

**For Immediate Release****THE CRITIC'S EYE****Photographs by Richard Bartholomew (1950s to 1970s)****Opening 17th January**

On view till 28<sup>th</sup> February 2009 (Extended till 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009)

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It is with great pleasure we begin 2009 with *The Critic's Eye*, an exhibition of photographs by Richard Bartholomew (1926-1985). A writer, art critic, curator, painter and poet, is how Bartholomew is remembered. Bartholomew's love for literature and art remained lifelong companions and he became one of the finest voices in art criticism in India. He was one of the first art critics to start a serious dialogue with the painters of his time. He created a community with them and engendered a sense of direction at a time when the public was not fully receptive to the bold artistic exploration of India's Progressive Art Movement. His photographs however, remained a more private introspection of life around him and were rarely exhibited. Twenty-four years after his death, we visit his archive and discover an intense and sophisticated eye that provides a rare glimpse into the beginnings of Modernism in India. He recorded art and its practitioners with a custodian's eye. Ever watchful and yet unobtrusive, like the man he intrinsically was, Bartholomew perhaps understood the evidentiary and historical role of the photograph. That many of the artists he photographed became significant underscores the importance of his archive today. When he photographed his wife and sons, the same watchful eye sought comfort in observing, but from a distance. He watched them sleep and read books as the years went by and the photographs are unusually tender and yet unsentimental. When he photographed on his travels in India and abroad, his attention to the banal detail reinforced his profound engagement with photography. He looked for the peculiar, the mundane and configured it with meaning that only a highly attuned mind would.

Richard Bartholomew would have been 82 today, had he been alive. As a remembrance and to mark the occasion of his first major exhibition in India, a book titled, *A Critic's Eye* will be released at the Opening. The exhibition will travel to Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai later in the year.

**Book specifications**

104 pages, 58 tritone plates

21.3 x 17.2 cm

Cloth bound Hardback with Dust jacket

Essay by Aweek Sen & Afterword by Pablo Bartholomew

Published by Chatterjee & Lal, Photoink & Sepia International

Available on [www.photoink.net](http://www.photoink.net)

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Born in Tavoy, Burma (1926), Bartholomew fled his homeland as a teenager during the Japanese occupation. He made India his home in 1942 like many refugees of that time. He finished his schooling and received a Bachelor's (1948) and Master's degree in English (1950) from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He married Rati Batra, a theatre personality and fathered two sons, Pablo and Robin Bartholomew.

His major literary works include articles on Indian and Tibetan art, contemporary Indian art and the Indian experience, as well as poems, monographs, short stories, a co-authored book on M.F. Husain, published in 1971 by Harry Abrams, New York, and a monograph on Krishna Reddy in 1974 by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.

From 1960 to 1963 Bartholomew was the Gallery Director of Kunika Art Centre, the first commercial gallery for contemporary art in New Delhi. Subsequently he worked with the Tibet House, New Delhi, from 1966 to 1973 as their curator where he personally catalogued the Dalai Lama's collection of religious artifacts, traveling with them to the US and Japan. From 1977 to 1985 Bartholomew served as the Secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi, India's prestigious national academy of art. Among his other many honors and achievements are a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in 1970; Commissioner of the Silver Jubilee Indian Independence exhibition held in Washington DC, 1973; a British Council Visitor in 1982; and Commissioner of the Art Exhibition of the Festival of India, held in Britain in 1982.

Richard died in January 1985.