

Portraits Report

By Aastha Chauhan

20th April 2007

It's been over a year since we worked with the students of the Gyandeeep School. I would meet the students running out of school every now and then. 'You don't come to school anymore,' they complained.

Hannah Mathew is based in Delhi for a year and has worked in photography since graduating in Fine Art. Since being in the city, she has been coordinating photographic exhibitions with Sunil Gupta and Radhika Singh and was previously an archivist at the Lee Miller Archives in England. As a photographer, she has also had a history of running workshops in photography. Hannah gladly consented to help conduct a photography workshop for the Gyandeeep School. 18 children from classes IV and V were divided into teams of two. The teams chose names of animals and birds for their identities, such as peacock, eagle, lion, bear, crocodile, elephant, snake, cheetah and tiger. Hannah briefed them on the basics of portraiture and handling of cameras. They were asked to click portraits of their partners. A week later the results of the camera escapade were shown to the students where they selected their two favourite images.

For the following class we shall provide them with material to make collages using prints of the pictures selected.

2nd May 2007

The students have certainly come a long way since we began a few years ago. Initially, much to our frustration, they would draw an apple, a hut or a tree; the shapes of which had been etched into their memories and all the drawings looked alike. The collages produced by them now are a proud proof of the journey we have made together. Hannah was very impressed with the variety and skill displayed by the students. Using wool, color pencils, chalk, paper and a variety of materials they have created what I can call a series of masterpieces.