

PRESS RELEASE

A Painter with a Camera: Jyoti Bhatt

January 8 – February 21, 2026
Subcontinent, Mumbai

Subcontinent presents ***A Painter with a Camera: Jyoti Bhatt***, an exhibition bringing together a rare selection of **black-and-white silver gelatin** works by Jyoti Bhatt, one of India's most influential artists. Opening its doors on Mumbai Gallery Weekend 2026, the exhibition foregrounds photography as a central and experimental dimension of Bhatt's practice. The exhibition title pays homage to *Painters with a Camera* (1968-69), a landmark group exhibition of seven artists including Jyoti Bhatt held at Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay, which boldly asserted photography's credibility as an artistic medium at a time when it was largely excluded from institutional spaces.

"While Bhatt has long been championed for his contributions to ethnographic photography, his experimental photographic practice is yet to receive the sustained critical attention it deserves," says **Dhwani Gudka**, co-founder of Subcontinent.

A key figure in the Baroda art movement, Bhatt's practice has always moved fluidly between painting, printmaking, photography and pedagogy. Bhatt approaches photography as a painter would: a surface to be revised, questioned and returned to again and again. Long before digital manipulation reshaped the medium, he was already bending photographic convention through analogue means. Each image bears the trace of time spent thinking with the photograph rather than merely looking through it.

Speaking to the gallerists about his practise, Bhatt, says,

"My camera recorded the images around me as my eyes saw them. Manipulation of photographic images, inside or outside my darkroom, shaped what was seen into what was felt." - JYOTI BHATT

Created between the 1960s through 1980s, the works on view encompass photographs fractured through the use of mirrors, lenses and multiple exposure, alongside darkroom interventions such as over-printing, masking using stencils, pushing contrast, cropping and enlarging. These are accompanied by images made using collage and hand painting.

One of Bhatt's most iconic motifs of the *Face*, a high contrast image of a peacock seen through the silhouette of a human head, was created in the dark room using these techniques.

“At Subcontinent, Keshav and I are championing the audaciousness of his practice, foregrounding photography as a sustained site of experimentation, invention and return. Rather than functioning as documentation, these works reveal the camera as a thinking tool, capable of revision and transformation.” - Dhvani Gudka, Subcontinent

The exhibition offers a rare opportunity for audiences in Mumbai to encounter Jyoti Bhatt's photographs as silver gelatin prints. Each image has been meticulously printed in the dark room using analogue processes employed by the artist, ensuring fidelity to his technical and aesthetic intent. Commenting on the genius of Jyoti Bhatt, Keshav Mahendru, co-founder of Subcontinent, adds,

“What continues to astonish me is just how far ahead of his time he was. In many ways, he has pioneered the medium for younger generations of artists in the country.

We were fortunate to meet him several times recently at his home in Vadodara. Even in his 90s, he remains deeply engaged and hearing his reflections on his decades-long photographic practice was an extraordinary experience.” - Keshav Mahendru, Subcontinent

Bhatt's work as a painter, printmaker, and photographer has been exhibited extensively across the country. In 2007, DAG presented *Jyoti Bhatt: Parallels that Meet: Paintings, Prints, Photographs* and in 2022, the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), Bengaluru, hosted the first museum retrospective of his photographic practice, *Time & Time Again: Jyoti Bhatt*.

Bhatt's work is held in major public collections domestically and internationally, including the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), Bengaluru.

The exhibition opens on 8 January and continues until 21 February 2026 at Subcontinent, Mumbai.

About the artist: Jyoti Bhatt

Born in 1934 in Gujarat, Jyoti Bhatt is one of the foremost contemporary artists of India. A painter, printmaker, photographer and educator from M S University, Baroda, Bhatt has been instrumental in shaping the South Asian art discourse from the early 50s. In 1956, he forefronted the Baroda Group of Artists and In 1959, he joined his alma mater as a lecturer in the Faculty of Fine Arts.

In the early 1960s, Bhatt pursued further studies in Europe and the United States, attending the Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples, Italy on a government scholarship and later under the Fulbright Scholarship and John D. Rockefeller III Fund at the Pratt Institute and Pratt Graphic Art Center, New York. In 1965, Bhatt married Jyotsna Bhatt, nee Shroff, Indian modernist ceramist and potter.

A keen experimenter, Bhatt's early works reflected the influence of cubism, later shifting to pop-art imagery, to finally arrive at a style inspired by traditional folk designs. Though Bhatt worked in a variety of mediums including watercolours and oils, it was his printmaking that garnered him the most attention. In the late 1960s, Bhatt began the photo documentation of traditional and folk Indian craft and design which later evolved into a central and enduring focus in his life long practice.

Humble and humorous, even at the age of 92, Jyoti Bhatt continues to create art, experimenting with forms, motifs and mediums often revisiting his earlier creations. A true master, the rigour and openness with which he authors his works are and have always been awe-inspiring.

Jyoti Bhatt has received numerous accolades throughout his career, including the President's Gold Plaque for his painting Krishna-Lila (1956); a Gold Medal at the Third International Print Biennale, Florence (1972); first prize for the design of a commemorative postage stamp

marking the 25th anniversary of Indian Independence; the World Photo Contest Winner by Fotokina, Germany (1978); the Gaurav Puraskar from the Gujarat State Lalit Kala Akademi (1996); the Lifetime Achievement Award – Distinguished Photo Artist Award from the Academy of Visual Media, New Delhi (2005); and the Padma Shri from the Government of India (2019).

About the Gallery

Subcontinent is a Mumbai-based art gallery committed to expanding the canon of South Asian art by showcasing artists and legacies that challenge received narratives. Founded by Dhvani Gudka and Keshav Mahendru, Subcontinent is a space of inquiry, storytelling, and cross-generational dialogue, where overlooked voices are brought into public view with care and conviction.

In its inaugural year, the gallery has presented solo exhibitions of Jangarh Singh Shyam, Hemali Vadalía, and Haku Shah, and showcased works by Bhupen Khakhar, Madhvi Parekh, and Sakti Burman in Fifty Years of Magical Thinking, 1960s–2000s. Subcontinent participated in Art Mumbai 2025 and will be part of the India Art Fair in February 2026.

Subcontinent is located in Mumbai's historic Fort precinct.

Title: A Painter with a Camera: Jyoti Bhatt

Artist: Jyoti Bhatt

Exhibition Dates: January 08 – February 21, 2026

Venue: Subcontinent, A-3, 2nd Floor, Apeejay Chambers, Wallace Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001

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