandurbar based (Currently living in pune) hobby photographer. In second year of my engineering, I bought new phone and started photography. I am doing photography from last seven years from phone. I love to click architecture, portraits from diverse background, nature, landscape, astro, and stories from festival.

I am Mechanical Engineer by profession and currently working at Devise Electronics Pvt. Ltd as a design engineer.

Recently I have secure 9th rank in 'Through My Lens' exhibition organized by Maharashtra Tourism. Secure 111 rank in 'Face of India contest' by 35Award International. Also my work has been featured in 'The Talented Indian' Magazine and 'Indian Talent Magazine'.

Three photographs were exhibited in 'Click Photography Exhibition'

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Jayesh :**Photography is as Important as oxygen to human beings.

I started photography from very basic 12mp phone and did phone photography from same phone for 5 years. Then I upgraded to new 64mp phone. After two years, I recently bought new camera.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Jayesh :**You can freeze the time in your photographs. Those memories which stored in my photographs inspired me to create and store more memories like that.





**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Jayesh :** I am involved in multiple genre. I do Astro photography, street, travel, nature and landscape, macro of insects, fashion portraits, portraits from diverse background, stories of festivals. My main master for photography is University of Google. Apart from that, people like Sudhir Shivram, Auditya Venkatesh, Inspired me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Jayesh :** I use Samsung F4I, and sony A73 with 28-70mm kit lens.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Jayesh :** Anything from which I can deliver some message, that inspire me.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Jayesh :** It's mostly depends on the mood of photo, and what I want to deliver. Depends on that I decide I want black or colourful image.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Jayesh :** I have documented Wari festival. From last 5 years, I am covering this festival. As I am very much interested to cover festivals, I involved myself in this project.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**AFSHAR THRITHALLOOR**



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Afsar :** I am Afshar, first of all thanks for selecting my photos and I am from Thrissur Kerala. I am doing now wedding photography and Model Shoots.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Afsar :** Photography is my passion and profession am now 8 years Old in this Field.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Afsar :** I have Nikon z62 Camera and lenses is 85,50.24 And I am using Godox lights like Ad200 and Octa is parabolic 120 deep Octa.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Afsar :** I am preferred colour and black and white photos





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ABHISHEK BASAK**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

# ABHISHEK BASAK

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Abhishek Basak :** I, Abhishek Basak, Kolkata based People, Travel & Documentary photographer. I have loved photography since childhood but i started it 5years back and it has been an endless journey filled with infinite learning experience. I organize different Photo tours & Workshop. Teach Photography & Post Processing. I am a photography teacher of a renowned school in Kolkata. My photography has been exhibited & awarded in more than 110 countries around the world & got 27 times Best Photographer Award from different international competitions held in France, Luxembourg, Serbia, Bulgaria, Belgium, Ukraine, Slovakia ,etc.. I also got more than 50 Best photographer awards in National Competitions. I have received more than 1400 Awards in National & International Photo Competition. My photographs are also published in different prestigious Magazines and Newspapers like, VOGUE, Nat Geo, Asian photo magazine, Chiiz, Viewfinder, The Guardian etc. This year I also Won 2nd prize in the EISA MAESTRO national competition organized by Smart photography Magazine.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Abhishek Basak :** Photography is the love of my life. Through my lens I capture the moments and translate them into art. From the very early days itself I liked photography, 5yrs back I purchased a DSLR camera NIKON D5300 with 18-140mm kit lens, this formally became the stepping stone of my full-fledged photography journey.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Abhishek Basak :** Social media is full of beautiful photos, watching these developed my love towards photography. This affection towards different and unique photographs made me choose photography as my profession. Eagerness to click something new, which has not been done in the past, motivates me to push myself. Every photography guru and their work inspire me as a photographer.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Abhishek Basak :** From the start I tried my hand in all the genres of photography with some success and a lot of learning. For the last 3 years I mainly work on TRIBES, FESTIVAL





& documentary photography.

There is no particular Master of photography who inspires me the most, all good works from different masters inspire me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Abhishek Basak :** Now I have NIKON Z6 II and NIKON D750 with Tamron 24-70, 2.8 and Tamron 15-30 ,2.8 lenses

I mainly use natural light sources in my photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Abhishek Basak :** Any uniqueness of a subject for eg : blue/green eyes, wrinkled skin, dirty Face, big eyes, curly or bouncy hair, long moustache, long beard etc. Any activity going on during festivals or on the street prompts me to go for a shot.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Abhishek Basak :** I always click in color, in post processing i make it black and white

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

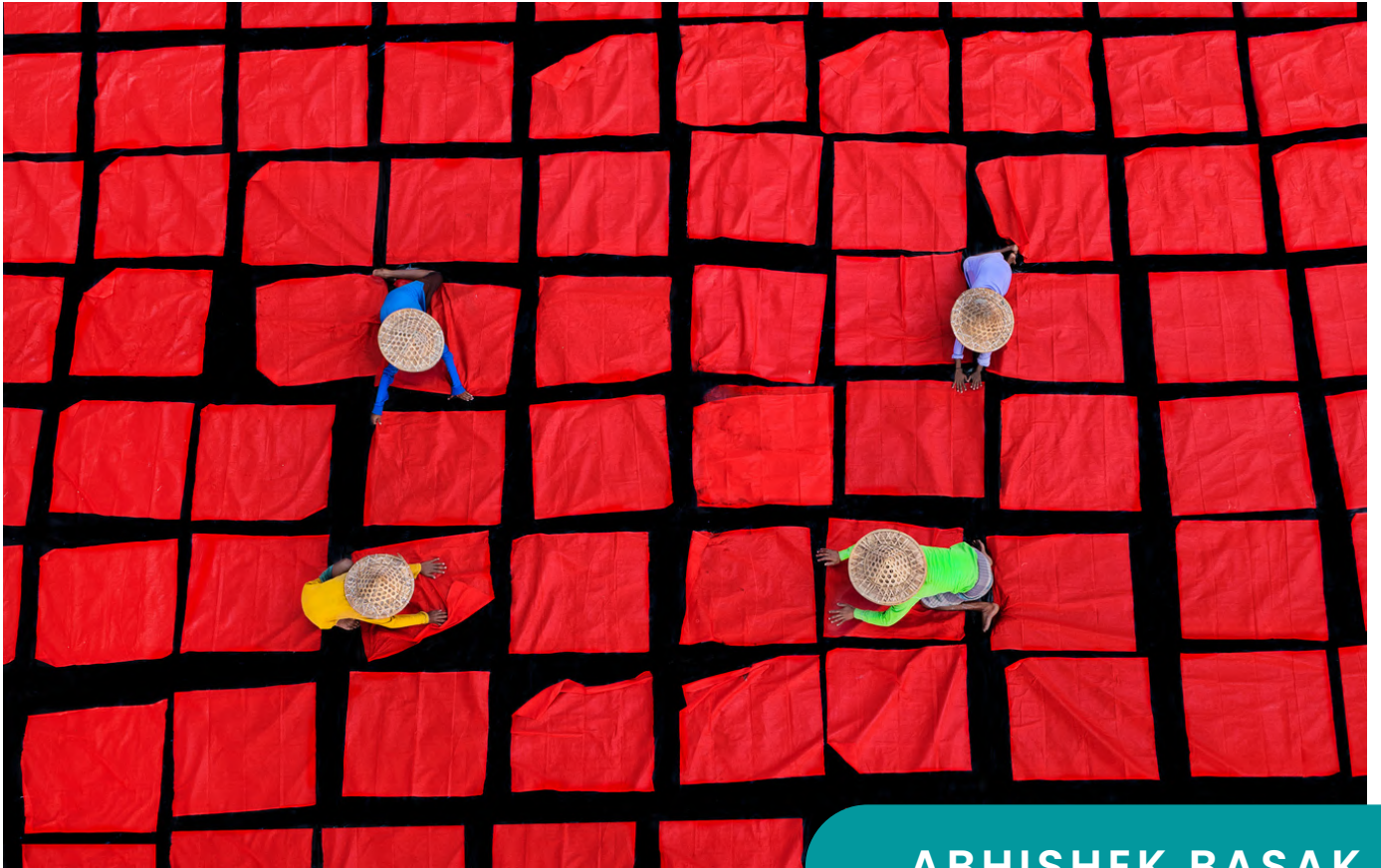
**Abhishek Basak :** Look my work is going on, assignment after assignment i am growing as a photographer. It is difficult to choose one of my projects to be best, I rather think my best project is still to come in the future.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Abhishek Basak :** Whatever i am learning, Photography or photo editing, i want to teach that to others. Want to become a dedicated Photography teacher and teach people. In the long run I want to build a Photography Institution, where I can teach, inspire and motivate many others to photography. It's my dream that these Photographers from my institute will click pictures which will be remembered by the world and this will define me as a photographer.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of those people who have supported me and still support me in this beautiful journey.





**ABHISHEK BASAK**



**ABHISHEK BASAK**



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SOUMIK GHOSH**

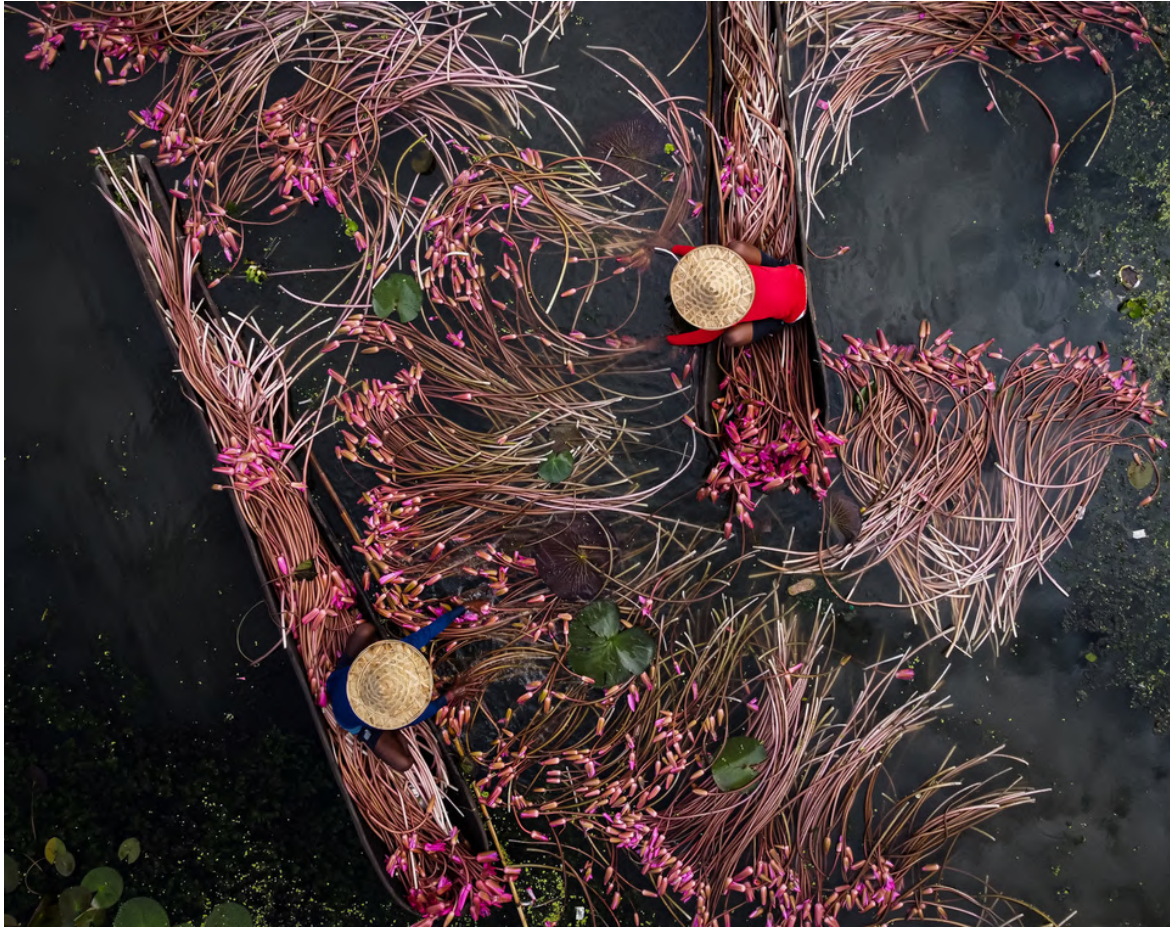




# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

# SOUMIK GHOSH

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Soumik :** I am Soumik Ghosh and I hail from Kolkata, India. Professionally, I am a content developer with a BBA degree but passionately I am a photographer and traveller. This passion has made to follow the unseen and capture the unheard and it turned me into a travel and documentary photographer

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Soumik :** For me, Photography is the most important meal of the day. It doesn't matter if the pic is clicking and has any worth or not, but every click speaks of my perspective in front of the world. Good or bad, every photo speaks a story!

I started following my passion in 2021. After grinding at a corporate level since my graduation I reached a breaking point, where I decided I want to follow my dream. I left my job and spent my savings to start a new life of a Digital Nomad who can travel and capture. In the last 12 months, I have been to 8 different trips across the country in a search of frames.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Soumik :** As a person, I live to explore various cultures and traditions and luckily being in the land of diversity is a gold mine for my inspiration. It inspires me to document various cultures that they would need to know, and that country needs to understand. The zeal to explore them and capture them with my camera inspires me.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Soumik :** The genre preferred mostly is Travel and Documentary photography with some level of street documentation. I try to convert daily life into a fine art documentary. If I start taking the name of my inspirations then the list will go long but two people inspire me most, Ashraful Arefin, a Bangladeshi street fine art photographer and Steven McCurry, a legendary street photographer. I try to mix my work and inspiration from both.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Soumik :** Being a documentary and travel photographer, sun in the only lighting equipment I can use. My main camera is a Canon M50 Mark 2 with 15-45mm lens and 50mm prime lens.





Being a travel photographer needs more modern gadgets to capture the moments like never seen before. For that I use my Drone, DJI Mini 2 and my action camera GoPro 8.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Soumik :** Have you ever visited mountains and seen small Shepard kids playing? Or old women cooking? Have you seen their emotions, their attire, their story? This kind of culture and emotion prompts me to take a shot. Walking on the Ghats of Varanasi at 3 am, you can find unthinkable seems that depicts our daily life, that depicts our very existence and this prompts me to take a shot and let everyone else understand how diverse yet same we are.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

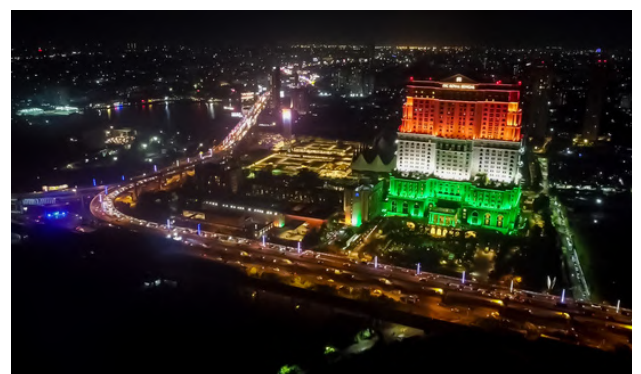
**Soumik :** I prefer colour photos. I believe each colour has its own noise and it shouts at your eyes to make you hear its vibrant story. Every colour speaks of emotion and feelings that enhance our lives.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Soumik :** I got a very rare chance to document the harvest and plantation of Red Water lilies in West Bengal and I feel it is the best project for me in the last 1yr of being on road. I got to know from my friend and veteran photographers who also wanted to capture this moment. Luckily enough we were able to do so.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Soumik :** 10 years is a very long time and I want to grow my art during this time. I want to capture as much as possible and bring out the true essence of human lives in front of everyone through my lens. In the next 6 months, I plan to head to the mountains and search for some stories that we haven't heard of. I am sure it will resonate well among you guys, cause after all voice echoes in the mountains.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SURAJ THOMAS**

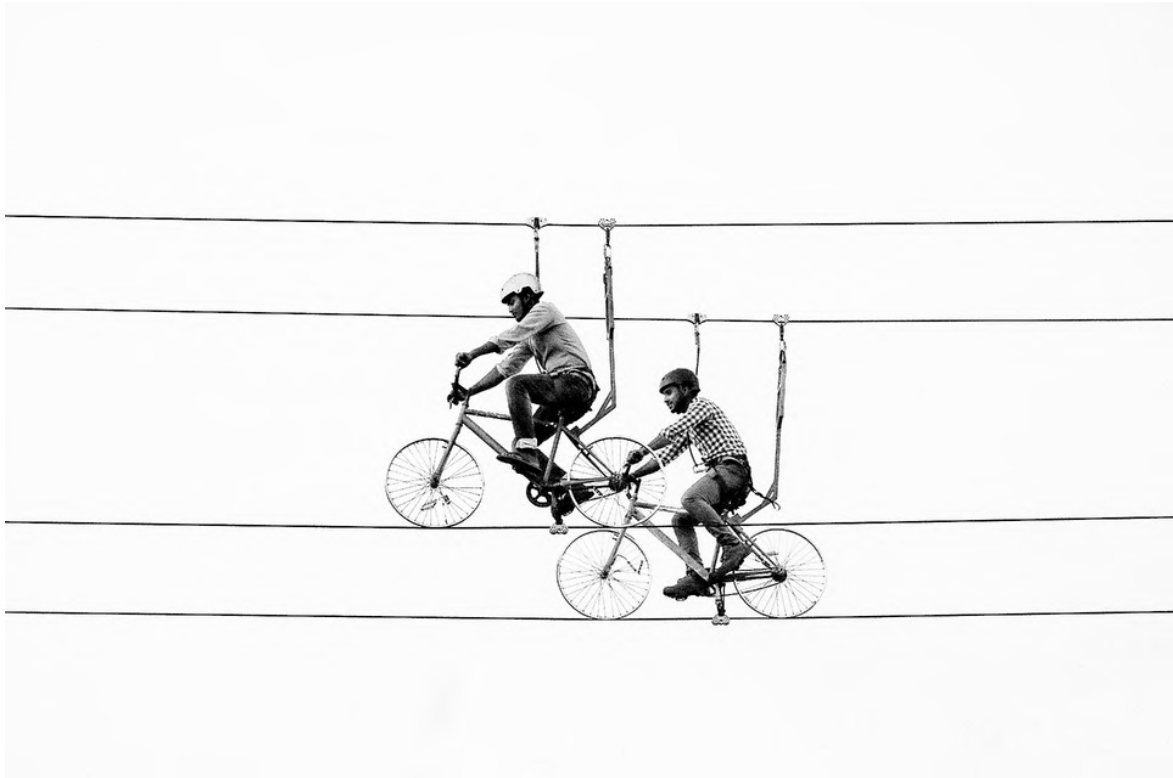




# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

# SURAJ THOMAS

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Suraj :** My name is Suraj Thomas and I am from Kerala. I have been photographing since 2017. I worked as a senior clerk in Kerala Motor Vehicles Department. I consider street and documentary photography to be the most interesting genre for me. I was the winner of several photography competitions in State and National level. My photographs published in some travel magazines . And also in several exhibitions.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Suraj :** Photography is a vision and art. Capturing image is important for me. Because I want to freeze the documental and unusual moments in Street and in a public space. Those photos will be cherished for the rest of their lives. When I am in Childhood age I met the guys with professional cameras who had a passion for photography. So I would like to became an photojournalist. But a getting my permanent job in other profession I bought a camera and capturing all genres those happening around me. After six month I realized that I most likely in Street and documentary photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Suraj :** I consider street photography to be the most interesting genre for me. It can be either easy or difficult to pick up, depending at our perspective. But it's a magic. So Street photography is important for me. All the photographers especially Henri Cartier Bresson, Reghu Rai, Steve Mc Curry, Vineeth Vohra and Prasanth Godbole are inspired me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Suraj :** Now I am using Canon EOS 750d, 18-55 mm lens and Redmi Note 11 Mobile Phone.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Suraj :** Street Photography can be beautiful, fascinating and even necessary for Photojournalism. Emotions are the most likely to come out when people are interacting. Every conversations and emotions in street is a story writing for a good street photographer. Those emotions are inspiration for me in everyday of life in Street.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Suraj :** A good photo tells a story. How you use colour is a big part of your visual vocabulary. Most of my photos I prefer in their own colours. But there are somewhere black and white is better.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Suraj :** Now I have worked on variety of Festivals in Kerala

an I learn something from each one. I wish to document that ancient festivals for the next generation.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Suraj :** I would like to document the variety festivals in India, Rural lives especially of tribes, and capturing the unusual moments from the streets of India. In next six month I had a plan for travel to next State Tamilnadu and document the rural lives and festivals in connection with the Dasara and Deepavali.





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SHWETAPARNA SAHU**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SHWETAPARNA SAHU

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Shwetaparna :** Thank you Retro Kolkata team for this opportunity to share my work on bird photography on your platform. I'm Shwetaparna Sahu, an avid nature lover & bird watcher, passionate about wildlife & bird photography from Sambalpur, Odisha. I have done my MCA from Sambalpur University, Burla.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Shwetaparna :** I'm a nature lover Since childhood. I always love to watch birds, animals & their behaviour from my balcony. The amazing animals, chirping of beautiful birds and sounds of nature always give me positive vibes and inner joy. I also saw many people started posting their hobby on social site during lockdown time. Then i thought myself why shouldn't I start this hidden hobby & share my work on social media. And This journey of photography started

during covid time, & with the passage of time, this hobby turned into passion. Initially I was capturing & shooting flowers, nature, sunset, clouds on my mobile. Sometimes i use my father's camera for clicking birds and nature. Seeing my desire increasing in this field my father bought a DSLR camera for me in 2021.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Shwetaparna :** Before lockdown, my father used to go for birding with my brother in our locality. His strong dedication towards photography always motivates me. I must say he is my first inspiration. That's the main reason why I'm interested to this field. He always encourage me & tells me every time why shouldn't I join with them in birding as i was getting bored at home during the lockdown. Gradually I started observing birds & their behavior from my backyard & sometimes I go with my father for birding and clicking them through my lens ever since I started my DSLR photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?





**Shwetaparna :** My love for Landscape, creative & wedding photography is forever, & nowadays portrait photography is one of the most popular types of photography. It's comes up in several different genre of photography including wedding, engagement, family, fashion. As my father is a professional portrait photographer & also has his own studio, I often liked to observe his work and sometimes I go through the wedding & engagement albums of others & fascinated how their every beautiful moments memorized in one single photobook. Also During my spare time I follow many professional photographers and spellbound by their beautiful work. I will definitely say that Varun Aditya and Shaaz Jung are two best photographer till date. I love the way they compose their images. They have such amazing power to create life through their own photographs. Even Anyone who sees his work will be hypnotized. They are always my role model & will always be.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Shwetaparna :** As I said before my father gifted me Nikon 5600D with Nikkor 18-55mm kit lens for Landscape photography & telephoto lens 70-300. Afterward he gave me his 200-500mm super telephoto zoom lens, which every photographer prefers to use for wildlife photography. Sometimes I use his Nikon Z6 camera with Nikkor 200mm f/2 lens (my favourite camera & lens as well) for best quality shots.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Shwetaparna :** I focus more on the story, colour composition & perfect lighting than the subject, so I don't care if it is most common subject or rare subject. For me if the photographs shows unique story and have power to captive the audience, then I would rather choose the common subject for the shots, & i really enjoy taking pictures like this.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Shwetaparna :** Wildlife means living things and especially mammals, birds & fishes that are neither human or domesticated. A habitat meets all the environmental conditions an organism needs to survive for an animal that means everything it needs find & gather foods, select a mate & reproduce successfully.

As a photographer we all should reach out to the people & enlighten them about the importance of planting more trees and wetlands for our bio diversity. You can also add native plants, shrubs & small tree to increase biodiversity for eco-friendly insects, birds & whatever else alight on your balcony. Also, we can keep a bowl of water in your balcony or outside of your house for the thirsty birds & animals. We all human being should always remember this "As much as human has the right on earth, the other living beings also have the same right". So it's our duty to save wildlife and their natural habitat for our upcoming generation.

**Retro Kolkata :** Bird photography is almost always about the action. How do you get a good pose during the fast action? What should one look for? How would you prepare for such shots?

**Shwetaparna :** Behaviour and activities of birds I always look for no matter whether it is feeding, in flight, calling, mating or parenting. But capturing birds in flight is quite challenging. Initially I failed to attempt flight shot many times. But with constant effort, I started getting a lot better.

I must say while we are capturing birds in flight your shutter speed should be quite fast 1/2000, 1/2500 or even higher if light allows. If there is not enough light or you are shooting slower objects drop down your shutter speed to 1/1600, 1/1250 if necessary.

ISO also play a vital role in bird photography, more no. of ISO can cause your photos to appear grainy or noisy, so better you should choose 800 to 1000 for birds in flight if the light condition is good. Increasing ISO allows you to use faster shutter speed & greater depth of field.

Next is Aperture, if you are using Nikkon 200-500mm f/5.6 lens, for fast action or flight shot then it's preferable to use f/7.1 or f/8 to extend depth of field If the light condition is very good, i always prefer to use f/7.1 in bird photography. If light condition is low or very low i shoot with maximum f/5.6.

Hence, we can say ISO, Shutter speed & Aperture which are interdependent on each other.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Shwetaparna :** Recently I went to visit Subarnapur, Odisha for clicking summer migratory birds like Indian paradise flycatcher, Black-naped monarch

and blue-tailed bee-eater, & this was my best ever project which I have done in last May. Many of western Odisha photographers were posting this summer migrant birds in social media site and I always mesmerized by seeing the beauty of summer birds and question myself when I'll get these beauty & get good shots as well. Then I told my father about this summer birds and he happily agreed to take me that place.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Shwetaparna :** In these 10 years I want to reach the peak of mastery in wildlife photography. If my passion & dedication continue, then I'll definitely able to achieve this goal. & my second wish is to visit all national parks, Sanctuary and famous forest of India and have to observe & click new species of birds, Animals & their natural habitat as well. My upcoming plan is to visit Chilika, Vetnai and Mandasaru for adding new species of winter migratory birds & animals to my list. I hope my all dream come true.





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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ZAINUL ABEDIN**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER ZAINUL ABEDIN

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Zainul :** This is Zainul Abedin from Aligarh, I have completed my graduation in fine art from Aligarh Muslim University. Always tried to expose his ideas via variety of media including painting, mix media, photography, performance, as well as other activities.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Zainul :** Photography allows us to express ourselves through an art form. We notice a beautiful street child or an old man's lined face and we want to capture it. Start photography when I was in intermediate school, I want to become a photographer . I took it way more seriously then I should have. I went Delhi and bought a second hand camera. And then starting shooting videos and photos everywhere.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Zainul :** Mostly motivated me child memories child labour street child, I'm to make sure that each photograph that I take is some way better then the one I took before . I try to use photography to show people the way in which I see the world, not just a visuals of scene before me.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Zainul :** I like fine art photography but I inspired by Lee Jeffries is a British street photographer, who resides near Manchester, England . He focus on homeless people in England and all around the world.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Zainul :** I used to much Nikon D90 it is not currently in market, and I did Canon mark 3, Sony mirrorless , Nikon D3200, lens 50mm, 70-200mm ,Canon lens 50mm, Nikon 70-105mm.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Zainul :** When you spend hundreds of hours to build your own business or become an expert in your field, you are trying to gain control over your livelihood. If you strive to control your life and that of others, your motivation is likely power. You enjoy actions that will make you the sole determinant of what happens to your money, food, health, relationships and more.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Zainul :** It depends totally on the subject although most nature photograph are better in colour , there are some where black and white is better.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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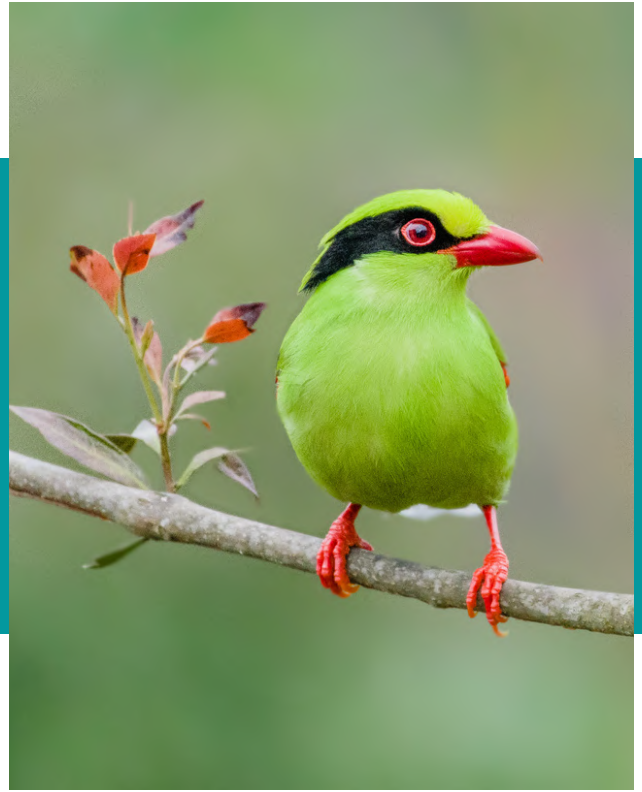
Meet the Photographer  
**SROMAN ROY**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## SROMAN ROY

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Sroman :** My name is Sroman Roy. I was born in the Royal City of Coochbehar but was brought up in Siliguri, West Bengal. I'm 25 years old and currently pursuing my Post Graduation in Political Science. Since a very young age I had a keen interest in arts and creativity . I was into drawing, painting, Indian classical music, Table Tennis and eventually Photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Sroman :** Photography is like meditation for me. Whenever I'm upset or even extremely happy, photography helps me out. I get to know myself and my creative mind in a better way.

As a school student, I never had the opportunity or permission to travel around until in class 12 when we had a geography class excursion in Gajoldoba, Jalpaiguri. I had borrowed a SLR Camera from my friend for this excursion. While all of my friends were busy with the field work, my attention went towards the bunch of Great Comorants gathered near the Gajoldoba Dam. It was then when I realised my interest in photography. And perhaps that was the first intentional photo I have clicked.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Sroman :** The story behind every frame and new possibility to add creativity inspires me as a photographer. Motivation comes when each day I learn to get better challenging myself to reach a further extent.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

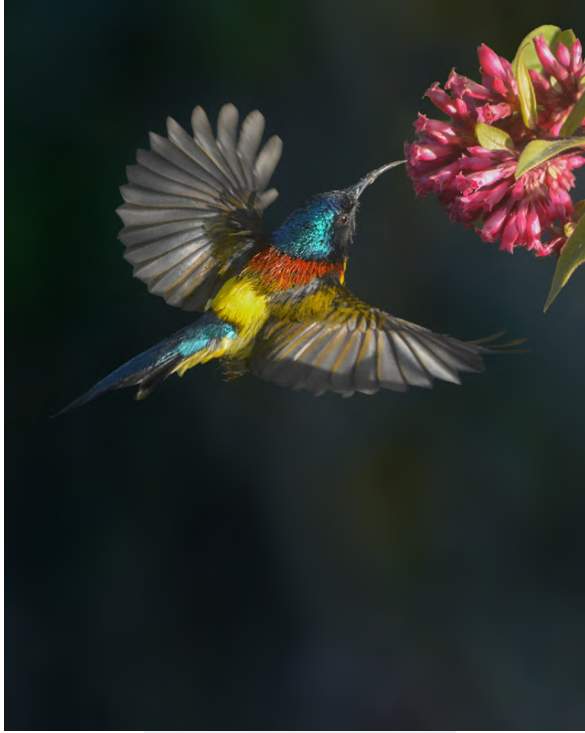
**Sroman :** I am into Wildlife Photography. Being a nature enthusiast and an animal lover who love the hills, the greens and the colourful species those exists in this nature has a lot to give. The story behind every lifestyle pattern and habitat of various species inspires me the most. The realisation after observance compared to those of humans, it is mesmerizing to witness so many happenings in the day to day nature around us.

**Sroman :** The story behind every frame and new possibility to add creativity inspires me as a photographer. Motivation comes when each day I learn to get better challenging myself to reach a further extent.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Sroman :** I am into Wildlife Photography. Being a nature enthusiast and an animal lover who love the hills, the greens and the colourful species those exists in this nature has a lot to give. The story behind every lifestyle pattern and habitat of various species inspires me the most. The realisation after





observance compared to those of humans, it is mesmerizing to witness so many happenings in the day to day nature around us.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Sroman :** Any species with a good background and adequate amount of natural lighting. What I like most are the action moments. It has a story in itself.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Sroman :** Wildlife conservation aims to protect plant and animal species as the human population encroaches on their resources. It is the practice of protecting plant and animal species and their habitats. As part of the world's ecosystems, wildlife provides balance and stability to nature's processes. The goal of wildlife conservation is to ensure the survival of these species, and to educate people on living sustainably with other species.

The conservation of wildlife is necessary for prevention of drought, new deserts, fires as well as floods. Also, this conservation ensures that the upcoming generations of humans and wildlife will be surrounded by nature thereby loving it and understanding the significance of wildlife. Also, wildlife acts as a gene pool for various resistant strains of pests causing the diseases. The production of food is also enhanced via wildlife. Various pollinating agents like birds, bats and bees help in increasing the productivity of plants. Moreover, wildlife also contributes as a medicinal source. Humans benefit from various species of microscopic animals, fungi, animals and plants in some or the other way. The wild plant species are responsible for the production of various pharmaceutical drugs. The study of interaction of various species with their ecosystem and the effect of human and environmental influences on the wildlife will help in conserving the wildlife.

As we all know the number of species are getting endangered because of the technological world growing. The more we study about it the more heart breaking it is. As a Wildlife Photographer I would like to start with the people near me and aware them of the beautiful nature and its species. Promoting to plant more trees and keeping the habitats untouched and undisturbed. Many people are getting to know more about the species and their importance in this nature through the work I project. The Greens and the blues of nature are to be protected and kept clean. I try to bring a connection between the wildlife and human world and aware people with a message of harmony that it is the duty of humankind to conserve the wildlife and the habitats of all the beautiful species within it.

**Retro Kolkata :** Bird photography is almost always about the action. How do you get a good pose during the fast action? What should one look for? How would you prepare for such shots?

**Sroman :** I always look for the background. The birds are always beautiful in every pose. If the background isn't good enough, even a good action shot won't give a good presentation.

While preparing for a fast action pose, patience and observance are the keys. While observing I study the subject's activity. Keeping patient and quiet, keeping a distance and not letting my subject know my presence, I predict the timing of the pose I am going to take and right before that exact moment I start clicking in Continuous High. Additionally, I set my Shutter speed and ISO in manual. Sometimes I get amazing frames, sometimes blurry. Again, patience is the key. It took me time to get my fast action pose but the more I attempt for a fast action pose, the better I get.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Sroman :** There aren't any such projects I have worked on. I have done quite a lot of photography trips with my cousin brother to the hills. I got all my best shots from among these trips.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Sroman :** In 10 years as a wildlife photographer I would like to travel throughout India and have a collection of pictures of all the species of all over the country including mammals and birds. In the next 6 months I have a planned trip of covering the north eastern states of India.

Apart from photography, in 10 years I would like to become an Assistant Professor in the department of Political Science in a recognised college. I'm about to sit for UGC NET this month so hopefully in 6 months I will be able to start my journey as an Assistant Professor.

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SAIBAL SEN**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SAIBAL SEN



**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your background.

**Saibal :** I am SAIBAL SEN but known as Shywal to most of my photographer friends. I am from Kolkata & i consider myself a learner in Photography. I am a corporate employee who works in Bengaluru. I started photography as a hobby through my schoolmate whom I consider my Teacher till now , as due to him I came into this field & he is an important critique & teacher who teaches me & guides me in improving my work . Although there are important people whom I consider as teachers, he is the First & important one. For me Photography is like a drug which gives me ideas or perspective to see things in a different way.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Saibal :**It started for me through my schoolmate during our college days. He taught me a whole lot about photography from basics to understanding the stories that a photo tells . I used to click with my normal Java mobile phone where the megapixels were just 5mp . My friend taught me to see photos & try to understand the photo, the story, the position of the subject & read about photography , which is still continuing till date . I tried a lot of genres of photography - Fashion, Corporate , Wedding, Product but Street got all my attention & I fell for it .

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Saibal :**For me it's Emotions , life & moments that won't be repeated again. Everyday there is a new emotion, a new frame , a new story can be found & it's not that you have to travel to different places . If we look around ourselves we will find it. That's what the uncertainty is in Street Photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like

and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Saibal :**For me Street is the genre that inspires me the most although i worked on different genres. There is no such masters i would like to mention because i believe everyone is an artist & have their own style & imagination to capture photos .

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Saibal :**I use a Nikon camera with basic lens 18-55mm along with 35mm.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Saibal :**For me people & surroundings around me are the most subjects that prompts me to look for the shot i imagine.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Saibal :**Bnw for me is an emotion as it gives life to any photos although colours give an equal competition to a photo .

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Saibal :**I have worked on a few good projects where my works were showcased in some International Magazines - Spectaculam Magazine (V ienna, Austria), XXZ Magazine (Serbia), 35awards (Russia) & etc. I was contacted by them & was invited to showcase my work.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Saibal :**According to me for now it is to keep developing my skills & learn more & keep on clicking photos. As for me photography is like a drug to me which keeps me going. The more I learn the better our imagination is at getting good photos.

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**RITESH GHOSH**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER RITESH GHOSH

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Ritesh :** Thank you Retro Kolkata for reaching out to me with this opportunity. My name is Ritesh Ghosh and I am from the City of Joy, Kolkata. I was a Banker by profession and presently a photographer by choice. I have been pursuing this art form for the past 7 years now after a freak road accident prevented me from resuming my Corporate Career. I call myself a Visual Storyteller who likes to capture the small moments from our everyday life.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Ritesh :** "Photography to me is what breathing is to living beings". I decided to take it up initially as a serious hobby and later as an alternative full time job when I was recovering from the accident I mentioned earlier. Photography gave me the strength to overcome my pain and create visual stories taken from the moments of everyday life. Street is where my heart is and I love the human interaction while I am photographing.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Ritesh :** Life has been the biggest teacher for me and so I take most of my inspiration from it. Apart from this I also learn something or the other by going through

the works of various new and celebrated photographers. In photography, everyone has a unique perspective of observing things and this can be quite inspiring.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Ritesh :** Anyone who has been following me on Instagram([https://www.instagram.com/love\\_thy\\_camera/](https://www.instagram.com/love_thy_camera/)) will know that my primary genre of work is STREET. From my very early days as a photographer I enjoyed walking the streets in search of my next subject and story. I have been inspired by quite a few Masters of this Art viz. Henri Cartier Bresson, Ansel Adams, Vivian Maier, Fan Ho etc. Some new age artists such as Alan Schaller, Sean Tucker, Vineet Vohra, Prashant Godbole etc have also been instrumental in inspiring my thought process as a photographer.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Ritesh :** Initially I started experimenting with the Canon 600D for a few months before I took to the Fujifilm mirrorless system. I owned the X100S at first which I traded for the 23mm prime once I acquired the interchangeable XT1 body. Presently I own the XT3 and the first Gen XT1 along with a set of 5 lenses of various focal lengths ranging from 10mm upto a 140mm. I am also using the Godox TT 685 speedlight as my external light source.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to I



ook for the shot?

**Ritesh** :Interesting faces, colour , texture and patterns is what I look out for while on the streets. I am also inspired by quirky moments (Juxtaposition) which makes the audience think twice before swiping to the next image on Social Media.

**Retro Kolkata** : Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Ritesh** :Personally I prefer shooting in colour although one should learn to see things in Black and White first.

**Retro Kolkata** : What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Ritesh** :I have worked on many projects till date but honestly I have yet to come across the 'Best' one. Good things happen to those who wait and I believe in this proverb.

**Retro Kolkata** : Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Ritesh** :Life is totally unpredictable and I learnt this 7 years ago when I took up photography after being a corporate guy for 8 years. So I would rather let time take its course and decide where I would rather be in a decade's time from now. Although I wouldn't mind sharing an exhibition space with the World's Best Street Photographers or signing copies of my Coffee Table Photobook for my fans.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ARNAB DUTTA**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER ARNAB DUTTA

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Arnab Dutta :** Hi, I am Arnab Dutta, basically a wedding photographer but love to shoot all genres.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Arnab Dutta :** Photography has become an integral part of my life. I started shooting at my maternal uncles wedding at the age around 8. That time I had a small manual camera. Everybody appreciated my clicks and that motivated me. I am grateful that my parents always supported me for my love for photography, even though they wished me to do a 9-5 job.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Arnab Dutta :** I find inspirations from lights. Lights from any source, if its fall and illumination is dramatic then I gets a vibe to shoot.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Arnab Dutta :** Street Candid is the genre I love the most. I love the works of Henry Cartier Bresson. Also my neighbour and a great photographer, Swarat Ghosh, keeps motivating me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Arnab Dutta :** At present I shoot with Nikon Z6ii, 35mm, 50mm, 85mm. For lights I have a godox tt685, AD200 pro, LC500R and one continuous light.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Arnab Dutta :** Any subject which have a story in them prompts me to shoot.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Arnab Dutta :** Last year I got a call from a friend in Mumbai, who works in a production house. She said that their house wants me to be the DOP(director of photography) for a theatrical show. Later they gave me the opportunity to be the DOP for two independent movies as well.

**Retro Kolkata :** What qualities make a perfect shot for you?

**Arnab Dutta :** Understanding the subject, a good frame and a basic knowledge of light will make a perfect shot

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Arnab Dutta :** My happiest moment in my photography life is when I got that call from my friend in Mumbai to be the DOP in their project.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**DEBARPAN DATTA**





**Retro Kolkata :** Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Debarpan Datta :** Hi, Debarpan here. I am not a photographer; rather I'd like to introduce myself as a person who has decided to dedicate himself in studying and gathering in-depth knowledge about nature and wildlife. I am working in Nature Mates, a Wildlife Research & Conservation Organization based in Kolkata. To talk about my background; it's a bit complex one but eventually that turned out to be very helpful in chasing my childhood dream of working with wildlife. I completed my Graduation in English Literature and my masters in Environmental Studies. Somehow my dream of conservation story-telling got brilliant support from this combination and that has helped me to work in different genres of wildlife research and conservation in last few years.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Debarpan Datta :** I can say that I am in a way indebted to photography as my interest to observe bird behaviour was intensified by this practice of freezing moments. Photography taught me to identify definite patterns about wildlife and I love the way how I can use these small early learning in my observations, works and studies.

My love for photography started long back when I was just 6, back in the year 2000, watching dad using an age old Nikon FM10 Manual SLR Camera. I got the first lessons from him and learnt the value of one single frame as those were the times when for one entire trip of a month we would have maximum 5 film rolls which means a total of 180 shots. Today in this era of digital photography when we don't even need to count the number of shutter being released for one frame, I

always feel from within how important that lesson of my childhood was. Gradually with time I developed my skills in the manual camera and finally entered the digital photography world post 2010.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Debarpan Datta :** Photography always fascinated me in a way where the artists speak of something already existing in front of their eyes and what they try to show is the perspective to observe something with their clicks. In all other celebrated art-forms be it painting, poetry or art craft the artist has the liberty of establishing something out of a blank canvas or right from the zero which is another different grade of challenge. But while I'm taking photograph of any certain thing I have an added responsibility to convey a story silently to the audience. Like; while clicking any wildlife I always try to depict its habitat or behavioural condition so that people have a greater idea rather than just looking at the image. This storytelling inspires me the most. Photography is not just a passion to me; it's a medium of deeper silent communication.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Debarpan Datta :** Nature and Wildlife fascinates me the most and naturally they are my favourite subjects. More precisely I can say I love to document wading birds and raptors the most.

As I previously said I try to tell stories with my photographs. Every photograph in this world has certain messages. I always try to use my pictures as medium for communicating intricate details for awareness. That's my biggest inspiration.





I have been extremely fond of watching works of Mr. Dhritiman Mukherjee and learn passively, how conservation storytelling can be effective in today's world. I consider him my hero in this field. Apart from him, I always cherish to follow works of Mr. Masood Hussain, Mr. Krishna Murthy, Mr. David Llyod to name a few; the list definitely doesn't end this short.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Debarpan Datta :** I have a very limited gear collection: Just a Nikon D750 Camera with Nikon 200-500 VR lens. I don't have any extra lighting equipment as I prefer to shoot only in natural lights.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Debarpan Datta :** In a line I can say that Wildlife, especially birds attract me the most. What prompts me the most is any definite characteristic behaviour of theirs which describes them better in terms of developing an understanding of the species in detail.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Debarpan Datta :** Going with just the meaning, wildlife and natural habitat conservation is any and every effort to help the natural elements thrive safely at their own pace and freedom. Now if we ask the question why it is important; what exactly conservation is will be clarified by itself. Working regularly in the field of this specific question under the guidance of some very inspiring and knowledgeable seniors I have developed an understanding that conservation is an initiative to ensure sustainability and survival of human beings on a much broader sense. All the Projects headlined with conserving several species is indirectly an effort to save

ourselves they are actually "Project Human" in a broader sense as if one species in this world goes extinct, the entire ecosystem can collapse and we can be exposed to existential crisis and probably won't survive the threat. We have to change our idea that we are no one to save or conserve Mother Nature; she can save herself on her own. Just like we have seen during the pandemic, Nature Healed herself by imprisoning us within our rooms and pollution level went significantly down. So nature has its own way of saving itself which we are not capable to cope up with. We need to develop an understanding that it's us who have encroached in the natural habitat of wild animals and isolated them in small pockets naming them as protected natural areas. Conservation is never possible if we are not aware of our vulnerability and are willing to save ourselves and act accordingly. This is where we need to understand and accept the fact that wildlife and natural habitat conservation is important because it's actually the effort to save our own future, ensure our survival in a healthy way for longer period. If we keep thinking like we are working for the welfare of any animal, the result will never be sweet. Conservation is a very grave word; it has much deeper meaning than we can superficially interpret. Firstly I'm not a photographer; this is so big a word which is suitable for stalwarts like the names I mentioned earlier. I am just a person who for the sake of his works and interest in observing wildlife takes photographs. Working under the guidance of some old warriors in this field has taught me how photography can be instrumental in conservation, from where my dream of conservation storytelling got the required fuel to progress. Every photograph is eloquent, and for the people who love to study wildlife, photographs are absolute blessings. Modern photography gear helps us to record the proper date, time, and location of every photograph, and these records are very essential for conservation, like for important documentation. Also photographs are

evidence of definite behaviour which is being studied by any certain person. Scientists today are also using photography to document specific aspects which they are finding from their tireless research works. Now, every aspect of this world has two sides, it depends on us who are going to prevail, the menacing one or the beautiful one. If used properly, photography can bring revolutionary changes in human approach as it is one of the brightest forms of art and interaction. The stories told, the messages delivered by a photograph, are themselves an ingredient for conservation. It is now up to us to decide how much value we are willing to place on a photograph; whether we allow an image to speak loudly and pierce through our hearts, or whether we represent it in a casual way where anyone simply take a quick glance and walk away without even looking at it properly. In the recent past, we have seen sad incidents due to our irresponsible behaviour while clicking wildlife; like destroying bird habitats and forcing a mother bird to abandon its fledglings in the nest as some over enthusiastic photographers crossed the line to get one good frame. We are transforming an extraordinary tool of conservation into a demon-like instrument just by our irresponsible attitude. On the other hand, we can see people like Mr. Dhritiman Mukherjee doing wonders with the camera in his hand and inspiring people like us with his pictorial storytelling, catching the eyes of thousands of people and making them aware, motivating us to dig deeper into a subject. I just mentioned two sides that reflect how the art of photography is right now balancing on the edge of the knife concerning conservation. It is now up to us to decide which side we will help to win.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Debarpan Datta :** Now, my projects are never related only to photography. They are much more about working physically directly or indirectly with wildlife. Luckily I have to travel a lot and get many opportunities to use my camera in my projects. Among all the projects I have worked or have been working in, Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation holds a very special place. When we rescue and finally release any injured helpless wildlife back into the wild that gives me some unexplainable satisfaction.

But if I talk about working in any dream project, that would be the research study of waders along the coastline of Sundarban Biosphere Reserve. When I decided to work directly in the field of wildlife, I dreamt of being associated in studying birds scientifically, especially the migrating population. That dream finally came true as I am now officially working as a researcher on the above mentioned project; the one which I've dreamt with eyes open for so long. I can't explain properly how I get involved into this.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Debarpan Datta :** Now, this is a real gem of a question and I put a disclaimer over here that the answer will seem a bit strange. First of all, I would like to say that wildlife research and conservation projects can never be of any single individual, it always requires a strong

compatible team to work collectively towards success. My dream of working in this field would never been possible if team Nature Mates was not there by my side. Working with wildlife is a very difficult profession where you have to work very hard for very to become financially established. When I was searching for any opportunity in this field my Idol Ms. Lipika Ray (IFS) suggested me about this organisation. I came here and was welcomed warmly and for the last four years I have witnessed so many difficulties to successfully execute any project related to wildlife; getting fund is the toughest part. Team Nature Mates collectively working in this field relentlessly, gradually is progressing where enthusiasts get the platform to pursue their interest in wildlife research and conservation. I wish to work successfully as a part of this team, successfully continue with my own research project with Nature Mates and establish this institution as a pioneer in the field of wildlife research. Our seniors struggled to provide us a better platform to work sincerely on our desired streams and now it's our duty to carry on with this effort by successfully doing our work and strengthen this platform further so that after a few more years interested people can work with certainty of definite securities and therefore continue with same enthusiasm...On personal front I aspire to gain further knowledge in this field, learn and on that effort uncover the unknown variables of bird migration and the mysterious Sundarban landscape, and above everything generate immense awareness among people regarding conserving the unique habitat of Sundarbans. I wish to see myself in a place where Debarpan Datta, a researcher of Nature Mates will have a green army formed by the young people who are ready to devote their lives for the sake of safeguarding the Sundarbans. I wish to see myself in a place where I can confidently motivate young minds to join the field of wildlife welfare, where young students can choose wildlife research as a career confidently being inspired by the collective success gathered by team Nature Mates of which I am a happy representative.

To achieve the aforesaid goals we have set certain targets with timeline. As the migration has started already this season, the next six months will be high time for the entire team to work and strengthen the base of the migratory bird project in Sundarbans. Working to engage and involve young people in this project is the biggest challenge we are going to face over there and what we will try is to make them understand that we are working for the betterment of that entire habitat on which they are also very much dependant. These next six months will really be instrumental in shaping the future of this effort which on a long run will answer good many questions about this specific landscape. So one thing I can certainly say, we are going to make these six months count in the best possible way. On a collective front, Team Nature Mates is working on different projects at present and fortunately we have a team where every member is ready to help others in their specific works. So as a team we have works scheduled and well planned for the next six months to put a step forward to achieve our huge goal that I've mentioned earlier.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SUBHRADEEP JASHU**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SUBHRADEEP JASHU

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Subhradeep :** Thank you Retro Kolkata for selecting me in your upcoming Green Edition. Let me introduce myself: My name is Subhradeep Jashu from Howrah. I am a banker by profession and photographer by passion. I have graduated from St. Pauls' College, Kolkata in English Literature and further completed my Masters from University of Calcutta. But somehow in the conflicted path of my life , I left the academic line and opt for competitive exams. After few attempts, I cleared banking exams and joined in Bank. Last 10 years , I have been in this profession and refuse professional upgradation in order to live my passion and for my love that is Photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Subhradeep :** Photography is Oxygen to me. It gives me immense pleasure in my busy schedule. To me photography is moment's monument. The start of photography may be traced back to my childhood days. I was brought up in joint family and saw my uncle using slr camera 32-33 years ago. This injected an interest of photography in my life. When I was in Class IX , my father gifted me Yashica Reel camera and that is the first footstep towards my love for photography. After 10 years from that, I invested almost 3 months salary while doing a part time job as

teacher in a school to buy first DSLR(Nikon) camera. Then gradually I have upgraded myself months after months as better photographer. Hope this process will continue till the last breathe.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Subhradeep :** I think the beautiful world around us and the activities of birds and wildlife captured through my camera and the enjoyment of the people by viewing my photographs motivates me to capture more and more and my senior and junior photographer friends who also provides hard labour on field for photography inspire me a lot in photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Subhradeep :** The genre I like is Wildlife Photography and the lives of birds, wildlife, insects, reptiles which are the essential object in Nature to live on earth inspires me to freeze the moments associated with them. The different perspectives that connects the wildlife and Nature inspire me in this genre of photography. The action moments of birds or animals in different seasons have inspired me along with their habitat shots in my photographic works.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Subhradeep :** I use DSLR and Mirrorless camera( Nikon D500, Z6II & D850) that are from Nikon. The lenses I use are 500mm Prime lens , 70-200mm lens, 16-80mm lens and 24-70mm (for mirrorless camera body).





**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Subhradeep :** The action moments of wildlife like hunting, eating of kill or action moments of birds like preening, flying subjects inspire and prompt me to look for the shot and also some good habitat shot I use to collect from field.

**Retro Kolkata :** What exactly is wildlife and natural habitat conservation & why is it important ? How can you as a photographer help protect wildlife and conservation?

**Subhradeep :** The natural habitat conservation is nothing but to keep alive the natural habitat for basic requirements of food, water, reproduction or nesting and protection against predators. Wild life conservation is very much important at present because it provides balance and stability to Nature's process.

I think as photographer, one has wide opportunity to help protection of wildlife and conservation. We should be careful about regular usage of nature based products, we should keep ourselves calm and composed while visiting national park and should maintain silence. Besides a photographer has close affinity towards nature. While doing photography, we should not disturb the natural habitat , should keep distance with the animate subject so that they also feel easy with us. Now a days , gaining social media fame creates a lot of turmoil regarding the disturbance of wildlife. We should be aware of these facts. Finally a photographer or be it other, one should have proper knowledge of behavioural aspects of the subject.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Subhradeep :** Frankly speaking, I still look forward to work with such big projects for conservation. But I think for conservation, one's work should be started from home. If we plant trees, create natural habitat for birds and wildlife around our home, then it will be a successful project one can work. In this case, we should remind that thousands drop of water makes an Ocean.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Subhradeep :** Next 10 years, I must look for being a better photographer along with knowledgeable conservationist and obviously by God's grace, if I earn fame for sake of photography, I must be a down to earth person. Every day, every month, I am learning. It is an eternal process. Next 6 months , it is important as the new season is coming . I will implement the homework on field that I gain in photographic subject so that the classwork may be evaluated by myself properly.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**RIBHU CHATTERJEE**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## RIBHU CHATTERJEE

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** Just like any other boy, I was expected to complete my degree and do a job. But things changed during college days, as I got more involved in photography/videography. Though I got my first camera after plus two but started using it more when doing my bachelor's in management studies. I started working as a freelancer and changed my stream to mass communication in my master's, which eventually helped me learn more about this field. Currently I am working as video journalist for The Quint.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** I liked clicking photos, but never expected that I will be going forward with it. Even before getting my first DSLR, I used to take pictures from my father's reel camera and my inspiration was my uncle. After joining college, my interest grew more into this, due to one of my seniors. I eventually joined the photo/video club of my college and started freelancing which gradually helped me to understand and work better in this field.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** What I like the most about photography, it helps me to tell many untold stories. Everyday one can create and shoot something new, thus one can never feel bored of it. The happiness, of t

elling someone life's story through your perspective is what inspires me a lot to shoot continuously.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like the most and What inspires you? Which Master of Photography have inspired you in your photographic work.?

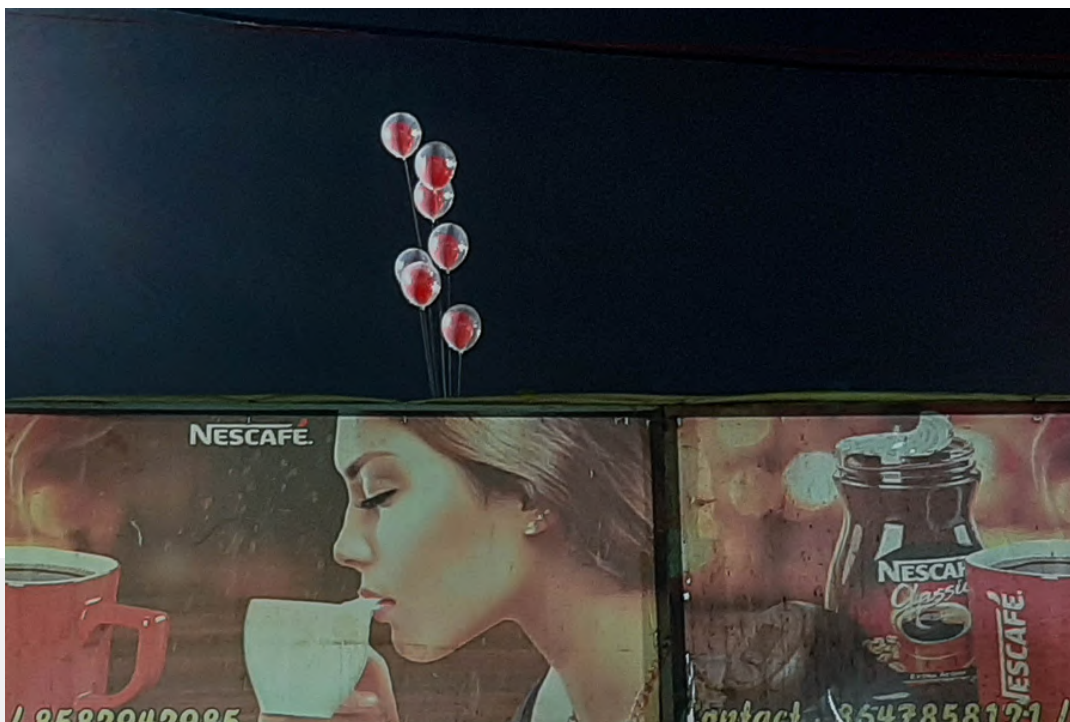
**Ribhu Chatterjee :** Telling about a specific genre I have tried to put my hands more on photojournalism and documentary photography. Other than that, I have a keen interest on travel photography also. If I start taking name of the people from whom I have been inspired over the years, it will be a long list. I have been inspired, not only by the masters, but by my contemporary photographers. Even till now I, have friends and seniors who mentors me and I love their inputs.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment's do you use?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** I usually shoot with my Nikon D3300 with 18-55mm and 70-300mm lens and if I am not carrying the camera, I shoot with my Samsung A52. I don't have any lighting gears.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** I don't any fascination for subjects. Everyone who is front of my camera is a subject for me. I try to shoot it candid and whatever unique moment which I find in street I capture it. For the documentary, since it depends upon a particular story, so had to go accordingly, which varies, from portraits to wide and creative shots.



**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** I think, both black and white or colour gives a different feel to photos. For me it depends on the situation and the mood I want it to be. Usually its colour for me, but I try varied combinations of both the profiles.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** Other than projects from my organisations, I have been working on many personal projects. One such project I did is on The New Normal, based on how the lifestyle of people

changed during the pandemic time. I don't know whether it is best or worst, but I covered it as I wanted to show my perspective of the pandemic.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years' time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Ribhu Chatterjee :** I aspire to see myself as an established photojournalist and for that I still need a lot of practice and experience. I am trying my level best to polish my skills and fill up my gaps by the guidance of my mentors and taking more shots.

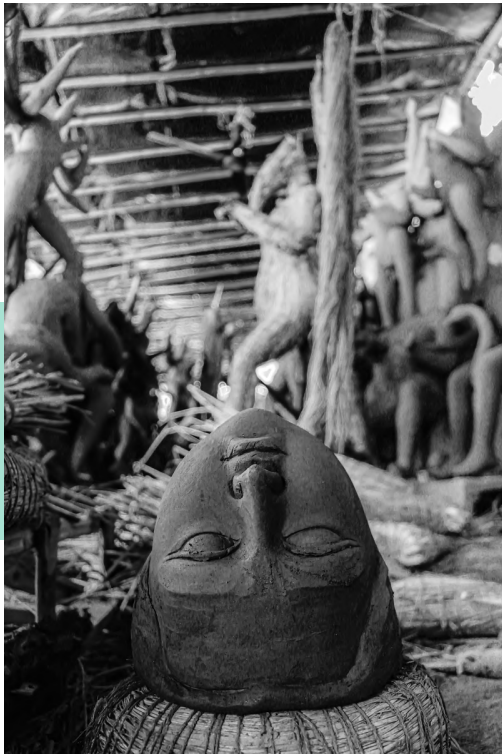


# HIDDEN GEMS

Meet the Photographer  
**INDRAJIT KUNDU**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER INDRAJIT KUNDU



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Indrajit :** I am Indrajit Kundu, 21 years old, I had just completed my graduation in journalism from Delhi University, currently I am working as a sub editor in the statesman newspaper.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Indrajit :** I started clicking pictures with my smartphone, slowly slowly I started getting appreciated and I also loved the photography so much that I started finding something new in every photograph. Photography is very important to me because it gives me the peace of mind and whenever I am with my camera i just get down into it more and more.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Indrajit :** I was inspired by the camera of my friend in school and then i got inspired from the great photojournalists, and street photographers.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Indrajit :** I like street , documentaries and wildlife photography. I gets inspired by the pictures which are meaning full and are meant to tell story and experimental photography is the best to innovate to

something new. I get soo much inspired by my Mr Raghu rai sir and a star photojournalist Ravi Chaudhary sir.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Indrajit :** I use canon 80d with 18-135mm lens and a 40mm lens.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Indrajit :** I always search for a story in a photographer and a very new prospective of taking pictures which is not being used.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Indrajit :** I like both B/W and coloured photographs but it depends on the situation usually i like to take B/W pictures to express sadness or something incomplete.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Indrajit :** The best project I am been doing is, working on a coffee table book which is gonna be published. In that book I am gonna show every moods of Delhi. Along with the culture, food and heritage of Delhi.

**Retro Kolkata :** Where would you like to be in 10 years time and what are you going to do in the next 6 months to get closer to that goal?

**Indrajit :** I would like to see myself as a photojournalist after 10 years because every photograph clicked for photojournalism tells a deep story. And i am going to work onto it from now and gain so much experience and contacts.



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**AMISHA RAJ**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER AMISHA RAJ



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Amisha :** Myself Amisha Raj, a 19 years old self taught passionate photographer and pursuing agricultural course. I am from a small town in Bihar where photography is not that popular. The thinking of the some people here is still the same that be a girl, become a teacher, do household chores, it is not your job to click photos, follow your passion & do photography. My family supports me and it matters the most for me & that's enough for me.

I had interest in photography since school time but I did not have my own phone, so I used to click on Father's phone. Then when I went to Rajasthan to study, I got my first phone.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Amisha :** I'd started my journey as a creator when I got my first Android smartphone and eventually documenting lots of festivals, streets and some time portraits too. Then when Lockdown took place in 2020 due to COVID-19. I opened Instagram at that time and started posting my old pictures which I had clicked. After that I watched youtube videos of good creators then practice things on how to use pro mode in mobile, different types of genre and learned a lot to get better photos.

Photography brought plenty of changes within me, I mean the overall impact it had upon me as a person.

It taught me a lot of things and gave me a chance to understand and capture the world through different perspectives.

I am very grateful that i choose this.

As a woman or a girl , photography comes in with many challenges but in spite of these challenges , the moments and joy that I experienced while capturing something with my lens is totally different and peaceful.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Amisha :** Having purpose and a plan is what motivates every photographers. For me, this is my hobby and it discovering what I want to photograph is not so driven by need. Finding out what I like to take photos of is a process. Keep an open mind about why you photograph & looking for new subjects to photograph is a best way of staying motivated every time.

Taking pictures pictures is one of the most inspiring and exciting things. It can encourage you to have adventures, facing people's, meet interesting peoples & see the world in your own way.

In my two-year experiences as a Photographer, we can be inspired by many things like lights falling on a scene or some creative and symmetrical perspective. I enjoyed to document our indian cultures and self portraits mostly and that was what would always draw my eye and inspired what I captured.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have



inspired you in your photographic work?

**Amisha :** As a beginner and aspiring photographer, the best thing is that you are free to explore virtually all types of photography there are.

Fashion, street, portrait etc. you can try it all out and improve your skill at the same time.

After 2 years of experience, I feel like I have more interest in documentary and self portrait photography.

Documentary photography is all about storytelling. It's the art of telling stories with a picture regardless of your subject matter.

You need to capture emotion as well as action. I like to do documents in mostly Festivals. I show my Indian cultures & festivals through the my perspective. Capturing raw emotions of our culture in real-life situation and moment in time.

But I get a lot of inspiration from self portrait photography. When I started my journey on social media, I started with self-portraits and it inspired me a lot. I am an introvert girl and posting my photos on social media by having a public account is not a small thing for me. This genre boost my confidence to face peoples around your society, power to avoid negative comments and peoples. Self-portraits gives me a sense of feeling of what it's like to be in front of a camera – rather than behind it, making you more aware of how your subjects feel in front of your lens. It gives you perspective in front of the camera & Giving Direction and Posing.

Behind every self-portrait,  
There's an idea I want to convey,  
A pose, a concept, a quote;

It's about selecting outfit,  
It's about light,  
It's about setup,  
And emotions.

it's about expressing something that comes from within.  
As an aspiring photographer, I will find that you always need inspiration from the greats who probably started out where you are. For documentary , I really inspired by Roshani Shah (Ig :- roshagulla) and For self portraits, I get inspiration from Mansiugale (Ig :- mansiugale).

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Amisha :** As I said, I am aspiring mobile photographer I had started only two years ago by clicking all this from my phone and till today I am clicking from the phone itself. Because I have to take my first camera from my savings, from my earned money and this year my dream of getting that camera will be fulfilled. I am currently doing it on Android smartphone that is realme 8 Pro, tripods and with some wide angle mobile lenses.

I don't have any lighting equipment, I prefer to shoot in natural light instead of artificial lights.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Amisha :** In photography, the subject is very important. It is the main point of interest in your photograph that makes it clear what the image is about and what message is being



conveyed by the image. Without a clear subject, the photo will be difficult to define and therefore unappealing.

The subject is the focus on the image, both literally as the sharpest point in the photograph and in a more figurative sense. According to me, subjects leads the photographer's decisions about aspects like lighting, composition, texture, exposure settings and more.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Amisha :** I like mostly colourful pictures.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Amisha :** There are some essential qualities that can make a perfect shot for example:- Your picture should have framing, there should be some human elements in your clicked pictures, there should be perfect lighting and the shot should be sharply clicked without any unwanted grains.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Amisha :** As I said that I am from a small town in Bihar, there is not that much photography community people here. So once I went to shoot frames in a famous Shiv temple here during 2021 Winters with my mobile phone. In front of the temple is the Shiv Ganga River and it had many stalls and some old Baba.As you know, I am an introvert and neither do I have a camera. Clicking someone's photos on the street like this is quite a awkward thing. So an old baba was taking a bath in the river, I took his photo, and took the photo in such a way that he did not know that I had clicked his photos. But he came to know and forgot me and asked me " beta tasveer le rhi ho kya " I was like what shall I say now? I dared to tell them that I can take your photos. Then that old baba would smile and say that " Ruko mai dubki marta hoon fir tasveer lena"after hearing this my happiness knew no bounds.

I was very happy that they let me take photos without judging me. This has been the best moment in my journey till date.

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**RISHA JAMATIA**







**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Risha :** Myself Risha Jamatia, I'm from Tripura, Recently i have completed my Graduation degree in Bachelor of Optometry from Assam Downtown University . And I'm passionate about photography drawing and traveling, working on myself.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

As a students and as a person who go through a lot photography is such an escape for me with a world of mine that i make my own.

**Risha :** Every moment of my life whether it be happy and tough times all memories are capture in just one picture and everything can be remember.

A single picture can bring out a whole lot of unsaid words and feelings which can be hold on to forever.

So, Photography is such an important tool for me as it has helped me in lot kind of ways mentally, which has made me stronger and i will forever hold on to it as it means a lot to me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Risha :** My source of motivation mainly comes from my friends and my sister as she encourages me to do better in what i do, which have brought me to this point.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Risha :** I would say i capture most of macro, nature and street photography which is mostly related to the nature as mentioned earlier that is where most of my inspiration comes from.

Macro photography captured by a photographer named @Nalinder Mahato are a masterpiece, he is such an inspiration to me and also photographers like @Varun Aditya and @Aarzo khurana and @Lope Romin a brother of mine are such a main source of inspiration for me.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Risha :** As a student i am not being able to give all the time that i have in photography and also cannot afford any expensive equipments so i use Normal mobile camera from that macro lens , wide angle, night mode potrait, other than that i don't use any other lens .

I don't use any lighting equipment, i make use of what is provided in mobile camera and bring my photography into real.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Risha :** As i have mentioned earlier about Nature and Macro lens, when i see or come across things in nature, it could be a beautiful sunset or birds in the skies or could be a happy moments with my beloved ones or could be a small creature that i see. So to me it can come from a lot of different ways.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Risha :** I prefer both black and white and colored but the works that i have done so far are mostly coloured as it has its own stories behind it. So even though i make my pictures into colored or black and white i look for the meaning behind it and anything can be beautiful in its own way.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

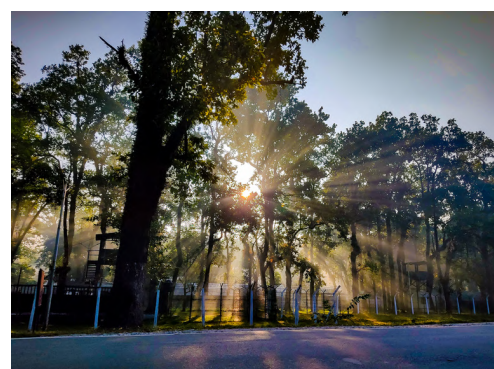
**Risha :** As a paramedical student my schedules get tight at times so i hardly make time for capturing what i love, so i still haven't indulged in anything like a competition or so but that doesn't make me any less since my passion for it is very strong.

**Retro Kolkata :** What qualities make a perfect shot for you?

**Risha :** Quality in my pictures i would say i look for the perfect moment, feeling and inspiration. It helps me to be creative to which I get the best results.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Risha :** I would love to share my happiest moment in photography life',



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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**DIVYA DUGAR**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER DIVYA DUGAR



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Divya :** I am Divya Dugar based in Jaipur, Rajasthan. I have a Bachelors in Photography from Symbiosis School of Visual Arts and Photography. I specialize in Fashion and Fine Art photography. Working as a freelance photographer, I love to experiment and bring out something new on the table with every project. To me every little thing which often gets unnoticed in our busy lives motivates me to highlight it through a unique setup to bring forth the question- 'Do you see what I see?'

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Divya :** For me, photography is the way I want to perceive the world and vice versa. It is about pouring my inner representation through the pieces of work I create and making everyone experience my thoughts without narrating them. It is equally important for me to affirm the art I create as the more connected I feel with my photos the more people will be in awe of it. Initially I started photography as an amateur hobby and was capturing images every now and then just to learn from the results. I still remember how empowered I started to feel by capturing photographs and felt my best self in the overall process. Slowly and gradually I started developing an undying passion and love for it which helped me become better and better each passing day and the process is still on.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Divya :** I get inspired from very simple subjects or situations which are often overlooked or avoided in the hustle of our lives. I believe that the best stories are always present around us and we just have to focus our attention to figure them out and understand their depth. Everything happening in our usual day makes a significant impact over our beliefs and values and once nuanced, can become beautiful concepts to motivate the audience.

Apart from it, I love seeing other artists work in various art fields and connecting with people to understand the different perspectives which help me enhance my knowledge and apply it across my art.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Divya :** After exploring all the different genres of photography for a few years, I selected fashion photography as my forte, as it provides me with an immense sense of satisfaction seeing my work becoming distinctive and getting so much appreciation and love from the audience.

I get inspired from the work of my fellow photographers who are doing some great work in the fashion industry, at the same time I get inspiration from reading about or practicing other photography genres to help me to get an offbeat vision.

There are a lot of wonderful photographers who have significantly motivated and made a deep impact on



my photographic journey like Sachin Chandane, Tarun Khiwal, Victoria Krundysheva, Arjun Mark, Tarun Vishwas to name a few. I always look up to their work and it motivates me to continue working harder and reach my potential.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Divya :** Usually I work on a Canon crop frame body, 700D with two kit lenses, 18-55mm and 55-250mm and 50mm. According to the needs of my projects, I keep on hiring the required cameras or lenses. Talking about the lighting equipment, I love using natural light for my projects with some fillers due its unmatched feel on my subjects creating some phenomenal results. For artificial lights, I keep on renting out my equipments or use other creative ideas in accordance with the visualization to achieve the final deliverables.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Divya :** I always look for subjects which are often not talked about much, so I can portray them from my point of view. Usually, whenever we think about being creative our mind automatically goes towards finding out-of-box complex ideas but I believe the most creative ideas are simple ideas with our own creative outlook - it's very challenging to make simple subjects look different and unique and that is what people love to witness. At last, the shots which I love freezing in time are the ones which cannot be replicated again and will be forever etched in your memories like that.

**Retro Kolkata :** Your projects are a collaborative process. Tell us what it's like to always work with new stylists, models and designers.

**Divya :** With every passing project I work on I feel very delighted to meet my beautiful team members who always help me land towards my visualized results. Working with different designers, stylists, models, makeup artists etc. creates an outstanding opportunity for me to improve my work and add on more value to it. Integrating their suggestions and ideas I develop fresh perspectives to advance my project. Lastly, it feels wonderful to create life-long connections and share this part of our lives together.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is communication during a shoot when working with a model?

**Divya :** Communication with a model is very essential before as well as during the course of the shoot. Being a photographer to get your results right you have to explain everything in detail to the model. We also need to discuss ideas during the shoot to enhance their character in the photographs. For example, if a pose is not working, their expressions, where they are looking etc. As a photographer I would act as their mirror. It is also important to make them see how the photos are coming along to motivate them and if needed improve on their role to add more charm to the frames. At last, being open and mindful to express any challenges I am facing or concerns we are facing helps us achieve the best results.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Divya :** I find all my projects amazing and they have all helped me learn more about myself and my abilities. But I would especially like to mention 'The Other Side' which was a self initiated project on sexual harrasment. The project took inspiration from the Nirbhaya rape case incident and talks about the issue with the help of photographs to spread awareness about the cause. It also points out a few assumptions made about the victims of sexual assalt focusing on the real problem.

The project was built on my visualization of using the pink trumpet flowers which bloom once a year and how they completely change the atmosphere around them and relating that to a victim's identity which turns completely upside down after any such incident. The project was my small effort to spread awareness about this issue which is so prevalent in our societies and highlight the plight of the victims and help people understand how deep the consequences are. Interestingly, we shot the project on 8th of March which is International Women's day adding another layer of celebration of women to my project.

**Retro Kolkata :** What qualities make a perfect shot for you?

**Divya :** Speaking of a perfect shot I believe I still haven't reached perfection but yes I have grown in my skills. A perfect shot need not necessarily have the perfect exposure but a good balance to deliver the essence of my visualization. A perfect shot is wholesome and doesn't need anything to complement. For me, a perfect shot simply means the one which conveys the story I imagined while capturing it.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Divya :** The happiest moments in my photography life is when I get the shot I desired for, when I see all my hard work paying off. It is also seeing the smile on my client's faces once the project is completed as they come to love the final results- that is one of the best feelings I am left feeling and am always grateful for.



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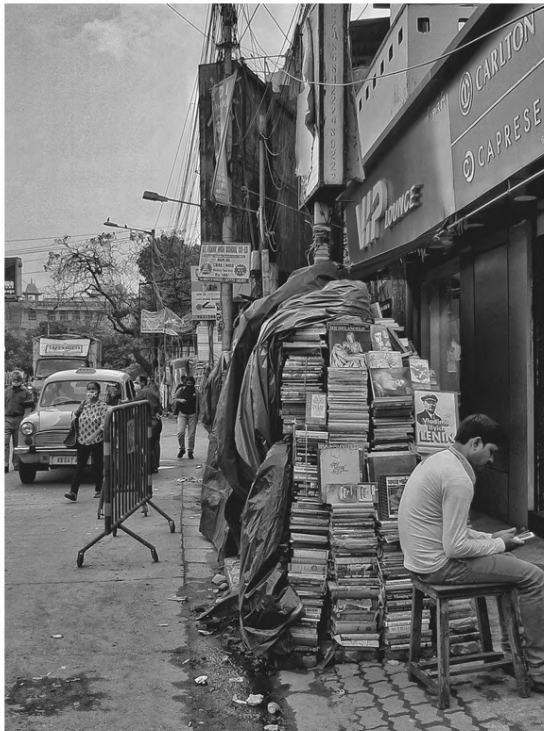
# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**SAYAN SEN**



# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER SAYAN SEN



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Sayan :** Thanks a lot to the Retro Kolkata team for the wonderful opportunity. Hello, this is me Sayan a 22 year old guy recently completed my graduation, planning for further studies, lives with my parents in Kolkata. I'm passionate about photography and started my journey couple of years back.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Sayan :** Photography is a timeless medium. Pictures elicit memories, emotions with which anyone can resonates the same old feeling only looking at the picture. That's the fascinating power of photography. The art of capturing always mesmerized me in many ways at different ages but since lockdown it helped me more to find myself and explore the appealing beauty of uneventful life through my photography. Being a shutterbug, my affection is to discover untold, unseen stories in ordinary.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Sayan :** Its actually difficult to narrow down to a specific thing that motivates me. Being very honest what I believe art is everywhere only the person need to be a vigilant observer to find out the story from the melancholic, dull lifestyle. We all humans have different standards with the word 'beautiful' that a beautiful thing must meet certain pre-determined societal

beauty' standards to be 'beautiful'. But a bunch of pale-dry flowers in a corner can also be 'beautiful' and tells the story of how fragile life is. So it depends on individual's own perception how one wants to perceive things and get inspiration from surroundings.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Sayan :** Documentary photography is my first personal choice, but as I am very new in this field its too early to bring myself into one genre. All I can say, trying my best to learn, explore, absorb and soak myself in the field of photography to enjoy every bit of it, and to find own style of work which represents me who I am.

Actually there are few whom I admire but special mention to Anurag Banerjee and Avani Rai their work is massive source of inspiration for me. Also, I really want to mention one person my father, no, he's not a photographer but he used to click lot of pictures with his camera and every time when the shutter clicks and flash light pops it made me curious and think more about the mystical process of capturing maybe he was the one who knowingly or unknowingly ignites the spark of photography in me back then in childhood.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Sayan :** Well, it might not be the best thing to say but as I have just started recently neither do I own camera gear nor any lighting equipment as of now. I do take all my shots with my mobile.



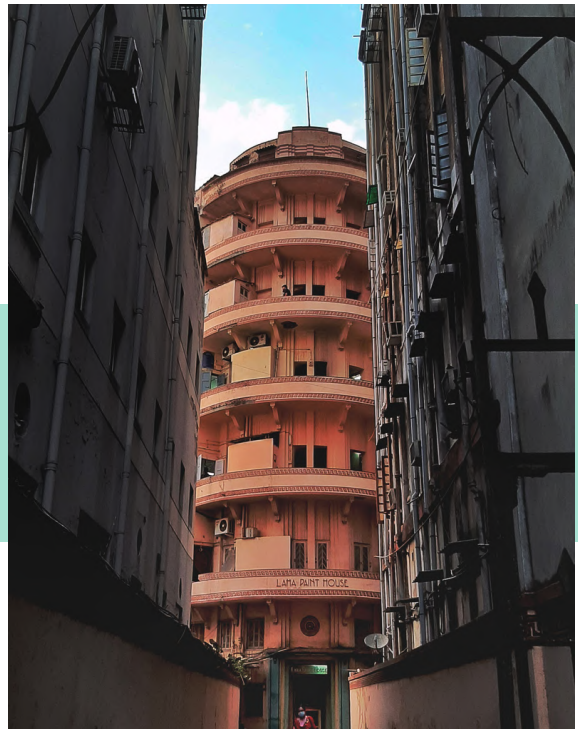


**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Sayan :** Monochromatic images contain all the possible colours and it has a potency to depict the truth, reality of this world and unseen emotions of human beings. Because of that I prefer black and white over colour photographs.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Sayan :** Recently I worked with Kolkata Centre for Creativity where one of my photograph exhibited after getting selected for their annual exhibition My Kolkata in Kolkata 3.0



**Retro Kolkata :** What qualities make a perfect shot for you?

**Sayan :** Composition and the idea of presenting the story through the image are two things I consider for a perfect shot.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Sayan :** Every time when my work gets acclamation from different platforms and when they gives opportunity to showcase my work, a sense of contentedness works within being shutterbug. Isn't it a happy moment to work with and answering questions for RETRO\_KOLKATA ?

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**INDRANIL SAHA**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER INDRANIL SAHA



**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Indranil :** Hi, I am Indranil Saha, age 25, born and brought up at a small town Mathabhanga, district Coochbehar, West Bengal, India but now I live in Kolkata for study. I completed My M.sc in applied geology from Techno India University.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Indranil :** Photography is a very important part of my life, we can't work if we don't sleep well as also I can't feel well if I don't go out photo walk two or three times in a week. This photography always gives me positive energy, Every day I make many mistakes while taking pictures and I learn from those mistakes and try to improve myself. and My journey with this photography started in the year 2017.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and what inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Indranil :** My favourite genre in photography is street and documentary. I like the work of many photographers, but my all time favourite photographer is Raghu Ray sir. One thing I believe is that the more you see the work of a good photographer, the more you learn.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Indranil :** I am using nikon d5300 camera and lenses which I am

using now, nikon 18-55 mm lens, nikon 50mm 1.8g, nikon 35mm 1.8g, nikon 70-300 mm. And also my Mobile camera is same valuable part in my Photography.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Indranil :** For me photography is the art of choosing a story from the many visuals around us. Me as a photographer the witness to the history happening right in front of our eye and the camera is our tool to capture it for future generations. photos are the memory of our life. so to create story throughout the image have become my hobbies.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Indranil :** yes, I always prefer black and white Photography and I love black and white pictures.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Indranil :** Most precious moment in my photography journey is in the year 2020 I was awarded by the Ministry of Tourism (CENTRAL GOVT) in heritage category.

My work also published 3 times in an international magazine. In this year I was the winner of Photography festival 2022 which was organised by NSHM knowledge campus associated with CANON INDIA. Here my ALL INDIA RANK WAS 1 AND recently Again I was awarded by the ADAMAS UNIVERSITY with associated Sony India, here my all India rank was 2 in human expression category.

I always keep one thing in mind and I want to tell everyone that

"You don't take the picture that everyone takes"

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# HIDDEN GEMS

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Meet the Photographer  
**ANMOL GURU**





# MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

## ANMOL GURU

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**Retro Kolkata :** First of all Heartiest congratulations for your selection in Retro Kolkata Magazine Green Edition. Please introduce yourself. Tell us about your background.

**Anmol Guru :** Gursimran Singh aka Anmol Guru , born and raised in a small town of Uttarakhand state of India. I am a self taught Travel Photographer and Filmmaker. Currently working as an assistant director in Chandigarh.

**Retro Kolkata :** How important is photography to you? How did you start photography?

**Anmol Guru :** Photography is something I can defy gravity with . Talking about its importance in life , I would say photography has given me recognition which is my life earning to the eternity. I started photography during my college days back in 2013-14 . Learning on my own I was mentored by one of the seniors in my initial days and the rest is history.

**Retro Kolkata :** What motivates and inspires you as a photographer?

**Anmol Guru :** Nature , mother earth , and surroundings are my biggest inspirations.

**Retro Kolkata :** Which genre of photography do you like and What inspires you? Which masters of photography have inspired you in your photographic work?

**Anmol Guru :** I like to travel and simultaneously like to document the things I come across so I designate myself in the travel photography genre. There are numerous photographers but definitely i would like to mention some , STEVE McCURRY , HARVARINDER SINGH ,

CHRIS BURKARD , NIMIT NIGAM . There are more photographers out there who really are inspiring but cannot name everyone.

**Retro Kolkata :** What type of camera, lenses and lighting equipment do you use?

**Anmol Guru :** I am currently using a DSLR nikon d750 + nikkor 50mm f1.8 lens + Tokina 16-28 f2.8 lens.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects inspire you and prompt you to look for the shot?

**Anmol Guru :** Nature is unpredictable , if i want to mention one subject i would say STARS . Astro photography is something else.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you prefer black and white shots or colour?

**Anmol Guru :** Depends on the location , mood and edit.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is the best project you have worked on and how did you get involved with it?

**Anmol Guru :** I cannot say the best to anyone as every project has its own significance . Currently I did a music video as an assistant director which is gonna release on T-series anytime now.

**Retro Kolkata :** What qualities make a perfect shot for you?

**Anmol Guru :** The composition , the mood , the lightning ,the edit , everything is equally important.

**Retro Kolkata :** Could you please share the happiest moment in your photography life?

**Anmol Guru :** If i say till now , when I was shortlisted by RETRO KOLKATA for the international exhibition is one of my finest moments .



ANMOL GURU



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ANMOL GURU



# ARTIST



Artist  
**PRASHANT BAPODARA**



# MEET THE ARTIST

# PRASHANT BAPODARA

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please Say something about you.

**Prashant Bapodara :** I am an architect as well as a self-taught artist who is working on freelance projects in both fields.

I have done my graduation in architecture from Parul Institute of Architecture and Research, Parul University, Vadodara.

I have presented my artwork in 2 exhibitions and have also been nominated 2 times in India Book of Records.

I worked with various architectural firms and have also conducted bamboo construction workshops at NASA, India meets.

I enjoy learning new things and experimenting with various mediums and techniques. I only participate in activities that I enjoy and that benefit my present and future. I enjoy being close to nature and company with my close friends.

I believe in myself and have an ideology to give my impeccable performance every time I take up something.

My preference of artwork is Portrait work, but I have no preferred material or technique to portray it, I have always made an effort to overcome this with a different technique and style, and have always tried to provide my clients with unexpected outcomes.

I always find a perfect, quiet time during the day to

work on my artwork so that I can focus and achieve the finest detail possible.

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you first realize that you really loved drawing? Were there any instances that you can recall in particular that made you choose to concentrate on creating art?

**Prashant Bapodara :** In my childhood, I drew landscape scenes, cartoon characters, tattoos, and different still life objects. When I was in high school I participated in a drawing competition and won which gave me motivation to pursue that hobby more. One of my faculties in school suggested me of architecture and asked me to make join it, I applied and passed the entrance exam and got admission this was the milestone wherein my creative journey begun, I learnt a lot about materials, techniques, details and architecture as a tool to portray myself which helped me grow more and explore endlessly.

**Retro Kolkata :** Has anybody guided you along your career path as an artist and if so who?

**Prashant Bapodara :** I started the journey of making portraits in first year of architecture wherein I practiced them while making live sketches of my friends. The practice was sometimes forceful as we had to make many such sketches to fulfil the subject requirements, at that time I didn't





like it but gradually I understood the art form, the materiality, technique and adapted a skillset wherein I was most comfortable in. I started to improve the skill, started of with pencil, pen reaching to mediums like charcoal and paint took no time as I my curiosity grew with each new medium. Since then my main focus is to achieve at the best art possible.

Throughout my journey, all my colleagues and faculties have always been supportive and have always appreciated my work and have given their critics which has helped me mold myself better, to create something better and never give up trying.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your work? What are you currently working on?

**Prashant Bapodara :** I have explored many mediums and materials throughout my architectural journey and am still exploring new things, I have done sculpture, murals, digital arts, computational art and architectural illustrations, and interior based projects. I also got nominated in the India book of records 2021 and will soon be nominated in 2023 for the largest portrait using 23000 dice. Commission-based dice portraits, thread portraits, and graphite portraits as per client requirements in their budget is a regular typology of work I get, I want to explore everything in art and architecture and want to include technological nuances in near future.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favorite medium to work in?

**Prashant Bapodara :** Every new medium intrigues me, but I focus upon portraits and also here there is no particular medium that I am stuck too, for me it's just a phase wherein I'm improving and learning new skills and techniques according to client demands.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some artist you admire?

**Prashant Bapodara :** Many artists and architects' works have inspired me throughout these years but I have been following architect Santiago Calatravas' sculptur-like buildings and art works, Steve Hanks' realistic figurative watercolor works, Vladimir Volegov's figurative oil paintings and MC Escher's different perspective, Daniel poppers sculptures are some of the many artists work I admire.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects do you mostly like to draw and paint about and why?

**Prashant Bapodara :** I choose the subject according to the purpose of artwork, if I have to do the art for myself and self-exploration I would deliberately choose something which I can be attached too and beautify its minute nuances to create a deeper attachment with it. If there's commission-based portrait work, I choose the most beautiful face with best expression and with some more details wherein I can showcase and uplift my skills, and I have tendency to choose something which is bigger than the last approach and more challenging in nature.

**Retro Kolkata :** What goes through your mind while you draw, is there a calm silence, do you listen to music or do you experience doubt, fear or any emotions at all?

**Prashant Bapodara :** While making any art work, depending upon the subjects and purpose of artwork, core focus is on detailing and perfection, and the quality of artwork. I listen to stories and songs related to the subject if relatable material archive is available. I choose the best quality time for my artwork wherein I am secluded in my room to and in the perfect mood.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any upcoming shows or exhibitions that you'll be attending?

**Prashant Bapodara :** I am a member of the "Maher Art Group," a Porbandar artist community group that organizes an exhibition in different cities every year. Perhaps it will happen this time in Ahmedabad. I also want to attend the "Burning Man Festival" in Black Rock City, Nevada, and exhibit some kind of sculpture or installation work there in the near future.

**Retro Kolkata :** Describe your dream project.

**Prashant Bapodara :** I want to integrate technology in artworks and want to break the boundary of art and architecture.

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# ARTIST

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Artist  
**DIVYAMAN SINGH**





# MEET THE ARTIST

# DIVYAMAN SINGH

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please Say something about you.

**Divyaman:** I am a self taught artist. Following in the footsteps of my grandfather, the renowned artist and Member of Parliament late Shri Awadhesh Kumar Singh, whose paintings were exhibited at the Parliament House under the tenure of Shri Dr. S Radhakrishnan as the President. I am currently the founder of Art By Divyaman gallery in Noida. My first solo exhibition titled 'Ethereal'; was well received in January 2017, at Pearey Lal Bhawan, New Delhi. After which I have exhibited in AIFACS, Visual Art Gallery, Open Palm Court at India Habitat Centre, M.A.D.S Art Gallery, Milan.

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you first realize that you really loved drawing? Were there any instances that you can recall in particular that made you choose to concentrate on creating art?

**Divyaman:** I have been participating in some art and drawing competitions in my school and had always won awards for my drawing and paintings which I did not continue after school, until one day when I thought of gifting my fiancé then (now my wife) something extra special and what better than my own hand painted artwork. Since then there is no looking back, she is my biggest inspiration.

**Retro Kolkata :** Has anybody guided you along your

career path as an artist and if so who?

**Divyaman:** I would rather rephrase this and say that not guidance, however, I am very inspired by my maternal grandfather who was an artist himself.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your work? What are you currently working on?

**Divyaman:** I love nature and I am currently working on textured works which are very much inspired by nature.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite medium to work in?

**Divyaman:** I explore all mediums but I am biased towards oil paint. I feel it has an expressive texture.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some artists you admire?

**Divyaman:** I like paintings by Van Gogh for always showing the magic in the mundane.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects do you mostly like to draw and paint about and why?

**Divyaman:** I do figurative and abstract both, however, nature based abstracts are my personal favourite, as I have very fond memories of home where I am surrounded by forests and mountains. I developed a strong bond with nature early on while growing up in Chaugain, a village in the Buxar district of Bihar.



**Retro Kolkata :** What goes through your mind while you draw, is there a calm silence, do you listen to music or do you experience doubt, fear or any emotions at all?

**Divyaman:** I have the subject in my mind that I have to put on my canvas, yes I do listen to retro songs when I paint. I prefer being alone in my studio so the thoughts do not get disturbed or scattered of what I have in my mind to paint.

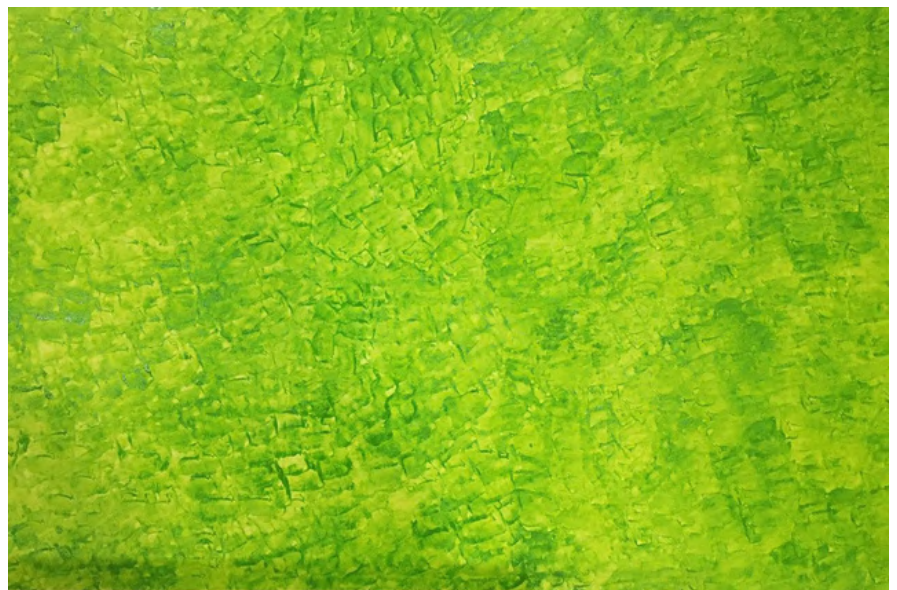
**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any upcoming shows or exhibitions that you'll be attending?

**Divyaman:** I plan to visit an upcoming show that is going to happen in Bikaner house, I like to see what other artists are doing and visit

these shows, especially by upcoming artists; I feel that's my way of encouraging and supporting them.

**Retro Kolkata :** Describe your dream project.

**Divyaman:** I am running an art gallery called Art By Divyaman studio & gallery which is my dream project. The gallery's motto is, "For an artist, By an artist", so that everyone who creates art can have a place to showcase it easily.





# ARTIST



@PAINTSANDME

Artist  
**SAKSHI GOYAL**



# MEET THE ARTIST SAKSHI GOYAL



**Retro Kolkata :** Please Say something about you.

**Sakshi :** I am currently pursuing my graduation in journalism and apart from that I do photography as a hobby. I hail from the pink city of India and painting is something I can't live without. I am of a jolly nature thus I love to meet and talk with new people and listen to their stories. Learning is something I am always open to and it does not have to be always relevant to my professional life.

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you first realize that you really loved drawing? Were there any instances that you can recall in particular that made you choose to concentrate on creating art?

**Sakshi :** I have been drawing, painting, and doing craft work since my childhood, thanks to my mother. Art and craft is something I have been drawn towards since I was a kid. From drawing haphazard lines on wall to actually painting beautiful murals on it, drawing on last pages of notebook to actually buying expensive sheets to paint.. It has been a beautiful journey. But, it was 2018 when I took it bit seriously. I received a watercolour set from my grandma, something I wanted from long time and that's when the inner me wanted to explore that medium.

**Retro Kolkata :** Has anybody guided you along your

career path as an artist and if so who?

**Sakshi :** What I paint today wouldn't have been possible without my school's art teacher. There were no art classes for us after 8th standard, and I was in 10th when I received that watercolour set. One random day, my school's art teacher, who used to teach us in mid school was in our class as a substitute teacher. I went to her and asked sheepishly, if she could teach me watercolours. It was a yes! The very next day I went to her with all my stuff and the first thing I was told to do was to discard the paint set I was having and buy a better quality one. The little girl in me felt a little disheartened as those paints were something I have been wanting for long. Two days later, i returned with a new set- the better quality one and we began with the basics. She taught me every thing possible with those paints.. basic mixing, light and shadows, controlling the water in water colours etc. Spending time with her in the art room used to be the best part of my day and now I pretty much miss them. Learning simple basics from her made my base strong and over the time I explored with the medium to achieve what I do today.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your work? What are you currently working on?

**Sakshi :** It's been a few months since I have painted something big, something with a lot of details. I was working somewhere as an intern and recently I dropped it because I was missing painting a lot. And now with pleasure I have started a painting,





named 'Kashna' which is of an old woman with red flowers and with a sweet smile. Apart from that, some commissioned projects or portraits are like a yo-yo in the background.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite medium to work in?

**Sakshi :** WATERCOLOURS! There's no doubt about that. People often say that watercolour is a tough medium because it is hard to control its flow, but for me, it's like my best friend, instead, I don't find acrylics easier than aquarelle. I love how versatile they are, ranging from transparent to opaque. They give a beautiful touch to the painting, also, before starting any new project it's fun (sometimes frustrating) to solve the puzzle of which colours to apply to get a particular shade in the painting. This is what I refer to as breaking the colours. Apart from them, colour pencils are my love, though watercolours remain the first.

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some artists you admire?

**Sakshi :** I believe there's something to learn from every artist and their style. But because my eyes crave for detailings, my favourite Indian artists are Bijay Biswal, Uday bhan, Raghunath Sahoo, Nikita Chhabra and for the international ones- Gizzele Delos Santos-Eustaquio, Karen Kluglein, Thierry Duval, Halyna Boholiepova. There are many more, but these are some whom I admire the most.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects do you mostly like to draw and paint about and why?

**Sakshi :** I started with painting food because of its colours and different textures, then navigated through 3d and realistic painting of food wrappers like chocolate, chips, cookies. Painting portraits was something I considered as my weak point then and I am still learning them for now, but painting old people, especially women, now I feel that, it's my style. Old people portray a lot of stories through their faces, every wrinkle of them is different, and their smile, It's so beautiful. A painting doesn't start with a sketch or when you lay down your paper, it starts even before- when you search for your reference image.

**Retro Kolkata :** What goes through your mind while you draw, is there a calm silence, do you listen to music or do you experience doubt, fear or any emotions at all?

**Sakshi :** I can't do something in a long sitting, be it painting or studying. Thus, I would just pop out of my chair every 20 mins and take a stroll in my home, to gather more inspiration or ideas, to see some close up of textures and colours and how I can use them in my painting. While painting I usually listen to slow-mellow-old-english songs because they are so peaceful and does not even distract me much ( because you never know the lyrics :P ). Sometimes I enjoy the process but most of the time it's self doubt that whether I'll be able to complete it well, what if I spoil the background or what if the colours turned out to be muddy.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any upcoming shows or exhibitions that you'll be attending?

**Sakshi :** Nothing particular as such but I keep a check on the exhibitions being organised in the city and try to attend them.

**Retro Kolkata :** Describe your dream project.

**Sakshi :** I don't have some gigantic dream projects for now but I just wanna be so thorough with my art that someday, at some corner of the world there'll be a fellow artist who'll admire me just like I am admiring the artists above. Apart from that, I am looking forward to organise my art exhibition in upcoming months which will portray my art journey starting as a kid to what I am today.

# ARTIST

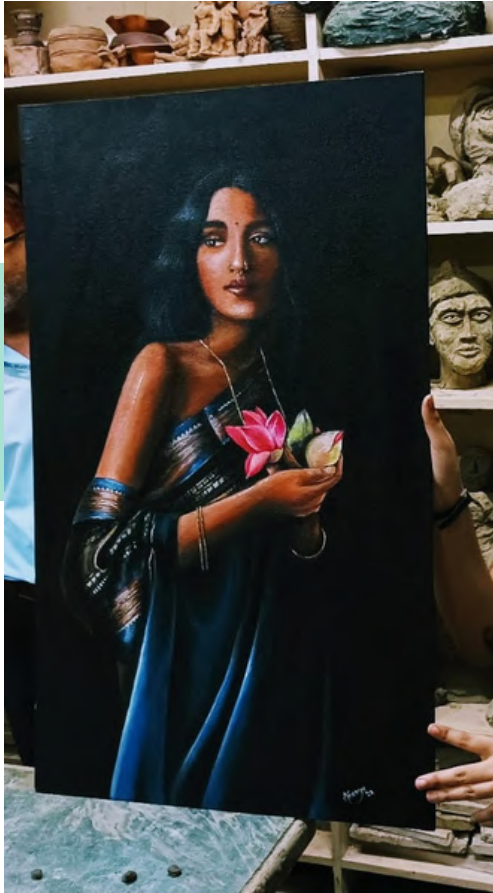


Artist  
**ANANYA CHHABRA**





# MEET THE ARTIST ANANYA CHHABRA



**Retro Kolkata :** Please Say something about you.

**Ananya :** I am an absolutely crazy person. I am mad over art and painting. I can paint for hours and get lost in the waves of emotion that it brings. I cannot be defined by any words, to understand me one has to understand my paintings. I express myself in the form of my paintings and as Lao Tzu quotes, knowing others is wisdom, but knowing yourself is enlightenment. For me painting is a process of knowing my own self.

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you first realize that you really loved drawing? Were there any instances that you can recall in particular that made you choose to concentrate on creating art?

**Ananya :** It was in 9th grade, although I remember being connected to art since the beginning of time. I discovered in 9th grade for the first time how fascinating it is that colours mix together to form a beautiful picture. How emotions flowed out of brush. I remember watching my art teacher holding a pen and drawing a wondrous landscape, there was a small lonely cottage amongst trees and a lonely person climbing up to the cottage. Nobody saw the landscape the way I did, watching him marvellously draw it brought tears to my eyes. For others it was just a drawing, for me it was the expression of a true artist.

**Retro Kolkata :** Has anybody guided you along your career path as an artist and if so who?

**Ananya :** Even if you hadn't mentioned this question, I would have talked about him some way or the other. I can never thank him enough for bringing me close to art. His name is Rajib Roy, he is an alumni of kala bhavan, Santiniketan and my art teacher of course. He possesses immense power and knowledge. Art comes naturally to him. I never told him this but every time I see him painting, it somehow brings tears to my eyes, such is the power of his brush strokes. The power of reaching someone's soul.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your work? What are you currently working on?

**Ananya :** I am still exploring art, I work versatile, I draw whatever I feel, paint using the references I find beautiful. I know I have been more inclined to realistic work lately, although I wish to create something purely from my heart. I am working on a big canvas right now and I am excited about it.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite medium to work in?

**Ananya :** There is no specific medium, but recently I have been working a lot with acrylic, moreover I am dying to try out oil painting.



**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some artists you admire?

**Ananya :** Rabindranath Tagore, Nandal Bose, Jamini Roy, Raja Ravi Verma, Vincent Van Gogh, Rembrandt, J.M.W. Turner, Renoir, Claude Monet, Eduoard Manet.

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects do you mostly like to draw and paint about and why?

**Ananya :** I like to paint Indian subjects, which have the essence of Indian culture to it. I usually paint any subject that particularly interests me and appeals to my eye.

**Retro Kolkata :** What goes through your mind while you draw, is there a calm silence, do you listen to music or do you experience doubt, fear or any emotions at all?

**Ananya :** I listen to music while I paint, It's never quiet. I am continuously thinking, feeling. Sometimes the emotions are tremendous and if I paint when I'm sad, it feels like a huge burden has been taken off my shoulders. When I'm painting, I am having an indescribable conversation with it. It's always talking to me, and my heart knows which way to go. This sounds like an illusionistic statement, but the painting always talks to my soul and only I can listen to the call. One thing is for sure, it's always peaceful in the end.

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any upcoming shows or exhibitions that you'll be attending?

**Ananya :** I am actually not sure about that, I love to admire and appreciate art, but I currently don't have any plans as such. However, you never know where life takes you.

**Retro Kolkata :** Describe your dream project.

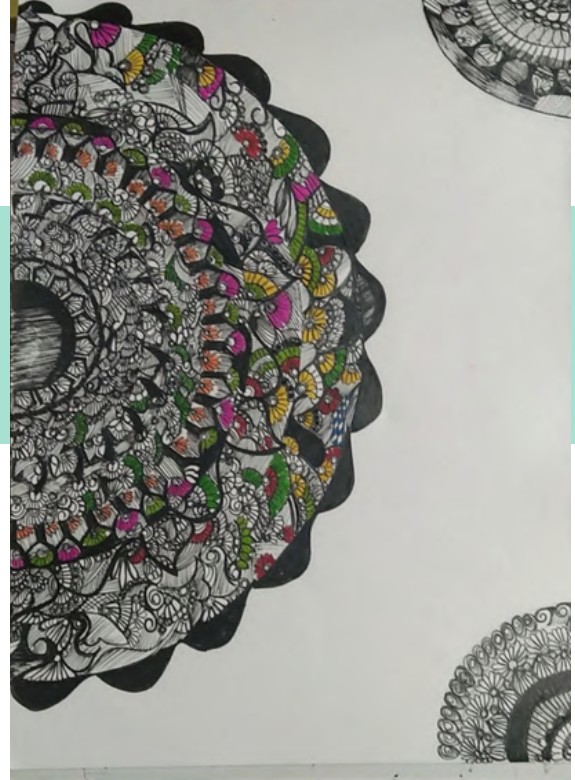
**Ananya :** As mentioned before, I want to paint something that comes purely from my heart, my emotions, it will be a huge painting. Right now, I don't have a clear picture as to what it will be, but it will be something very different to what I usually paint.





# MEET THE ARTIST MEHWISH FATIMA

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**Retro Kolkata :** Please Say something about you.

**Mehwish:** My name is Mehwish Fatima am a writer and artist.I write poetry and do Mandala Art also I started sketching and pencil shading.

**Retro Kolkata :** When did you first realize that you really loved drawing? Were there any instances that you can recall in particular that made you choose to concentrate on creating art?

**Mehwish:** I love drawing since my childhood.

**Retro Kolkata :** Has anybody guided you along your career path as an artist and if so who?

**Mehwish:** Yes my grandfather and my mother.

**Retro Kolkata :** Tell us about your work? What are you currently working on?

**Mehwish:** My work is to make Mandala Art through it I create logo also Currently am working on Mandala designs ,logo etc.

**Retro Kolkata :** What is your favourite medium to work in?

**Mehwish:** Watercolor, Mandala pen

**Retro Kolkata :** Who are some artists you admire?

**Mehwish:** Chetna Singla, Prasun Balasubramaniam

**Retro Kolkata :** What subjects do you mostly like to draw and paint about and why?

**Mehwish:** I mostly draw Mandala Art

**Retro Kolkata :** Do you have any upcoming shows or exhibitions that you'll be attending?

**Mehwish:** No not yet.

**Retro Kolkata :** Describe your dream project.

**Mehwish:** My dream project is to take Mandala Art to greater heights.



**A true artist is not one who is  
inspired, but one who inspires  
others..**



**SALVADOR DALI**



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