

10 years of Blind With Camera (2006-2016)

Blind With Camera is a core project of the Beyond Sight Foundation, non-profit organisation based in Mumbai. The foundation aims to promote participation of people with visual impairment in art & cultural practices in line with the Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Blind With Camera project is the first of its kind in India. The Beyond Sight Foundation is founded by Partho Bhowmick, a working IT professional, photographer, curator, speaker, writer and advocator of Disability Art culture.

Photo Workshop with Visually Impaired & Sighted

Blind With Camera was started in February 2006 with just one visually impaired at the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind, Mumbai. Over the years hundreds of visually impaired are trained in photography across India. Today many trained visually impaired take pictures independently and several of them have turned trainers. To replicate Blind With Camera across the world, in 2010 launched world's first e-school of photography for the visually impaired (www.blindwithcameraschool.org) giving step-by-step guidance to them and training material for sighted photographers to become trainers. Conducted blindfold sensory photo workshops with sighted people where trained visually impaired photographers are trainers. Provided income for visually impaired trainers, equal platform for exchange, demystified blindness and reduce the gap between "them" and "us."

Exhibitions & Presentations & Workshops

Work of Blind With Camera was first exhibited at the Piramal Gallery, NCPA Mumbai in February 2007. Followed by exhibition at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (Bangalore), India Habitat Centre (New Delhi), Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (Mumbai), Academy of Fine Arts (Kolkata), Alliance Francaise (Mumbai & New Delhi), Kala Academy (Panjim Goa), DaDa International Disability Art Festival (Liverpool, UK), Gallery Art & Soul (Mumbai), Harrington Street Arts Centre (Kolkata), British Council (New Delhi) and several public places across India. Presentation given and conducted sensory workshops at several TEDx, Tech-Share India, IIMs, IITs, SP Jain Institute of Management (Mumbai), Indian Federation for Arts (Bangalore), Max Muller, UNESCO (New Delhi), Goa & Hyderabad Literary Festival, National Museum (New Delhi), Nehru Centre (London), Royal Holloway University of London UK and Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) City Palace (Jaipur).

Making Photographs Accessible

Blind With Camera through its exhibitions and books offered a combination of touch & feel raised pictures, Audio Description (AD), Large Print and Braille for the visually impaired to access and enjoy photographs.

Social Impacts

Bring dignity, elevates self-confidence, improves learning & social skills, and develops creative expression, opening income opportunities and giving hope and new voice for equality to the visually impaired. Challenge common perceptions about people with visual impairment and inspire social change.

Ground Breaking Achievement

Bhavesh Patel (complete blind) was engaged for taking pictures of Indian actress Katrina Kaif for LUX Perfume Portrait campaign. The campaign went viral with over 5 million viewers over Intranet. Bhavesh is world's first blind photographer to shoot a commercial campaign. He was paid as per industry standard.

Books & Publications

Two books are published on Blind With Camera "See As No Other" by Partridge, an imprint of Penguin Random House and "In Touch With Pictures" a multi sensory photo book, published by the Beyond Sight Foundation. Blind With Camera was featured in several international journals on disability, arts & culture and assistive technology.

Awards

Recipient of the "Karamver Puraskar" from the Indian Confederation of NGOs in 2009. Finalist for the "NASSCOM Social Innovation Award" in 2011. Recipient of the "Manthan Award: South Asia & Asia Pacific on Digital Inclusion" in 2014. Nominated to "World Summit Award" in 2015.

Films

"Light On The Dark Side" a film on Blind With Camera was made by Geeta Singh in 2012, produced by PSBT (Public Service Broadcasting Trust), Ministry of I&B, Govt of India. Visually impaired photographer from Blind With Camera was engaged in making of internationally awarded film "Ship of Theseus."

Media Coverage

Blind With Camera is featured in Times of India, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, Hindu, Telegraph, Deccan Herald, Business Standard, DNA, Mid Day, Tehelka, Business World, Timeout, The Week, CHIP and international media like the Guardian, Reuter and BBC. Story & interviews aired in TV channels like CNN-IBN, NDTV, ZEE and other programs. Blind With Camera is popular worldwide among bloggers and e-content platforms.