Mainstreaming the marginalised

Reema Kisan's photo essay highlights the invisible hand of labour through a range of artistic forms.

Reema Kisan's first solo exhibition, Labour of the Underdogs—Shwek, is titled 'Shwek' and is on at Chalk House, Colaba, till October 9. The show is a collaboration between Kissan, who is a freelance journalist, photographer and filmmaker, and artist Khilnani, who has been a part of the labour movement in India and abroad — and the idea was to not only increase public engagement and demand pay raises across the board, but to also make the invisible visible, and art a means to do so.

Khilnani, who hails from an Anglo-Indian family and grew up in McLeod Ganj, the home of the Dalai Lama in exile, was inspired by her family background to create this show. Labour, she says, is still invisible in India, and the show aims to make it visible.

Kissan's photos emerge from her own freelance experiences and the views of her maternal father, Budra, and her grandfather, Pawan Kisan, who was one of the pioneers of the transportation industry. Growing up, he says, she was taught that labour was important, how to interact with people, and the value of hard work.

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Cultural evolutions

The show is divided into sections: the evolution of labour. The show begins with a series of images of women working in the textile industry, and the last section is a series of images of women working in the textile industry, and the last section is a series of images of women working in the textile industry.

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