

JaipurPhoto 2017 – A Festival on Wanderlust – 24 February 2017

Opening Address by Ambassador Dr. Andreas Baum

Esteemed organizers and members of the audience, dear friends,

Thank you for inviting me to the opening of JaipurPhoto 2017. It is great to be back in the Pink City.

I wish to congratulate artistic director Lola Mac Dougall and guest curator Federica Chiocchetti for bringing together international and Indian photographers under an inspiring motto. “Wanderlust” is a strong desire to wander and explore the world. This reminds me of the story of the Indian Bimal Dey, who was such a man with “Wanderlust”. He began his wanderings on two wheels in Kolkata in 1967 and ended his journey through numerous countries 5 years later. Mr. Dey and his wife now live in Switzerland. A Google search of “Wanderlust” indicates no less than 13 possible career paths. To name just a few: cruise line worker, flight attendant, au pair and, of course, photographer.

Photography is a powerful means of documenting human life, which we can revisit for a long time after an important event occurred. What makes a photograph a work of art? According to Edward Steichen, the patriarch of photography, it is the artist in photography that gives form to content by a distillation of ideas, thought, experience, insight and understanding, freezing those moments of “non-return”, capturing time and making time timeless.

I am happy to be a part of this public-private art initiative that de-mystifies art photography, extracts it from the limited space of a gallery and lets it wander among the public. Thus everybody can interact freely, without inhibitions, with the photographic work.

Switzerland counts many leading photographers. Looking at their work, there is no such thing as typically Swiss photography. But many renowned Swiss photographers have one thing in common: they have made their careers abroad. Let me congratulate Swiss photographer Flurina Rothenberger, who displays her work here in the Swiss pavilion.

Switzerland is proud to have a threefold presence at the JaipurPhoto festival. In addition to Flurina Rothenberger’s work, we have independent curator, author and photo editor Lars Willumeit participating in the speakers’ forum. And then there’s the Swiss pavilion, specially designed by IN:CH architects and planners, who are based in Bangalore. Let me congratulate Professor Juerg Grunder and Architect Ambica Ganesh for producing a cutting-edge contemporary structure that blends perfectly with local material and creates a dialogue with the Charles-Correa-designed building of the Jawahar Kala Kendra.

It is a privilege to be present here today, together with the Swiss Arts Council, in a concentrated effort to showcase contemporary Switzerland. I look forward to being carried away by “Wanderlust” through the various displays spread across this wonderful city. Thank you.