

SHUCHI KAPOOR

THE ARTIST:

I am a photographer and a writer—essentially a storyteller. And while that might be considered an art, perhaps I haven't indulged in it enough as yet, as my switch from a decade of advertising to photography was nail-bitingly late. While, on the one hand, there is an astounding lineage of visual history to delve into, on the other I am bombarded with a bevy of editing softwares and social media apps and gear upgrades—leave aside the influence of many veterans and contemporaries that often makes me think, 'What was I really thinking?' So I began from whatever I knew best—telling a story. Whether it came from the prostitutes who lived in many red light areas or from documenting the salt workers of Kutch, whether it was a candid invitation for a cup of tea by a homeless family on the streets of Calcutta or a mouthful of self-emphatic anecdotes by the Banarasi paanwala, whether it was having some raunchy fun with the transgenders at a Sufi fest in Ajmer or finding answers beneath the psyche of a 'possessed' person—photography helped me find my feet and save my nails. It also helped me reinvent my identity as *Girl in the Galli*.

THE SENSIBILITY:

It would be premature for me to say that I have a vision. I am still in an experimental state of mind and it seems like that is going to remain a constant. And I'm going to constantly look out for mentors who will be my source of strength and inspiration. I haven't really figured out the mathematics of what inspires me, but I know what moves me—People. I am a very people's person: their psyche, their language, their state of being, their cynicism, their hopes, their hospitality, their grief, and their issues—the human condition is what intrigues me. This is perhaps why I am absolutely at home with a prostitute as much as with a Sufi saint in a Dargah, with the shepherds in Kashmir or with mentally challenged children. Everyone has a story waiting to be told.



