

Ethnic Minorities Coming Out

A Touring Photographic Exhibition



29th January - 1st April 2010

Research for this project began in early 2009. The images were produced from May to July 2009. The images are touring London and nationally from August 2009 until August 2010. The project was funded by The Arts Council and Unltd.

Artist Statement

As an Indian British-born female, I am aware of the difficulties of coming out in ethnic minority societies. Family members and friends often suffer due to their own narrow-mindedness and this leads to hurting or rejecting the person coming out. Education and increasing awareness can help develop more openness and understanding whilst reducing internal conflicts.

Participating in the development of a photographic project offers the subjects a new means of expression; also providing a chance for them to explore an alternative therapeutic practice whilst accessing a personal source of creativity not previously utilized. We often try to block out our pain or avoid the problem so as not to suffer. Talking about the experience and partaking in the creative production of the images helps subjects confront and deal with their reality whilst allowing them to come out through the means of photography.

The text accompanying the portraits was transcribed from interviews with the participants describing their coming out process. Subjects are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and at different stages of the coming out process; some have already come out, some are in the process of coming out and some are thinking about coming out.

Some subjects requested full anonymity so powerful photos had to be taken whilst hiding their identity. They were asked to choose an expressive part of the body, which was then photographed, experimenting with the natural light available. Digital media was used to allow the subjects to see the photos immediately. This helped them trust the photographer and allowed for them to criticise and choose the images for the exhibition.

Artist Biography

"Communicating what is frequently left unsaid; to deliver an insight into that detail we may not always perceive, or that we sometimes try to ignore"

Sonalle thirsts for a deeper knowledge and understanding of universal life and society. She travelled alone for almost ten years through Europe, Asia and Latin America observing and participating in the kaleidoscope of cultures and sights encountered.

Now driven by the desire to transform her journey, Sonalle is progressing, through her photographic narrative, in order to communicate what is frequently left unsaid; to deliver an insight into that detail we may not always perceive, or that we sometimes try to ignore.

Sonalle has worked alongside numerous successful photographers in New York and Paris, coupled with developing several diverse photographic projects in selected cities worldwide.

Since her recent return to London, Sonalle has assisted Magnum Photographer, Mr. Chris Steele-Perkins, whilst creating many thought-provoking and issue-based assignments that have raised public consciousness.

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