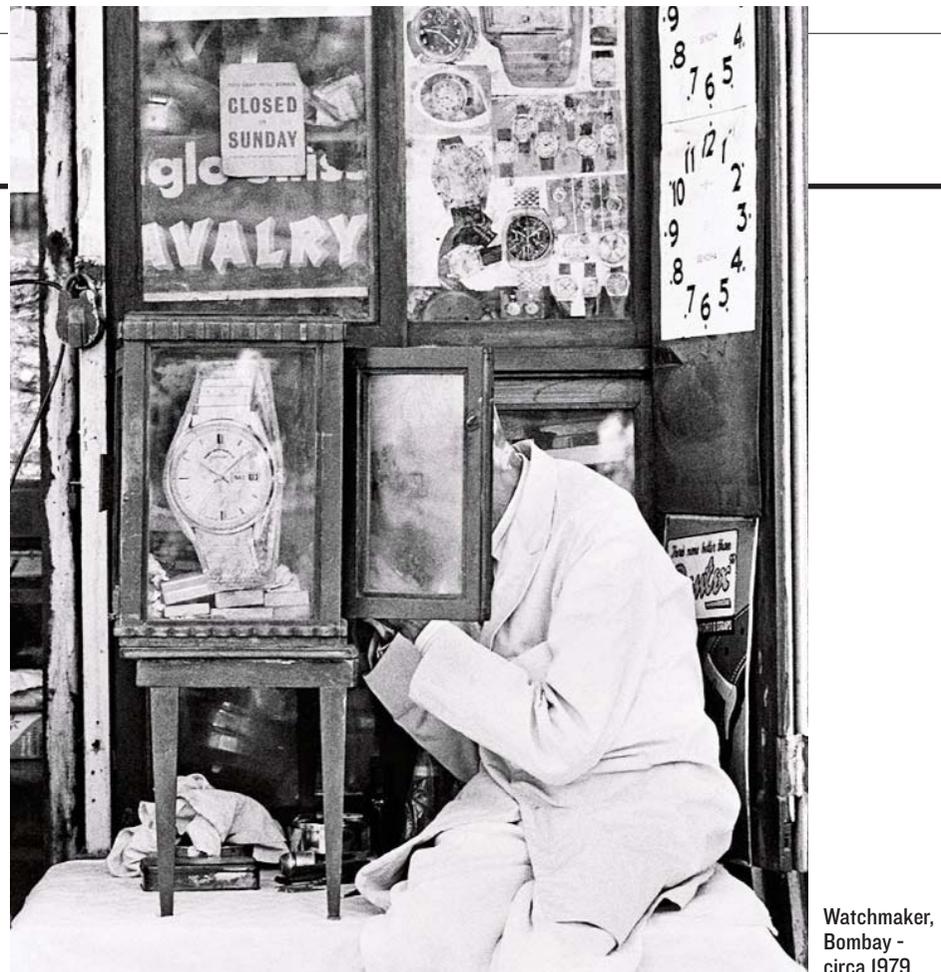


06 HITLIST ART



Roadside Photo Studio, Bombay - circa 1979. PICS COURTESY PABLO BARTHOLOMEW



Watchmaker, Bombay - circa 1979

Smile, this is BOMBAY

AWARD-WINNING PHOTOGRAPHER PABLO BARTHOLOMEW RECOUNTS HIS FAVOURITE MEMORIES OF THE CITY THAT PROVIDED HIM AN ESCAPE FROM WHAT HE HAD KNOWN

PHOTOGRAPHY

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For Delhi-based photographer Pablo Bartholomew, Bombay, now Mumbai, provided an escape from the claustrophobia he had begun to associate with the city he grew up in.

"Delhi was a very small circle of people, everybody knew everybody," he says over the telephone from the capital city, where *Chronicles of a Past Life* — Bombay, his collection of photographs is currently on display.

The black and white photographs offer an insight into the people and places that lent colour to the vibrant city of Mumbai through the 1970s and '80s. "Bombay is a special place. It is a city that people come to, to make a better life; to escape their environments no matter where they are from."

Bartholomew, who dropped out of school at the age of 15, was aware that his decision to follow his own path in life would come with its set of consequences.

"In a professional sense, it made sense to come to Bombay. If you look at the film or advertising industries, for instance, you see that people from all parts of the country go there to make a living."

As Bartholomew's work now takes him around the world, he visits the city less often than he might like, but when he does, he makes it a point to stop by the Olympia Coffee House in Colaba.

"I usually order a Mutton Masala with rotis or have a breakfast of kheema-pao there." Sahiba in Bandra for its Gomantak cuisine is another favourite haunt of the award-winning photojournalist.

Colaba, Fort and Ballard Estate are the places fused with the most nostalgia for the 56-year-old. "Primarily because there is a sense of familiarity with these places."

Inside Maximum City

About the impact that Mumbai has on its people, he says, "When you get into a physical space with people that is dense, packed and charged with activity, it affects people. Take the example of the taxi driver, he has to look at single, independent women differently than he would in his village."

His advice to aspiring photographers is to stick with their day jobs. "I know what the struggle can be. It's easier if you negotiate it differently and find time for your passion," he offers.

Reluctant to compare Mumbai to New York, he says, "Geographically, they are quite similar — sort of banana-shaped cities by the sea — but they are very different, in terms of their social fabric. Bombay is far more complex."



Taxi Driver with Passengers, Bombay - circa 1979



Capital Talkies Building, Bombay - circa 1979