

Newspaper's Name	The New Indian Express
Date	22.03.11
Description	When photographs speak the language of art

# When photographs speak the language of art

## Two international expos of photographic art in Delhi are attracting steady streams of viewers

New Delhi, March 21

GROWING awareness of art as a reflection of surrounding realities, wider markets and a new segment of collectors have brought photography back to the centre-stage of contemporary art.

Two international exhibitions of photographic art in the national capital, at the Religare Art in Connaught Place and in the National Gallery of Modern Art, are attracting steady streams of viewers for their depiction of American and British contemporary realities.

Noted American photographer Todd Hido, who was in India last week to address a gathering at the opening of a showcase, 'American Psyche: 10 Contemporary American Photographers' at Religare Arts, on the evolution of photography in the US, said one of the reasons why photography as an art was making inroads into the collectors' market was its easy association.

"People find it easy to relate to photographs. They are kind of real and affordable. Photographs are now collectibles of the wealthy too," Hido said.

His photographs grace the collection of British pop musician Elton John and are in

permanent collections in several museums across the US.

Hido photographs houses at night and common people in the American suburban environment. "I drive around a lot and something calls out to be photographed," Hido said.

American photographer Paul Shabroom, a member of the "American Psyche" team, makes high art out of the functioning of American democracy.

The photographer, who captures city council meetings of residents in smaller provincial cities across the US, documents the mood of the electorate, the variety of nationalities and issues that constitute everyday life in the US.

Shabroom said he "spends hours at the usually dreary council meetings to capture right moments and the right expressions". The end result is an artistic document of American reality.

Lensman Mark Steinmetz chronicles the psyche of the common people across the American towns of Tennessee, Georgia, Ohio and Connecticut with his camera.

His black and white portraits on display define the 21st century American expressions that vary between

boredom, surprise, resignation and hope.

binging, pique, grief, For award-winning photographer Susan Felter, the cowboys of her youth - who peopled the rodeos in the city she grew up - represent "Hollywood myths".

"The young sexy cowboys are extraordinary and ordinary at the same time. They are a culture beyond my own," Felter said of her Cowboy series at the American Psyche showcase.

Tracing the history of photography in the US and in the west in general, American curator Janet Delaney said: "When the first photographs were shot in the US in the 1840s, they were a tool to record landscapes."

"Government offices in Washington DC commissioned large-format landscape portraits. But nearly 170 years later, photography is a high-technology art with the intentionality of abstraction," Delaney said.

She said this principle of photographic evolution - from a document to a work of art - was similar almost the wordover.

The exhibition, 'Something That I'll Never Really See', was inaugurated by Culture Minister Kumanan Seja March

10» IANS