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Description	Narmada's loss is the city's gain



Mukesh Panika, head, Religare arts initiative, with gallery director Gulrukh

By Kritika Banerjee

**I**T IS a world, where your last name is often, your only claim to fame, and Tuesday evening proved to be no different. The Religare arts gallery, witnessed a

huzzah on the opening of the photography exhibition *Flowed Objects, Lost Planet*, even though the names of the artists were deliberately, and rather tirelessly, kept under wraps.

But that was not to be, and the cat was let out of the bag much before the exhibition actually went underway. Art connoisseurs turned up in full force to view the latest photographs of Sanjay Bhattacharyya and Pankaj Agrawal. And as the curator of the exhibition, Aman Nath, who also serves as the co-chairman of Neema Hotels, said, "One is a photographer more than a painter, the other a painter more than a photographer."

Bhattacharyya proved to be the surprise package of the day, having made a seamless transition from painting to photography in a relatively early age. He, who is his diddler for the past two years, and who is a

passion as an "obsession", but is quick to add that, "they were fun." The painter had never really thought of mounting an exhibition till he realised that he had shot close to 200 prints. "I shot whatever I found interesting while walking on the road," he said.

His photographs transcend the boundaries of form and texture, and in the artist's own words play around with "brown, black and grey". A rust-eaten lock hanging on an equally rusted latch, his pictures capture the essence of a city, which has lost itself to commercial intrusions.

Sharing space with Bhattacharyya, are the pictures of Indore-based photographer Pankaj Agrawal. Shot around May 2007, Agrawal's photographs are a visual documentation of the new-submerged sites of the Narmada Dam project. Juxtaposing opposites such as the stationary and the moving, outside with inside.

Agrawal's pictures dwell on nature in its pristine form. His pictures form a wonderful contrast to the in-your-face commentary on the cityscape by Bhattacharyya.

A painter turns lensman and a lensman has painterly visions

# NARMADA'S LOSS IS THE CITY'S GAIN



Sanjay Bhattacharyya has taken a break from painting to train his sights on the lost objects that come up on Narmada's shores

Agrawal's pictures have almost a calming effect on the observer. Be it the ripples on the water or the water cutting through the rocks, the pictures look nearly ethereal. "I have worked with various elements in nature, but water remains closest to my heart," he said.

For the curator, the objects lost in the submergence of the dam site in Agrawal's pictures, find a new interpreta-

tion in Bhattacharyya's works. It took Nath, close to four months to put together the pictures of the two photographers.

But what was the big idea behind keeping the identities of the artists undisclosed? Nath said he did not want people to come with pre-conceived notions. The photographs are left undisturbed, in a bid to encourage observers to lend their own interpretation to them.

Kritika.Banerjee@  
mailtoday.in



Kapil Sibal (left) with Malvinder Mohan Singh, group chairman, Religare & Fortis Healthcare

The exhibition curator and heritage hotelier Aman Nath with fashion designer Ritu Kumar