

March 18, 2009

PHOTOGRAPHIC BAZAAR OF INDIA

Lehigh University is displaying Fredric Roberts' rich, rewarding photographs of India, part of a five-year quest to personalize an epic continent.

The Los Angeles resident specializes in large, locked-in portraits of people with lighthouse eyes. Setting them off to the side, he makes them more luminous. A confident, vulnerable young woman with a nose ring the size of a fist is one of several candidates for National Geographic covers.

A two-time winner of the International Photography Award, Roberts has a keen eye for tiny, telling gesture. He finds the towering power of praying hands, the practical poise of a boy cowherd. His distant pictures are intimate, too. Humanity radiates in a rear view of a river worshipper and a long view of a laundry city.

Even his blurry shots are focused. Photographed in action in a crowd, dancers become whirling braids of color in a spiritual bazaar.

"Humanitas," photographs of India by Fredric Roberts, through June 13, DuBois Gallery, Maginnes Hall, Lehigh University, Asa Drive and Vine Street, Bethlehem. Lecture by Roberts 6-8 p.m. March 27. Hours: 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. 610-758-3615, <http://www.luag.org> .