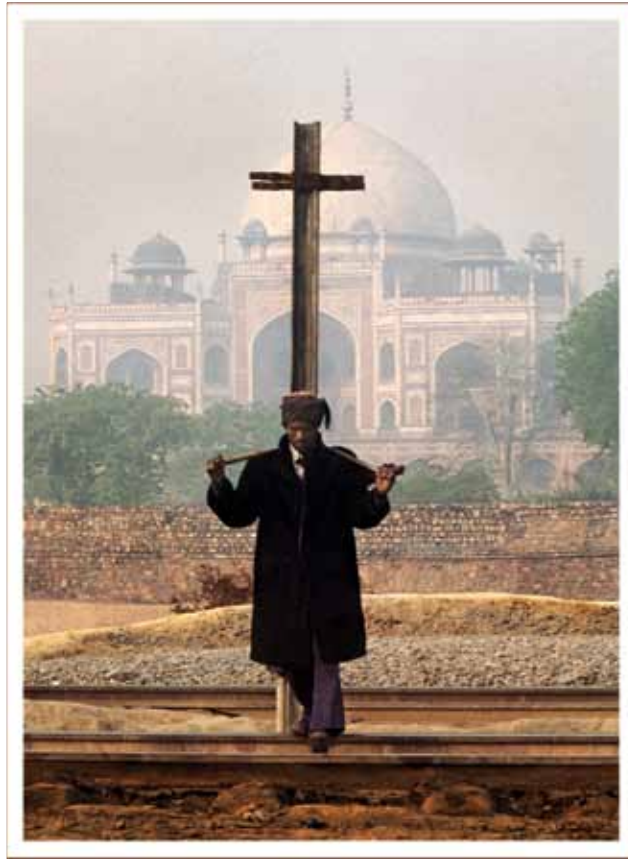


FROM RAGHU RAI'S ARCHIVES



INDIA IMAGES

*DELHI ... THAT WAS*

OJAS  
A R T

INDIA IMAGES  
DELHI ... THAT WAS

RARE AND UNSEEN PHOTOGRAPHS ...

...FROM RAGHU RAI'S ARCHIVES

OJAS  
ART

*Garche hai mulq-e-daccan  
mei in dino qadr-e-suxan,  
Kaun Jaye 'Zauq' par  
dilli ki galiyaan chhod kar*

Sheikh Muhammad Ibrahim Zauq (1789-1854)

Originally in Urdu by the famous poet Zauq, the above couplet may be transliterated as, “..the seat of power may now rest in the Deccan (Southern India) along with all worldly comforts. But, still who would want to leave the streets of Delhi?”

Written almost two hundred years ago, these lines still hold true and embody what Delhi means to a true Delhiwallah. For a Delhiwallah there is no other place, which can even come close. Period. It's often said that Delhi takes a lot to get used to and is not the most accepting city in the world. The babudom, loudness, boisterousness and laid-back attitude may not be the easiest to adjust to, but even all this does not take away from the charm and charisma of the city.

To cherish and enjoy all aspects of Delhi equally, that is, its grandeur, history, arts, culture (and shortcomings) makes one a true Delhiwallah. Raghu Rai is one such Delhiwallah. His long-standing affair with

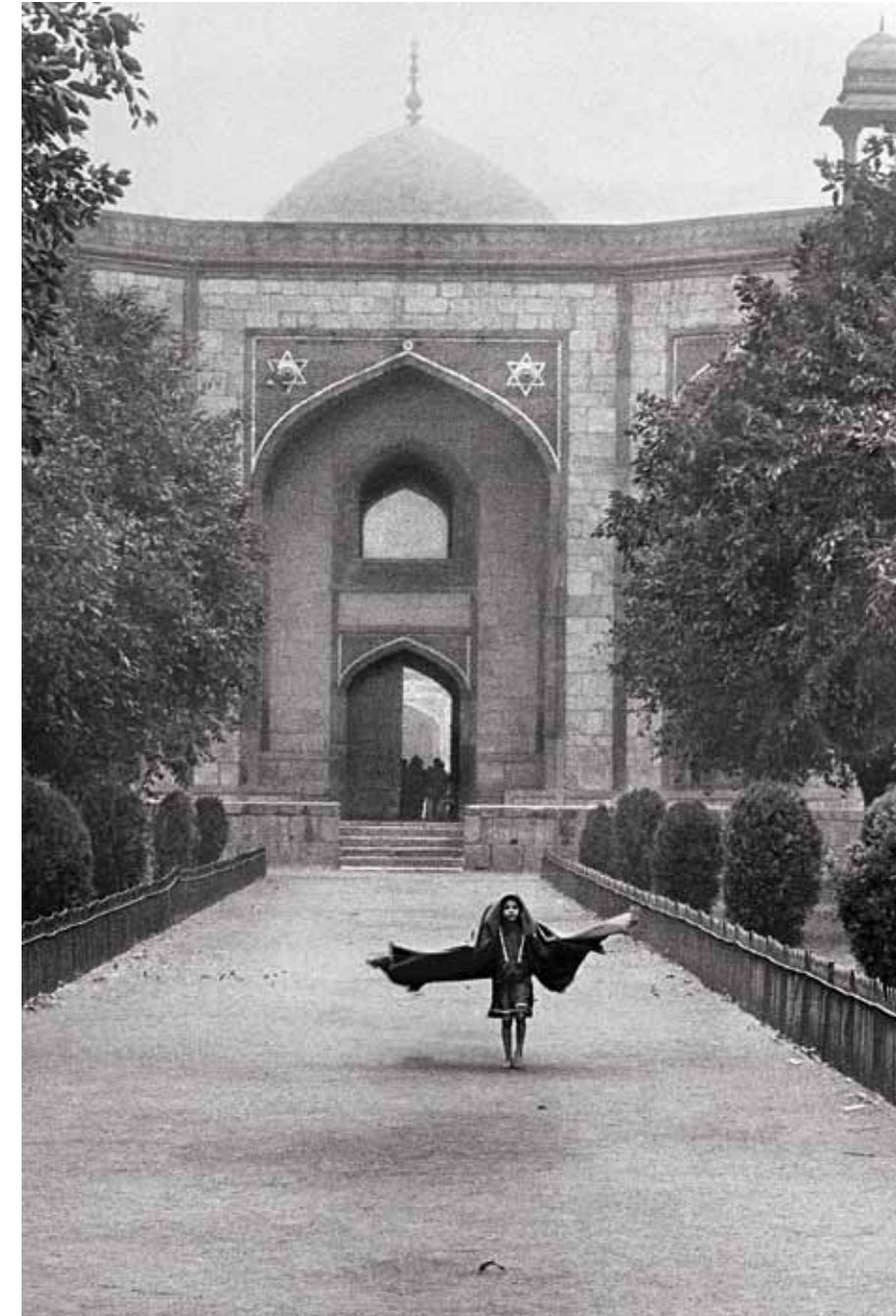
photographing Delhi is testimony of his love for Delhi. The images span his photographic journey of more than four decades. The earliest image is from 1966, which is also approximately the same time he started photographing Delhi.

Majority of the images belong to the 1960s and 70s, when Delhi looked different, felt different and lived differently. The flyovers and skyscrapers were yet to come, which altered the view of many monuments forever. Delhi was also less populated and less congested.

The breathtaking stills capture the grain of Delhi, the very DNA, which defines Delhi. The selection includes Rai's trademark black and white images and some coloured images as well. The images capture different moods and moments of Delhi; from an early morning Yamuna view, to Jantar Mantar in the afternoon to the majestic stance of Humanyun's tomb.

Personally, with over three hundred years of family history in Delhi, I am the quintessential Delhiwallah, and no other city even comes close to Delhi. The only place that may be better than Delhi as it exists today is the city as it existed in the past, the Delhi...that was.

Anubhav Nath  
Curatorial Director, Ojas Art



Breezy girl, Humayun's tomb, 1973



## DELHI ... THAT WAS

I came to Delhi in the early 1960s. I had spent my childhood and completed my education in Punjab and was now ready to 'spread my wings' in the big city. However, I had no idea that I was going to become a photographer. I came to stay with my elder brother Paul, who was passionate about photography and, indeed, about everything in life. Paul's friends were all photographers. It was like an obsession because they virtually ate, drank, talked and did only photography!

The first time I picked up a camera was just by the way. My early pictures got published in The London Times. and were also accepted for international photography exhibitions. This was a big 'kick' for me and encouraged me to take up photography seriously. But, above all, what fascinated me about the camera was that each time I viewed the world through the lens, I felt all my energies, my concentration were focused on what I was seeing. Through this instrument, I found I could take a closer look at the world around me. It was a heady experience: this ability to see something through the viewfinder and simultaneously capturing it on film, made the intangible become almost tangible!

It was the year 1966. I was already 25, after a few months of photography, I made a scrapbook of my pictures and, it got me a job with the Hindustan Times. it was a beginning of a

fascinating journey and so started my life-long affair, coming from small town in Punjab, Delhi was a large enough world for me to go on with a steady camera in my hand.

When I got a better grip on my photography, I started seeing slightly more than the usual, and wanted my frame to expand as Delhi was becoming a horizontal experience for me. So, the city was growing on me. I thought that the whole world was in my hands and yet as slippery and elusive as ever changing equations of life. Curiously, I wasn't aiming to be famous, and make a lot of money, but as my passion for photography developed, everything else with it grew, click by click!

Since I was based in Delhi, on my lean days, I started visiting the heritage sites and monuments. These sites frequented by many tourists, it was suddenly too much to take. So, I would usually walk away, going to the less visited spaces around the monument to see what was going on there. This usually gave me a different sort of canvas.

I photographed the wheat fields behind Humayun's Tomb, where the villagers tilled the land till late 60s. This scenario does not exist any longer. Also, unconsciously, the thought that one can see pictures of these monuments everywhere, on postcards and calendars, so where was I going to be different?, I walked



Wheat thrashing, Humayun's tomb, 1966

the streets of Old Delhi and Jama Masjid, I discovered that life was so intense and ever-changing. It was quite a challenge to grab something meaningful. But it had to be now or never.

So this was basically a self-assigned job, a split-second interaction with my subjects. Often, when I came back in the evenings restless as I was, I would rush to my dark room to process my films, see the results instantaneously. This gave me, a kind of fulfilment as if I had become an explorer. Passion and money that I was spending on photography was to lead me further on my journey of exploration, and Delhi The capital city was ever, growing world for me. In the process, I realized two things: one, that human beings are such an important part of any urban or rural landscape that photographing just a monument without the people becomes meaningless and two, that the world's most beautiful temple, church or mosque if bereft of human energy, would be just a building . No gods would appear in these edifices. Perhaps, I too was one of the seekers!

With the camera in my hand I had many revelations- that moment of connectivity when mind, body and soul know that something momentous has happened. I believe that the world's greatest philosophies are born in

retrospect long after the moment of revelation and realization, a moment that you have grabbed- has enriched you to the core. Later, this becomes a manifestation of that intense charge and recharge that you have experienced. Living in the Capital city of a country- a nation so diverse, so varied and vibrant, some called it a city of Babus and bureaucrats, political power, Art and culture, National sports- a hub of everything worth living for.

For over 35 years shooting on black and white or colour films, it was extremely difficult to look at every image conceived and captured, because making prints was expensive and time-consuming. But now, thanks to digital technology, and my Coolscan 9000, I started scanning my black and white and colour transparencies, I had shot for so many years of my affair with Delhi.

Today, when I look back at some of the pictures that I took 30-40 years ago, what emerges is a Delhi that does not exist anymore, or has changed so drastically, that these images stand as a testimony of photo-history that cannot be rewritten.

Rishi



Tilling land, Palam airport, 1970





Shifting sand and Dhobis, 1976



Junk-yard, Old Delhi, 1979





Wrestlers in Akhara, 1979



On a monsoon day, Jama Masjid, 1975



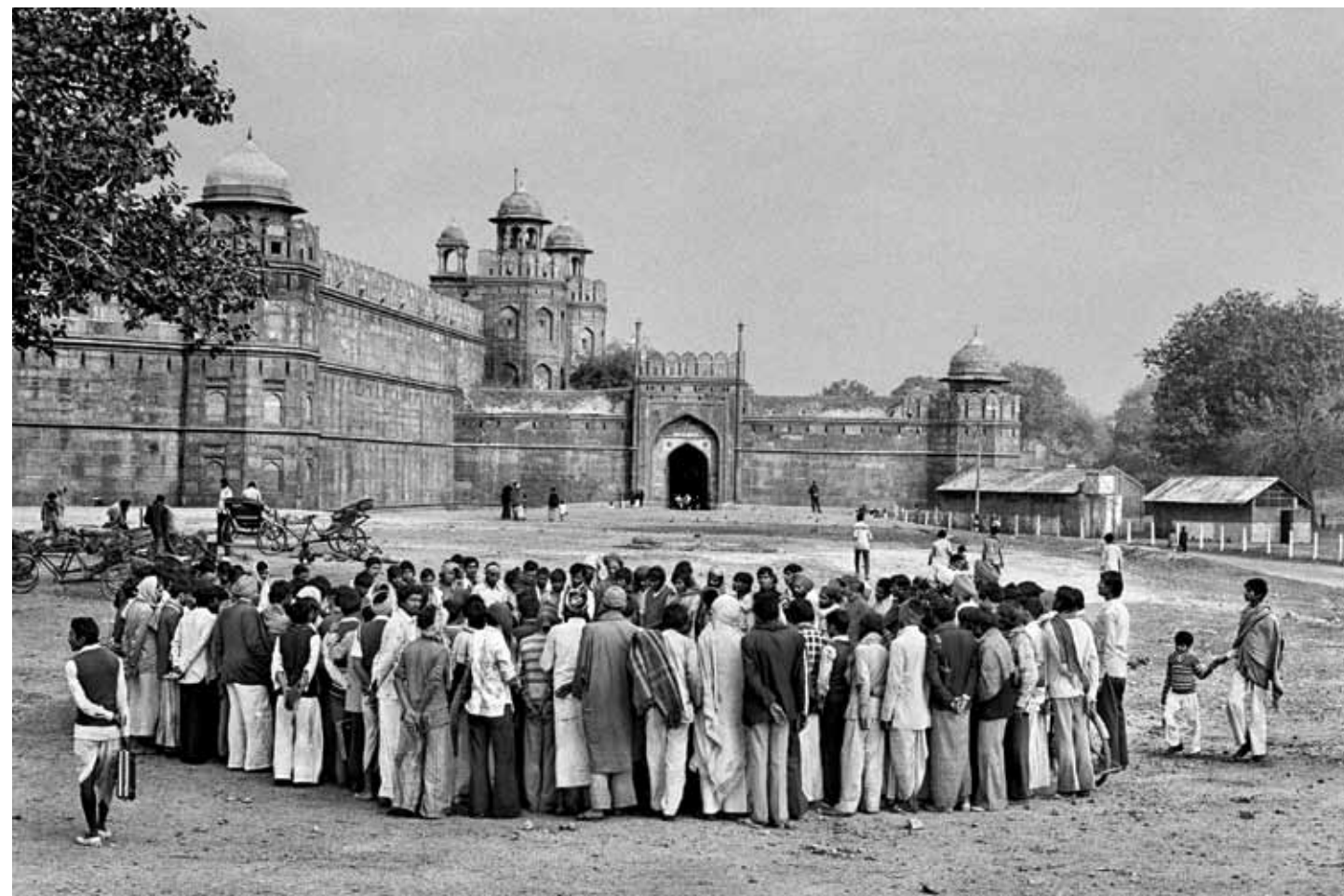


Dust storm, Red Fort, 1986





Wedding band rehearsing, Red Fort, 1966



Out-side Red Fort, 1970





Horse and wheels, Old Delhi, 1968



Near Palam airport, 1985





Light and shade at Mehrauli Dargah, 1979



Jama Masjid, 1979





Visitors at Safdarjung tomb, 1967



Visitors at Birla Mandir, 1976





At Bakhtiar Kaki Dargah, Mehrauli, 1990



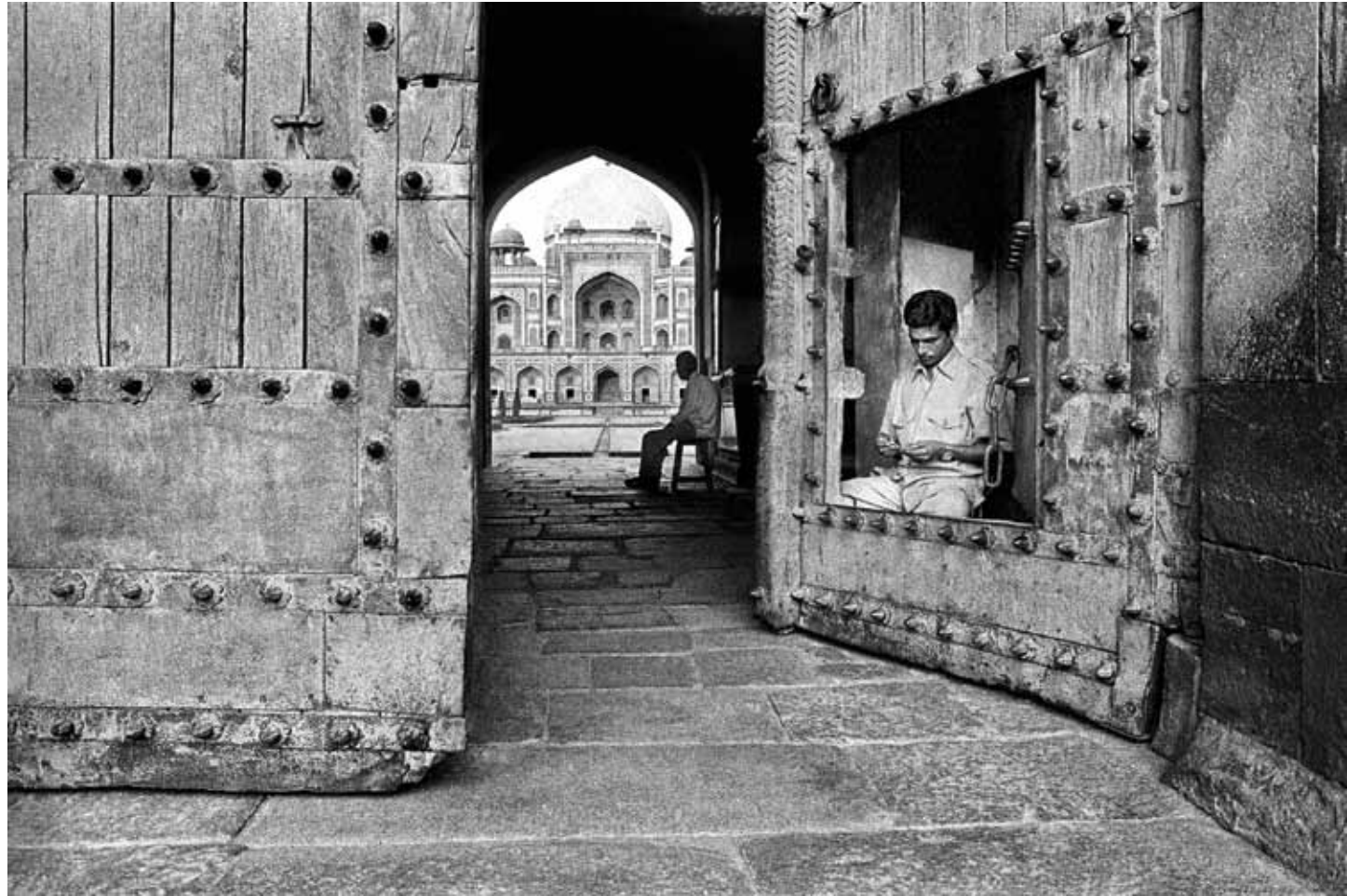
Market day behind Red Fort, 1988





Road-side studio, old Delhi, 1972





Main gate, Humayun's tomb, 1966



Humayun's tomb, 1966

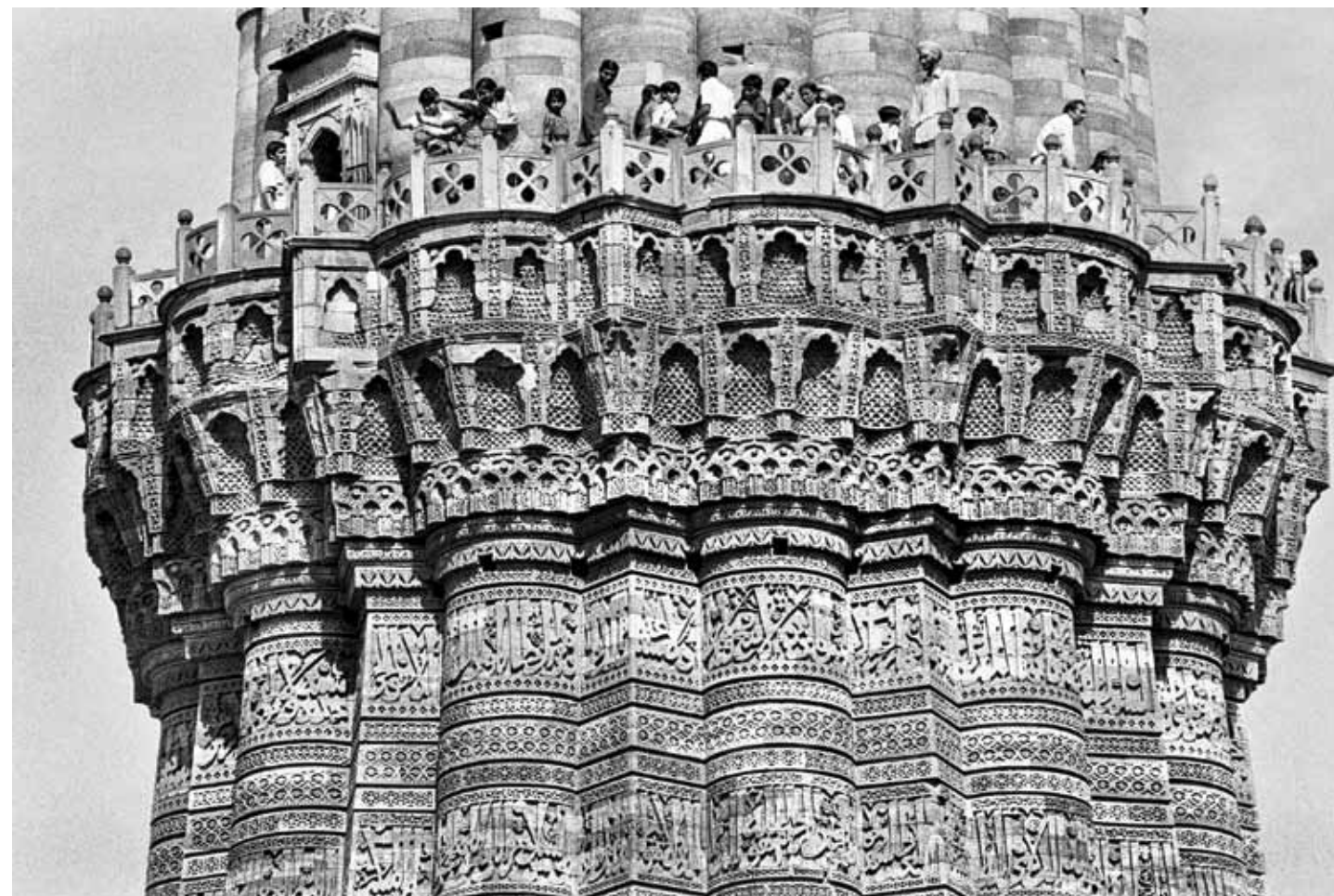


Safdarjung tomb, 1967



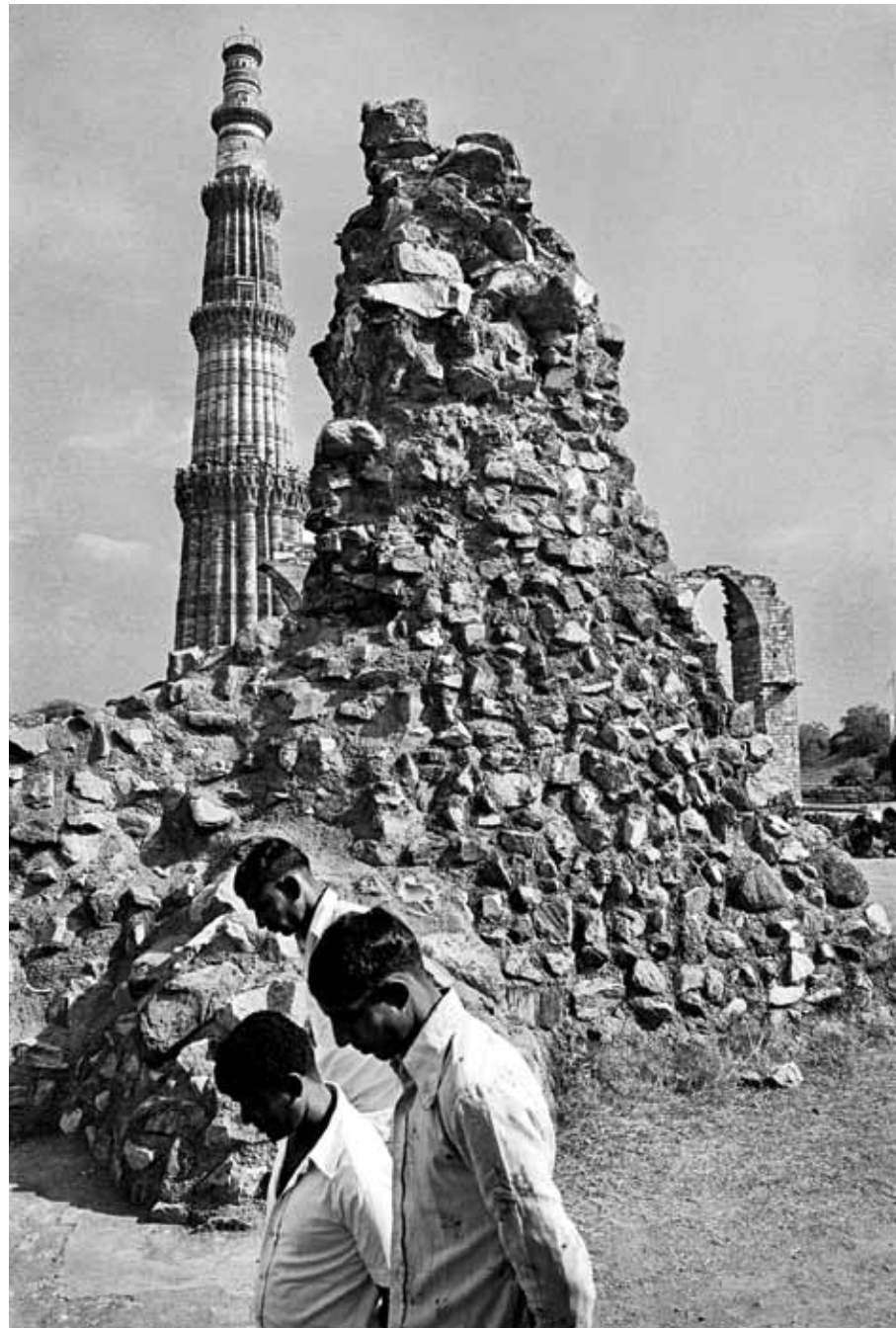


Iron pillar at Qutub Minar, 1973

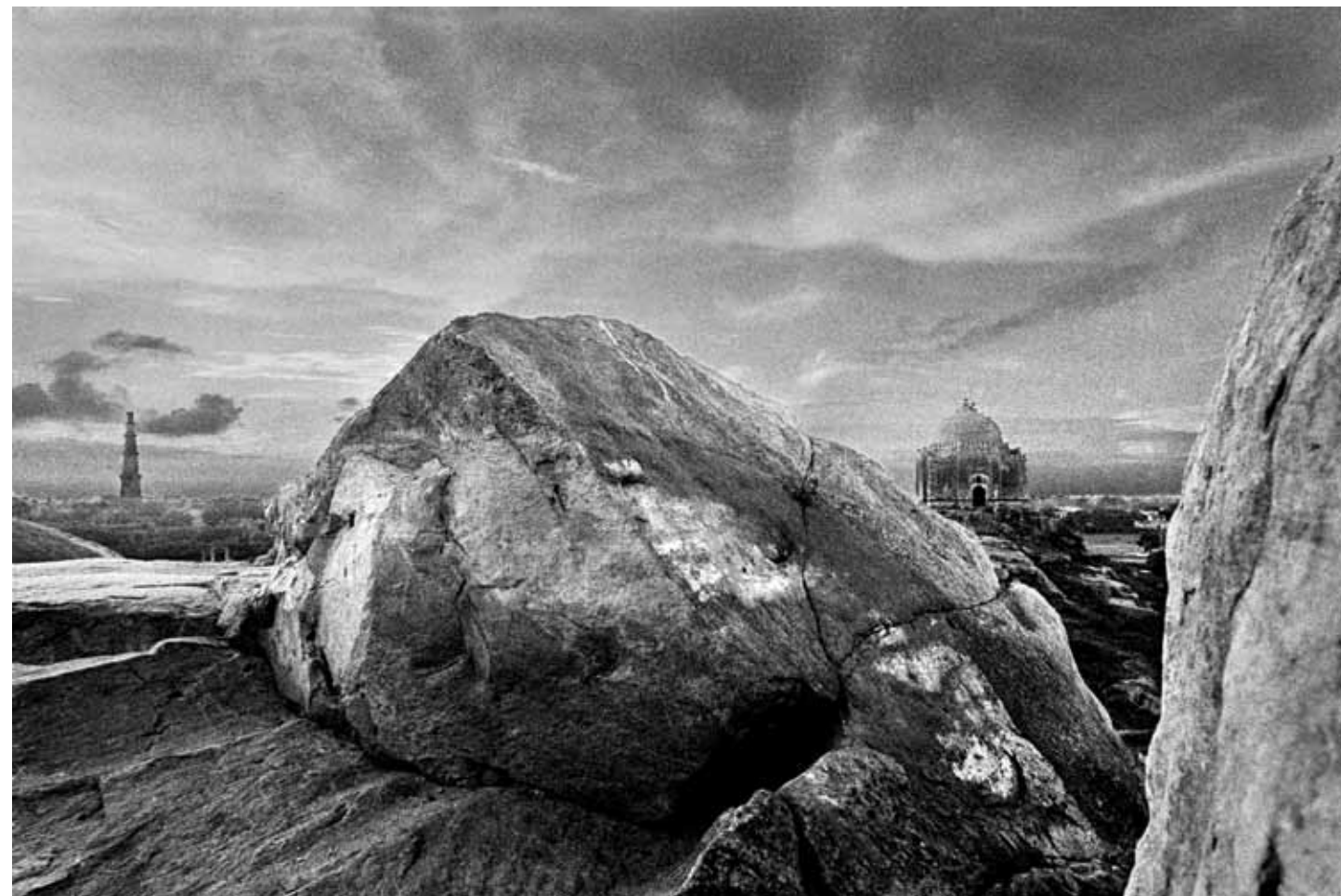


Visitors at Qutub Minar, 1973





At Qutub Minar, 1972



Rocks near Qutub Minar, 1990





Feeding the seagulls, 1989



At a cycle stand, 1982



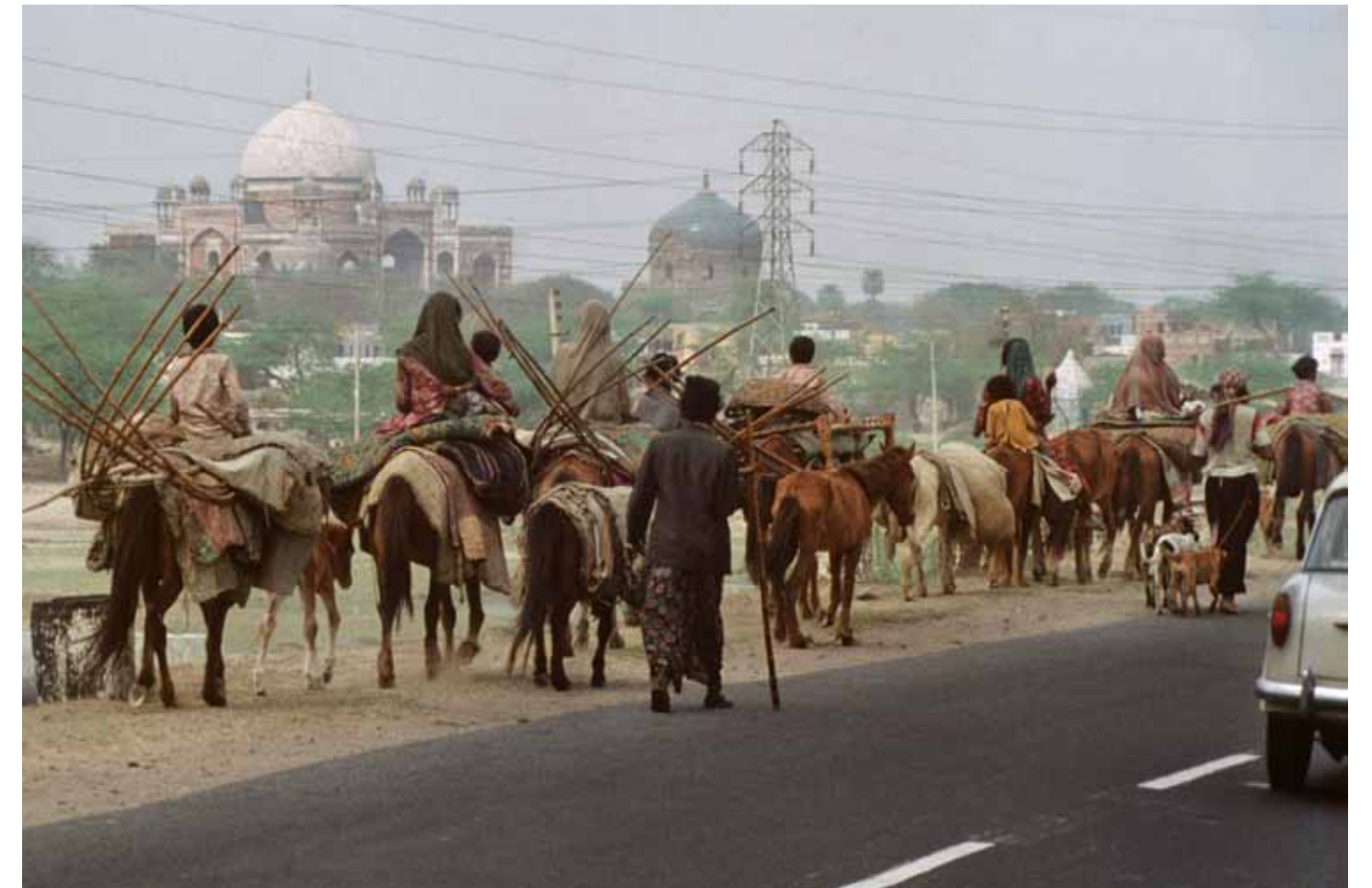


Republic day rehearsal, 1996

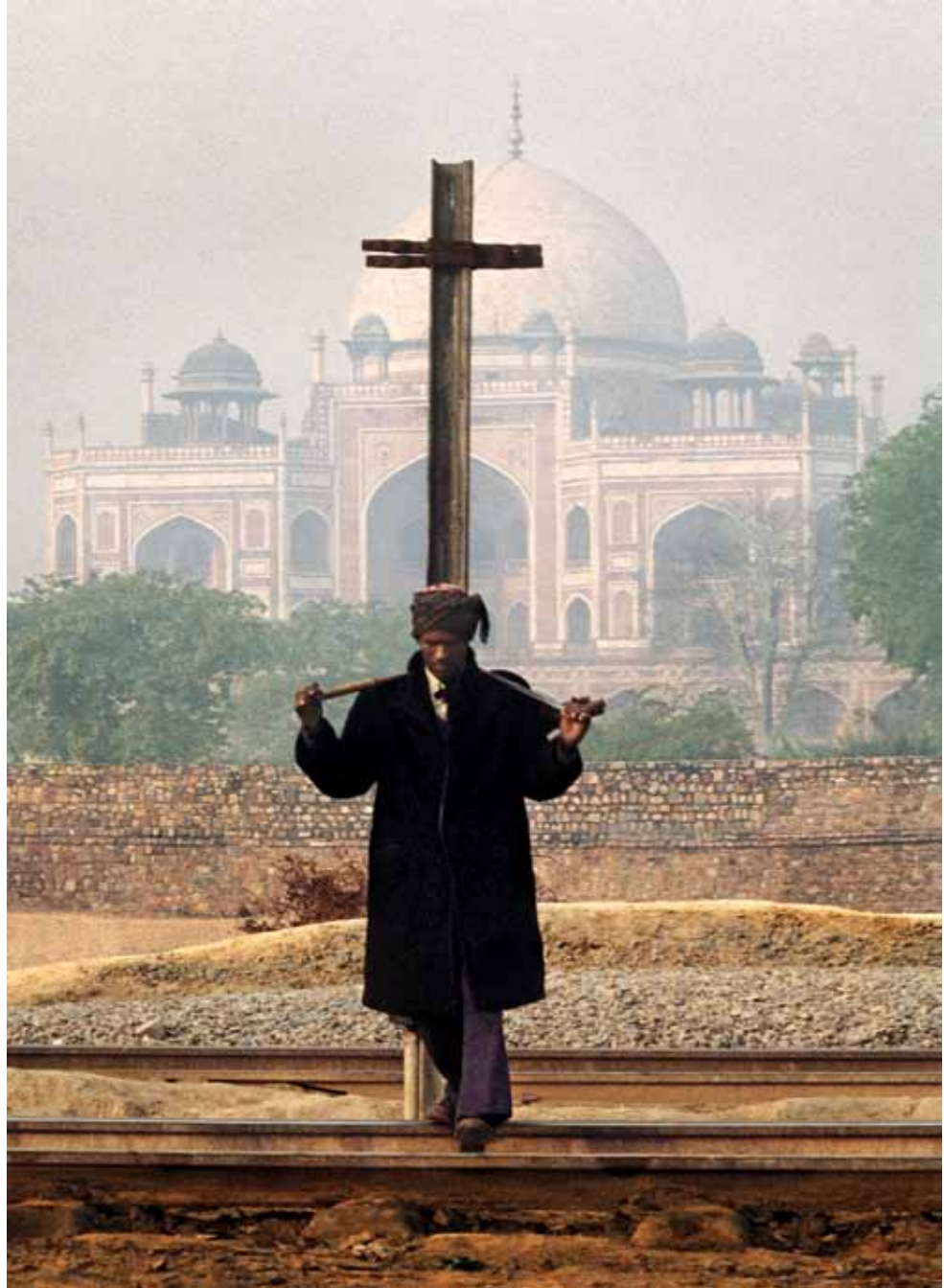


Presidential procession, Rajpath, 1972





Nomads on the move, Humayun's tomb, 1980



Crossing railway track, opposite Humayun's tomb, 1968



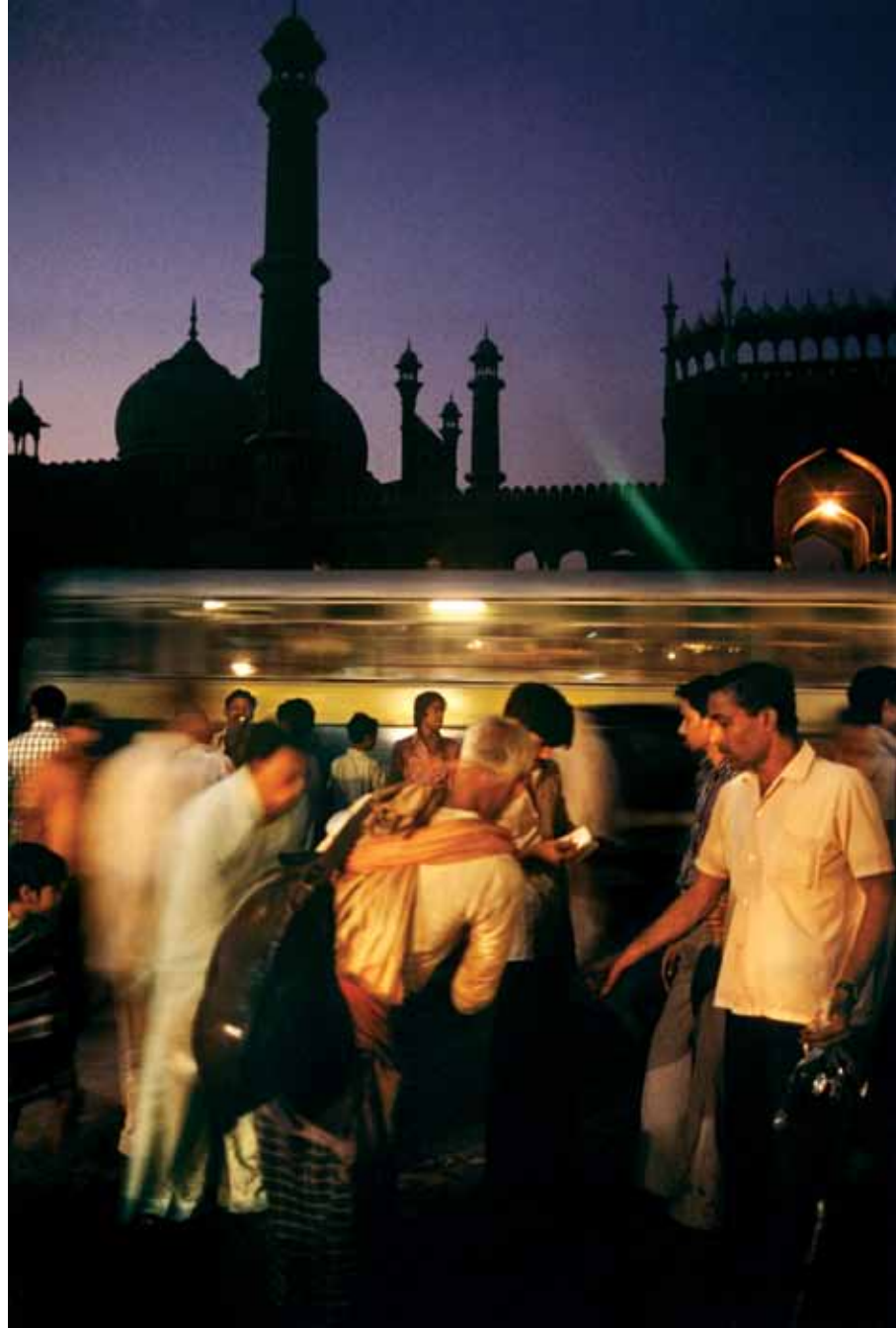
On a winter morning, Red Fort, 1982



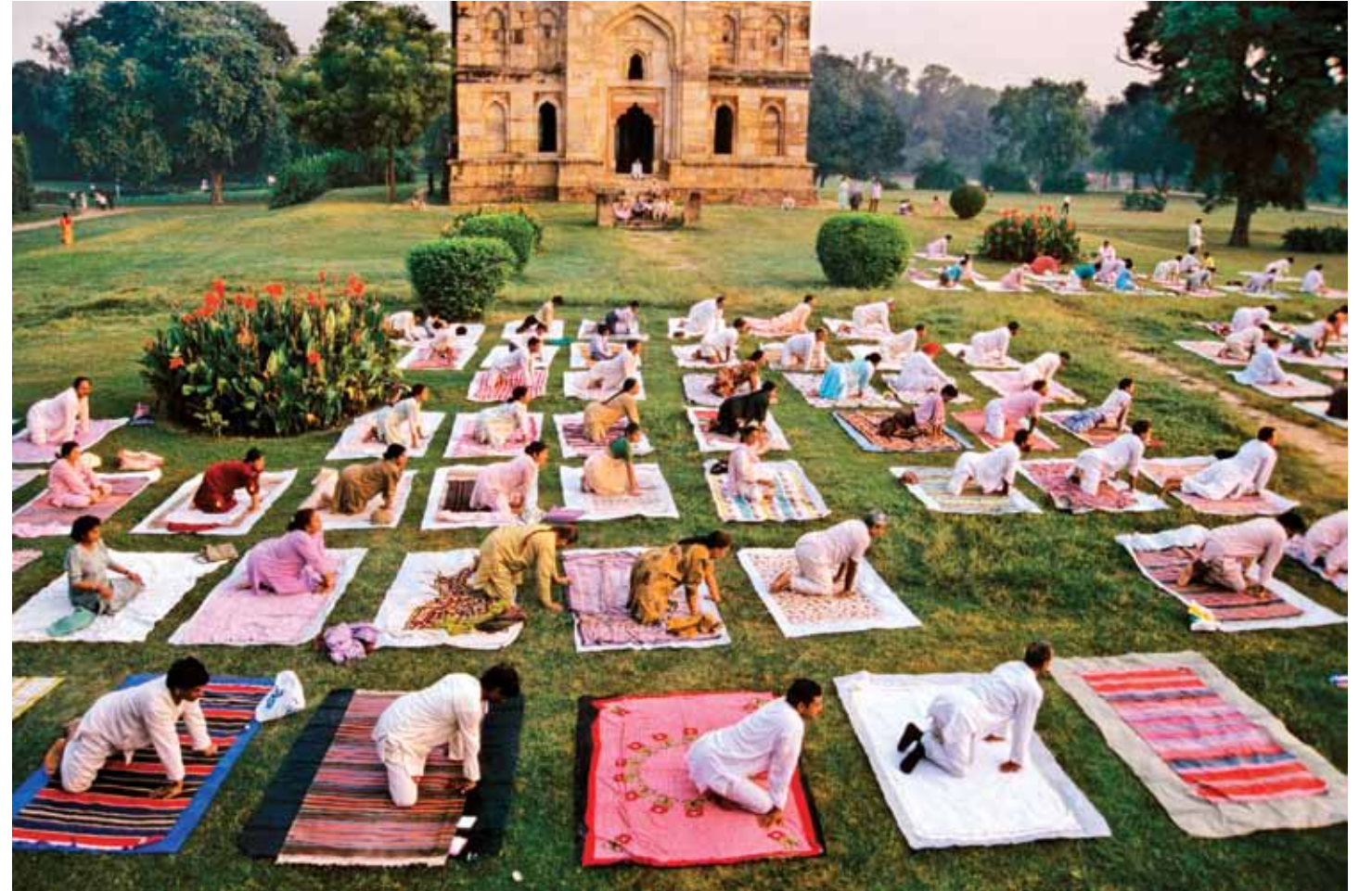


Installing Lord Mahavir, 1990





Out-side Jama Masjid, 1975



Yoga at Lodi Garden, 1988





Sunday market behind Red Fort, 1989



New construction site, South Delhi, 1991



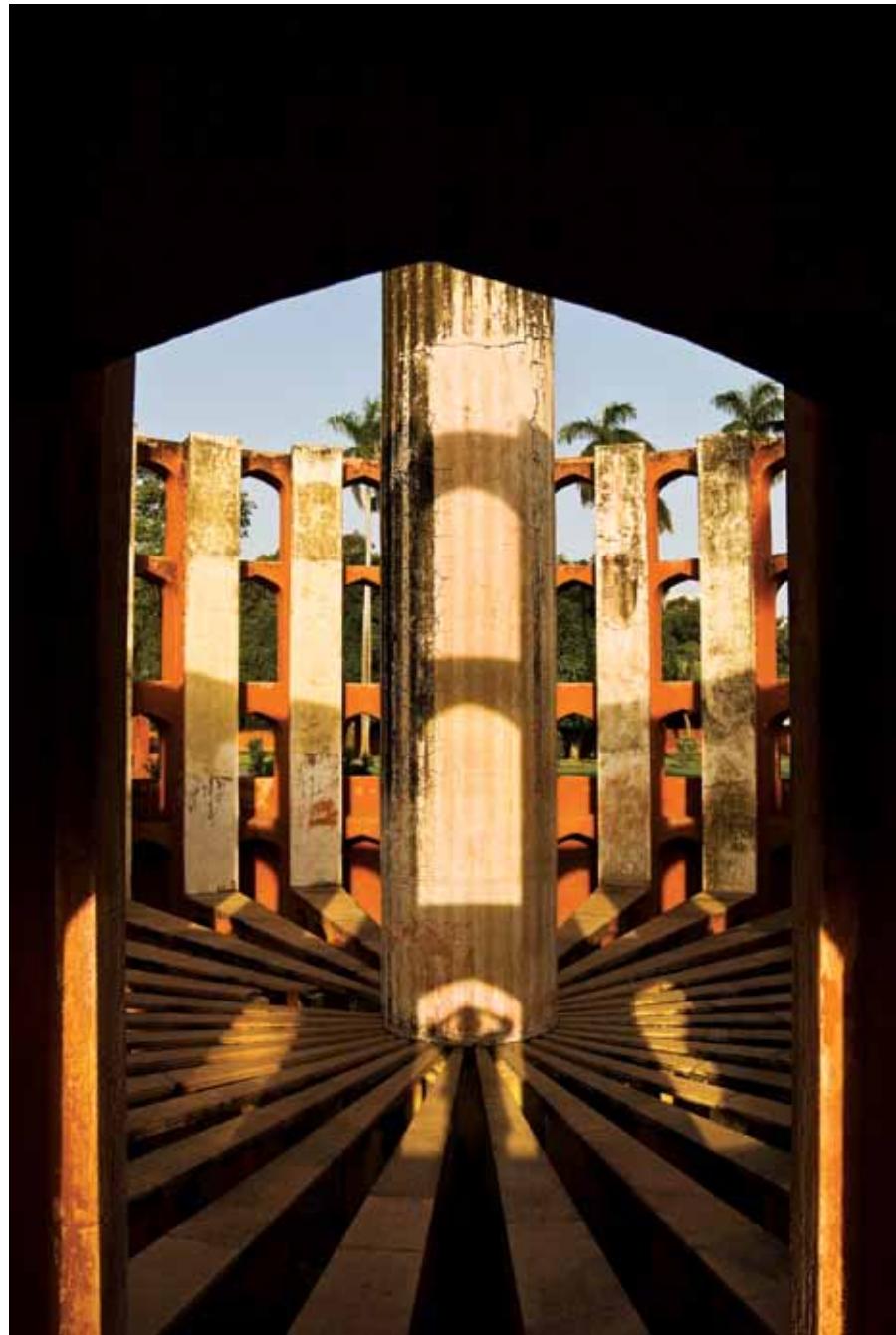


Chefs at Oberoi terrace, 1989



Celebrating Bapu's birthday, 30 January Marg, 1982





Self portrait, Jantar Mantar, 2005



A view of the central vista from Rashtrapati Bhawan, 1990





Seagulls at Jamuna, 1989



'DELHI...THAT WAS'  
Edition of 51 prints each

All images in this exhibition are printed on Photo Rag Pearl  
Museum quality paper which is 100% cotton rag, acid free for true archival properties.

This is in combination with pigment inks.  
The size of images is 22" x 14.6" and panoramic images are 18" x 40"

Printed at Raghu Rai's Studio, New Delhi

This Catalogue  
published in India in 2012

For  
OJAS ART  
1 AQ, Qutub Minar Roundabout  
New Delhi 110030  
art@ojasart.com : +91 11 26644145

Edited and Designed: Raghu Rai  
Copyright Photos & Text © 2012 Raghu Rai  
Copyright Essay Text © 2012 Anubhav Nath  
Technical Support: Amit Chauhan

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means,  
without prior written permission.

© OJAS ART 2012

ISBN : 978-81-908019-1-1

Supported by : Ramchander Nath Foundation