

# The GQ guide to collecting photography

How to turn photographs into an investment more rewarding than the stock market

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Nathaniel Gaskell

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Queen of the Jungle © Ram Shergill / Courtesy Tasveer



India has a particularly rich history of photography, yet a relatively young market in terms of people collecting photographs as art. Many pioneering photographers worked here in the early years of the medium, around the 1880's onwards, capturing the topography and the people of the day. In the mid-20th century, India became a hotbed of **photojournalism**, with international icons such as Henri-Cartier Bresson and Margaret Bourke-White giving us some of the post-war world's most defining images, such as that of Gandhi's funeral or the exodus during partition. In more recent times, Indian photographers are engaging with the broader narratives of politics and **contemporary art**, and we have images such as Rohit Chawla's collaboration with Ai Weiwei, remaking the iconic photograph of Alan Kurdi's body, washed up on the beach in Turkey, one of the defining images of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis – and now a contentious and much discussed piece of contemporary art.

**Photography** is a key invention of the modern age, one that's shaped our cultural consciousness and helped document the world around us for nearly 200 years. Today, it's become so familiar, so ubiquitous, and such an extension of our mobile arsenal that we forget to pause and reflect on the power of individual images. **Art galleries** provide a space in which to do this, and, for those with a **passion for collecting**, the opportunity to take part of this experience home.

**For collectors, these are not just images**, but chances to own part of history – a tangible link to the past, fixed forever on paper, and this is one of the reasons why it's such an exciting and rewarding medium to collect.

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## What does the global market for photography look like?

In 2015, photographs sold at auction globally brought in about \$190 million – exceeding the amount set before the art market crash of 2008. Much of the action happens at Christie's, Sotheby's, Phillips de Pury and Bonhams, who hold important annual photography auctions in New York and London. When taking into account sales made at private galleries, this figure would be far higher, perhaps even double. Prices for individual photographs at auction range from around \$5,000 at the low end, and go

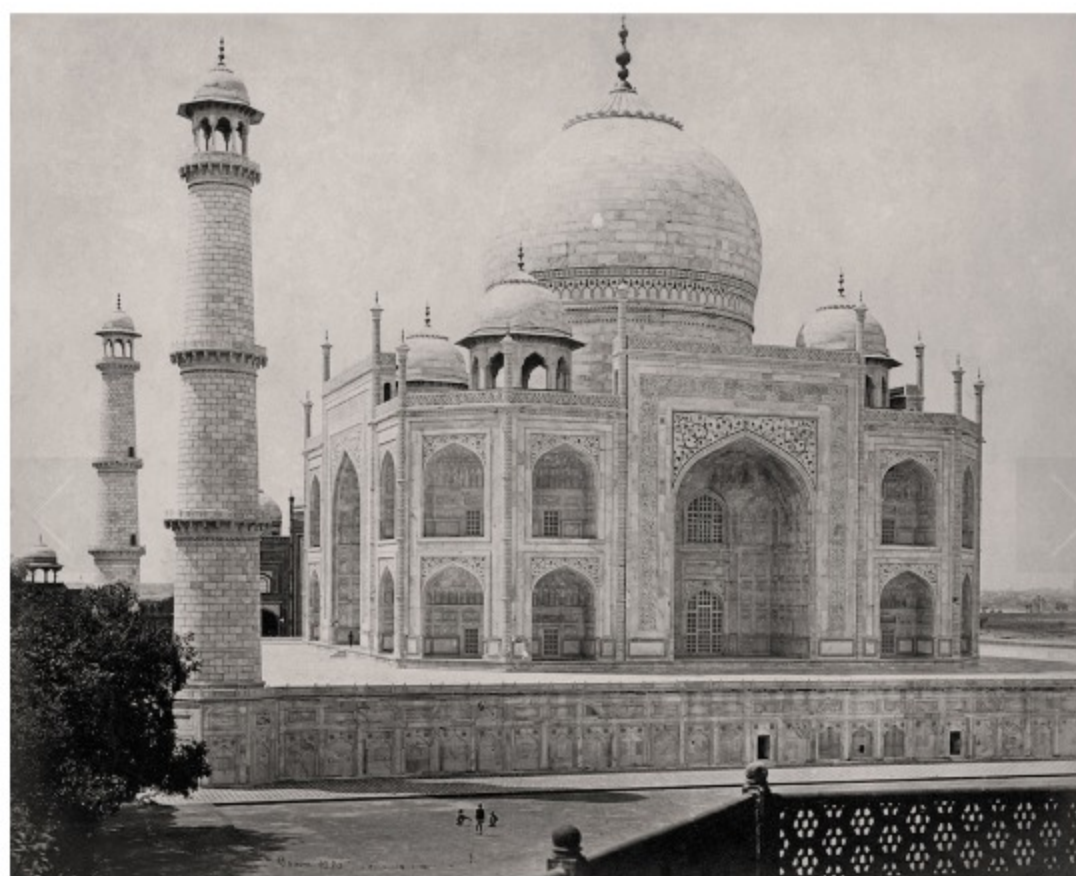


Image: Agra, The Taj Mahal from the corner of the quadrangle Samuel Bourne, c. 1860 Courtesy MAP/ Tasveer

If you're looking to attend photo exhibitions in Mumbai, here's one amazing gallery you can visit right now:

**Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke**

In this solo exhibition, Gauri Gill exhibits three new bodies of work engaging with rural landscape and community.

**When:** 15th April to June 29th (11 am to 7 pm)

**Where:**

2 Sunny House,  
16/18, Mereweather Road,  
Behind Taj Mahal Hotel,  
Colaba

**Contact:** 22023030/ info@galeriems.com

*About the author: Nathaniel Gaskell is a British writer and curator, specialising in the history of photography and visual media from the Indian subcontinent. Before moving to India in 2010, Gaskell worked for Eric Franck in London and Source Photographica in Australia, as an archivist and researcher. As the director of Tasveer in India, Gaskell has played a key role in photographic publishing for the gallery, and in developing the market and awareness for South Asian photography. He studied fine art photography at AUCB, UK, and holds a Master of Research degree in Cultural Studies from the London Consortium.*

