

PRESS RELEASE

Nightshade

Natasha de Betak

17 Feb – 31 Mar 2012

Curated by Aveek Sen

Experimenter presents *Nightshade*, by acclaimed photographer and filmmaker Natasha de Betak in her first solo in India between, 17th Feb – 31st Mar 2012.

In her urge to go deeper than what is apparent in *Nightshade*, Natasha captures the thin line between death and dream. *Nightshade* emerged from de Betak's extensive travels in India, sometimes to places that would seem inaccessible, chillingly forbidden, at times spiritual and even unearthly. It was in India too, when the city slept, in a state of trance, that *Impulse*, the other series of photographs in the exhibition were created. In Natasha's words, "as if those images trickled directly from my mind into the camera with my eyes closed". Suspended between love story and ghost story, memory and dream, fragments of cinema and the ruins of history, *Impulse* is photography taken to the heart of the real, yet freed from what Coleridge called "the despotism of the eye".

Born in Madrid to an Argentinian father and a French-Polish Jewish woman, growing up in Paris to attend film school in Budapest and New York, compelled to live in Russia for her immersion in Dostoevsky and in what could be called "the texture of Russian films", and now living in Paris, Natasha's sensibility is a confluence of the many histories of European modernity, and of several key traditions of art and, crucially, cinema.

Deeply moved by the writings of Dostoevsky and the Russian Avant Garde, and her close familiarity with the films of Tarkovsky, the mystery of time becomes the central preoccupation of her photography and her cinematic work – "time suspended, time in brackets, time that you embrace". *Speaking Tree*, which will be shown in the city during this exhibition, came out of her encounter over a period of six years with a man tied to a tree in the middle of the desert of Kutch, to be tended by his mother because of his insanity.

In "Nightshade" and "Impulse", Natasha de Betak uses photography to experiment with the invisible. Sleep, dreams, memory, madness, desire and death. They are states and experiences that are not only individual and inward, rooted in the depths of the irrational, but also historical and, in that sense, collective.

Solo exhibitions include Musee des Arts Asiatiques Guimet, Paris (2010), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2008), Global Art Film Festivals Hollywood 2008, HERMES gallery, Tokyo (2008) amongst several group exhibitions worldwide. Her films have won several awards including the "Best Short Fiction Film Award" (*Kaal*) at Tempere International Film Festival, Finland and Carlo Di Palma Award for The Best Cinematography; *Speaking Tree* was nominated for The best Documentary at MIAAC, NY.

The exhibition will close with a screening of her film *Speaking Tree* (2007) at Goethe Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan on 29th & 30th March 2012 at 5pm on both days. The exhibition continues during regular gallery hours (11am – 7pm) at Experimenter. For further information please email info@experimenter.in or call Prateek Raja on +91.98300.15854.