

RUBIN MUSEUM OF ART

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Candid: The Lens and Life of Homai Vyarawalla

First Museum Retrospective in the United States of Works by Pioneering Photojournalist

July 6, 2012–January 14, 2013

New York, NY –

The Rubin Museum of Art will present *Candid: The Lens and Life of Homai Vyarawalla*, an exhibition celebrating India's first female photojournalist, whose iconic images of the events surrounding India's independence in 1947 from British rule endeared her to the Indian people. An employee of the British Information Services from the 1940s–1970, Vyarawalla chronicled a nation in transition, while also capturing candid portraits of world leaders for prominent publications including *Life* and *Time*. She was hailed as a pioneer in her field and her recent death at age 98 generated tributes from around the world.

The exhibition will display a selection of Vyarawalla's original prints of the key historic encounters, figures and events that she captured from this significant period in India's history. These photographs, many of which were widely circulated and became enduring images of this newly independent nation, illuminate the importance of Vyarawalla's work in post-independence India.

Homai Vyarawalla began working as a photojournalist in 1938, earning one or two rupees per photograph from the *Bombay Chronicle* to capture images of daily life in Bombay. She learned photography skills alongside her husband, Maneckshaw Vyarawalla. Her first photographs were published under Maneckshaw's name, but it wasn't long before she earned a reputation of her own, photographing wartime activities in Mumbai during the Second World War for *The Illustrated Weekly of India* and *The*

Weekly. Vyarawalla's career as a political photojournalist progressed in earnest when both she and Maneckshaw were recommended to establish the headquarters of the Far Eastern Bureau of the British Information Services in Delhi, where they moved in 1942.

Vyarawalla created rich visual images that were to become iconic representations of India, its leaders and its people. *Candid* will present some of the many images from Vyarawalla's extensive career including important historical events, such as the meeting of Gandhi and the Congress Committee to determine the vote for the 1947 plan to partition India and Pakistan into two countries, the first Independence Day celebration and flag hoisting ceremony at Red Fort; and the departure from India of Lord Mountbatten, Governor General and head of the British administration. Vyarawalla was also present during the visits of many world leaders and dignitaries including Jacqueline Kennedy; Helen Keller; Queen Elizabeth; Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader; and Zhou Enlai, China's first prime minister under Mao Zedong, often capturing them in lighter moments. She also documented the Dalai Lama's arrival in India, in addition to funerals of important political leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second prime minister of India.

While Vyarawalla has been credited with taking what would become some of the most iconic portraits of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, she also extensively chronicled the lives of ordinary people, capturing the everyday life of Bombay residents during the 1940s and people at leisure in Delhi from the 1950s through the 1960s, before ending her career as a photographer in 1970.

Combining the prominent portraits associated with Indian independence with those of the lives of ordinary people, *Candid* will showcase the long and varied career of one of India's most significant photojournalists. In addition, her personal ephemera such as her cameras, correspondence and press passes will be on display. This exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Alkazi Foundation for the Arts.

The Alkazi Foundation for the Arts is a registered charitable trust based in New Delhi, India. Over the last 30 years, Mr. Ebrahim Alkazi, the Foundation's Chairman, has amassed a private collection of photographs known as The Alkazi Collection of Photography (www.acparchives.com), an archive of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographic prints from South and South-East Asia. The core of the Collection comprises works in the form of photographic albums, single prints, paper negatives and glass plate negatives from India, Burma, Ceylon, Nepal, Afghanistan and Tibet. Almost every region with a history touched by the British Raj is represented. These vintage prints document socio-political life in

the subcontinent through the linked fields of history, architecture, anthropology, topography and archaeology, beginning from the 1840s and leading up to the rise of modern India and the Independence Movement of 1947.



ALKAZI FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS
www.acparchives.com

ABOUT THE RUBIN MUSEUM:

The Rubin Museum provides an immersive environment for exploring Himalayan and Indian art and culture and its connections to contemporary life and ideas. The only museum in the U.S. dedicated to Himalayan Asia, the Rubin holds outstanding collections of Tibetan, Indian, Nepalese, Mongolian, and Bhutanese art, and provides a bridge to the cultures of the region. Dedicated to creating a multidimensional experience, the Rubin engages its visitors with a diverse range of exhibitions, dialogues, films, performances, and educational programs, and the shop and café are also inspired by the region's varied cultures. For more information, including hours and location, visit www.rmanyc.org.

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