Photoessay

Always the night...

DHRUV MALHOTRA

In the photographs of Dhruv Malhotra the night is not the other of the day; but it is present as its own being – robust and real. This being of night is contained in the material landscape of objects and atmospheres. The city photographed by day brings forth many aspects of the city, but night-time photographs do not simply bring to us the city, now by night – they indeed capture the cultures and atmospheres that make these places. These atmospheres unguarded and unselfconscious by night, the photographs capture the temper contained within these material landscapes rather than the performances we call life and society by day.

As the day crystallises (and not move towards or changes to) into the night, an abstract-real emerges; the temper that we call night settles into an existence that mechanically lays bare its vulnerable, obvious and existent self. I walk the night to introduce myself to the city, be able to enter it, if allowed, to touch it and know some more of its deep and scattered landscape. It is the time you can talk of stories that neither you nor the city can really otherwise share.

As cities are being planned, developed and traded over lives and real estate; and as nights are denied an equal existence with the day, the photographs of Malhotra build a new city of their own; adding to cities that Calvino draws up for us. This new city is its own landscape as drawn in the photographs; and like the map in the Borges story, in these photographs the real and the image is one and the same. They are a geography of atmospheres. They are not dark as against the light but they are in their elements; they are not empty because life has left it, but because they are tired and do not want any more crowds. This city in the images wants no attention, no vistas, no view-corridors no map-exactitude but enjoys the dimensionality of space where scale and temper, neglect and narrative are bedfellows. The cacophony of overenthusiastic citizens have thankfully retired for the night, the debris of their hyperactive construction, their constant need and greed for beauty lingers on... as leftovers, but also as forms of a new landscape that is building a new city, and if it had its way they would escape their roles of the day and make their own secret city of the night – night always.

—Kaiwan Mehta

The exhibition *Works from Noida Soliloquy & Sleepers (2007 – 2012)* was on view at Chatterjee & Lal gallery in Mumbai between 22 March and 4 May, 2013 as part of a gallery exchange programme with Photoink

Dhruv Malhotra (1985) grew up in Jaipur. He majored in Economics from Mumbai University in 2006. His work focusses on urban areas and cities at night and engages with issues of progress, modernity and the otherworldly. His photographs have been shown at Photoink, New Delhi, the Hyères Festival, France (2010), the 2010 Brighton Photo Biennial, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco (2011) and The British School at Rome (2012)

From *Noida Soliloquy*
Pigment print
2007-2010
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

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Pigment print
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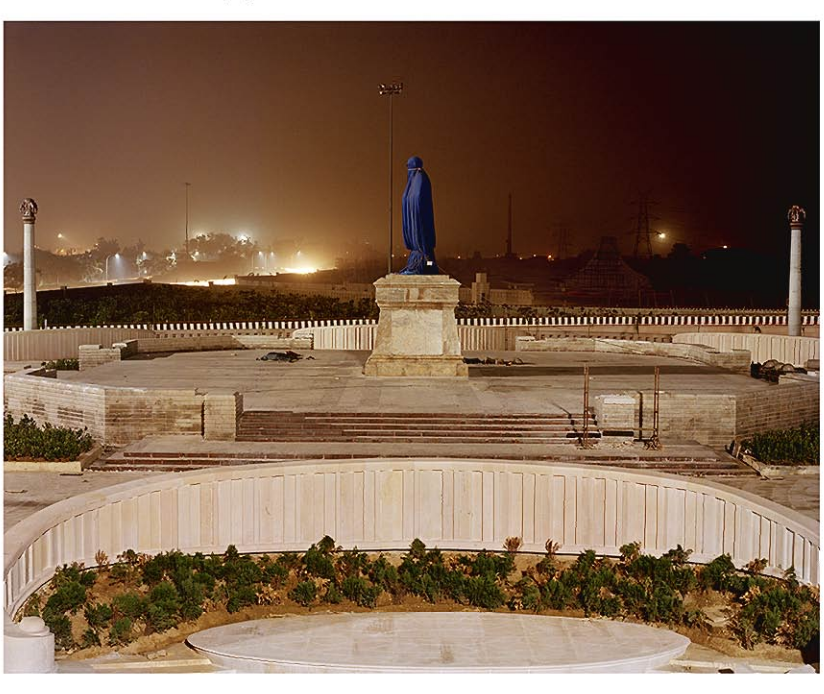
From *Noida Soliloquy*
Pigment print
2007-2010
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
2007-2012
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink



From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
2007-2012
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
2007-2012
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

From *Noida Soliloquy*
Pigment print
2007-2010
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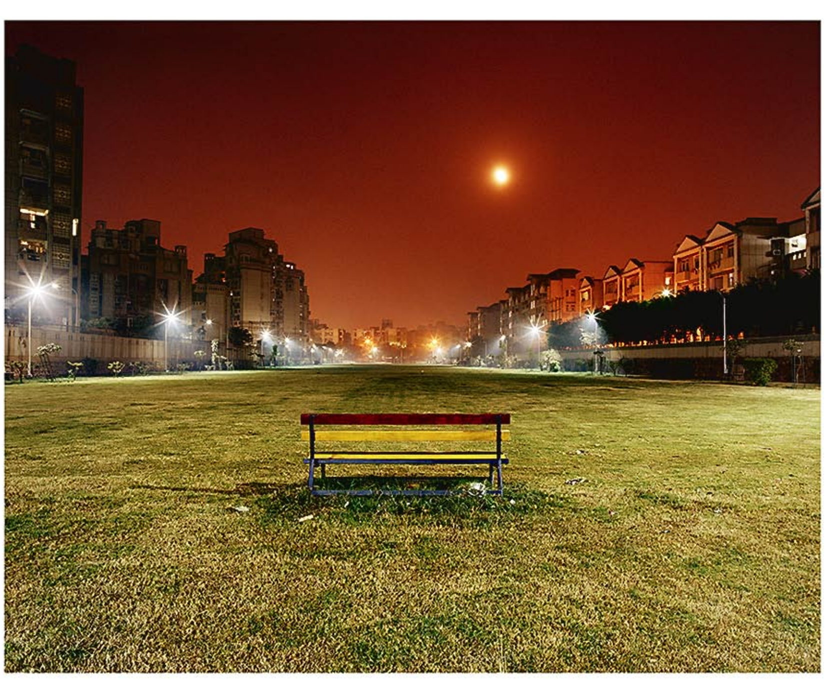
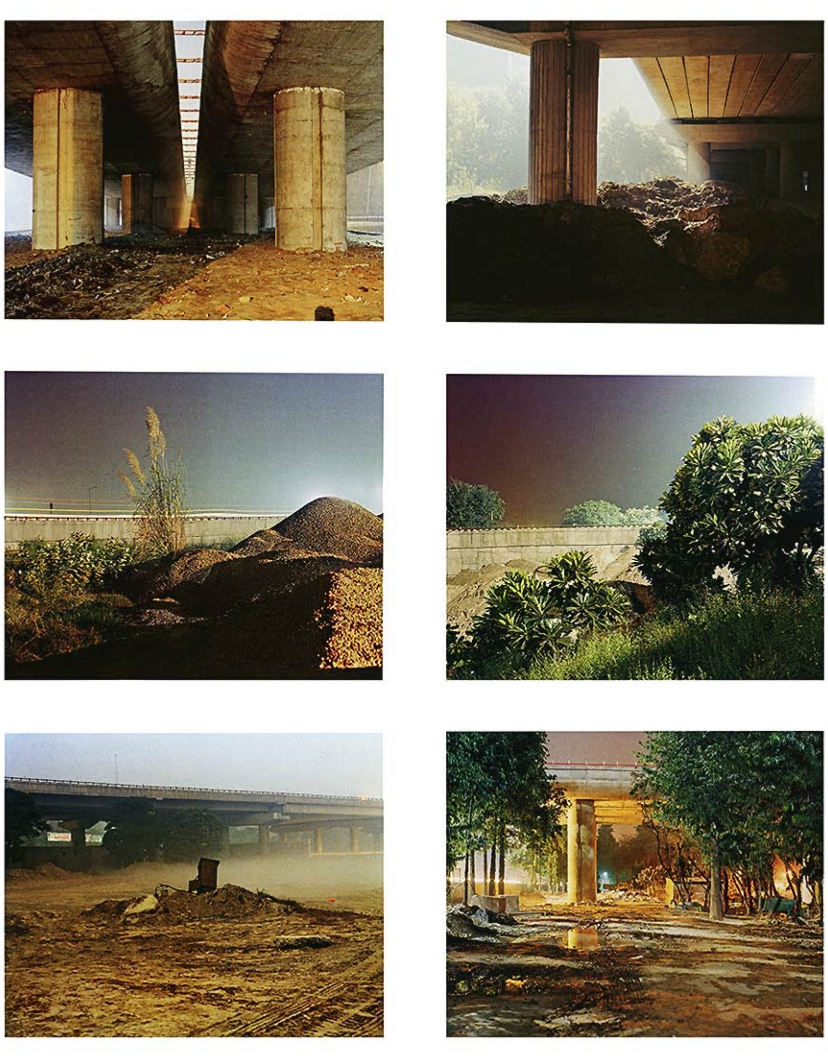
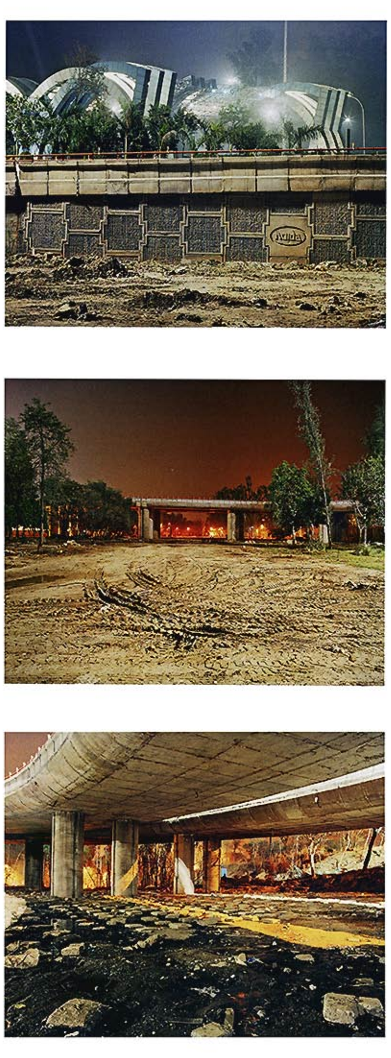


From *Noida Soliloquy*
Pigment print
2007-2010
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink





Below Flyovers
Pigment print (set of nine)
2007-2010
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
2007-2012
Courtesy Dhruv Malhotra/Photoink

From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
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From *Sleepers*
Pigment print
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