



Well-known British photographer Martin Parr at Photoink. Behind him are pictures he shot of Indian birthday cakes.

Exuberant India comes alive in pictures

by **Archana**

When celebrated British photographer Martin Parr describes India as a photogenic country, he is not just stating the obvious; he is underlining the possibilities that have not yet been explored by Indian photographers to document their pictorial land. "Indians continue to see their country as a fantasy land," says Parr at Photoink, the Faiz Road gallery where his maiden show in India gets underway on Sunday.

Perhaps, the view from his camera is organically different from what meets the Indian eye on the streets here. Therefore, he sees what we dismiss as routine. But in doing so, we are perhaps, missing out on capturing the moments of life in India which are changing form and colour with each passing

day, especially since the country embarked on economic liberalisation.

The 'possibilities' become clear when one flips through some of his photography books on display — he has more than 60 to his credit — at the gallery. The most striking works include those where he has documented the social life of his country, with details that are not just beautiful but littered with, litter, as it were, presenting a 'real picture'. "It's not that I'm fascinated with litter. It is part of our lives and so it appears in pictures," says Parr, the 56-year-old Magnum photographer who has attained acclaim for his social, pictorial

documentaries. One of those projects — *The Last Resort* (1986), where he captured the British working class and was accused of being voyeuristic, is being shown at Photoink; the other two are *British Food* (1995) and *Martin Parr in India 1984-2009*. The book on the last item will also be released at the launch of the exhibition.

Right now, it's the changing lifestyles of Indians, thanks to the changing economy, that has caught Parr's attention. Some pictures of this idea are part of the upcoming show but he says, a lot more is waiting to be captured. Perhaps, Indians could take a plunge in this reservoir.

— Martin Parr's show is on at Photoink, 1, Faiz Road, from February 21 to March 27; 11 am - 7 pm