

Metrolife on the move

FINE PHOTOGRAPHY

Dark night rises...



AFTER SUNSET Photographs (above and below) by Dhruv Malhotra from his latest exhibition 'Sleepers'.

The nightworld has always had a charm of its own – the silent air, desolate streets, dim streetlights and barking of dogs puncturing the silence once in a while.

Now imagine a photographer roaming the streets in these graveyard hours shooting all that his camera can in the dark. Presenting, Dhruv Malhotra, a chronic insomniac by his own confession, who went about shooting people sleeping under the open night sky. He is now displaying these photographs in an exhibition titled 'Sleepers'.

Dhruv majored in Economics from Mumbai University in 2006, though he now prefers to pursue his passion – photography, full time. He delivered his first solo exhibition 'Noida Soliloquy' in 2010 which also comprised pictures of night-time in his current place of habitation – Noida. With 'Sleepers', he broke all boundaries and shot across

India.

He says, "Darkness has always held a fascination for me. In the dark, a shroud of ambiguity hangs all around. There is a certain freedom suspended

in shadows which makes everything more alive. I enjoy working at night, slowly and meticulously, with a tripod, long exposures and little or no disturbance. The longer I look

into the darkness, the more my eyes adjust and the more I see. I like the idea of unveiling what is concealed in the darkness."

"In India," he continues,



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DHRUV MALHOTRA

"The night offers unusual, sometimes bizarre images. Full of people to the brink as it is, things tip over. People sleep on the streets, in parks, in fields, on major road junctions, below metro constructions, at building sites, guardhouses and even graveyards. Therefore, they easily became the subject of my night photography, though for me, their surroundings were as much important."

In his quest to capture night-life on the streets, Dhruv has also documented urban landscapes in India. In his shots, people can be seen sleeping at the foot of Dr Ambedkar's statue in Mayawati's park in Noida. The statue itself is covered in blue cloth. Some take shelter at the greens beside the swanky steel sprouts near AIIMS. Others sleep below flyovers, in rickshaws and taxis.

His pictures also bring out the dichotomy of urban India. While some whiz past flyovers in chic cars eager to reach home after sunset, others create makeshift homes under those very flyovers and spend cold, restless nights.

Dhruv says, "When I began shooting for 'Sleepers', I was drifting through life in a daze and without purpose. Photography rescued me from that state of mind. Therefore, for me, the sleeping figure acts as a metaphor for dormant potential, a sleeper drifting through the small hours of night waiting for that magical moment of 'awakening'."

Catch this exhibition at Photoink gallery, Jhandewalan till March 2 from 11 am to 7 pm.

Baishali Adak