

Illusion/Hallucination

Abhay Patel, India

When I look at this image, I'm struck by a quiet clash between innocence and environmental neglect. The boy's silhouette—so alive, so full of motion—emerges from a surreal sea of foam. At first glance, it almost feels magical, like a child playing in clouds. But that illusion fades quickly, giving way to the harsh reality: this is pollution, not play.

The sunlight glistens off his wet skin, highlighting not just the joy of movement but also the unsettling truth of where that joy is unfolding. Behind him, the bridge stands still and impassive—an emblem of modern progress casting its shadow over a landscape shaped by industrial waste. It watches, but it does not care.

As the artist, what stays with me is how effortlessly children adapt—even to the most toxic surroundings. There's resilience in that, yes, but also a deep injustice. Why should play take place in poison? Why must childhood unfold in the margins of decay?

This photograph holds more than a moment—it holds contradiction. It's beautiful and tragic, hopeful and heart-wrenching. It reminds me that in our cities, the line between wonder and waste is often razor-thin. And perhaps, as artists, it's our job to hold that tension up to the light.

The Yamuna River in Delhi appears to be coated in snow, but in reality, it is covered in hazardous foam made from industrial waste. Despite how frightening they may be, Delhi residents

have grown accustomed to seeing these images.

"Health Hazards" - Bathing in the toxic foam of the river can dry out the skin and worsen dermatitis. The froth may cause skin allergies, rashes, and various kinds of skin pigmentation. It is undoubtedly possible to experience this early and in a variety of forms for those who have a family history of autoimmune illness to flare up.

This chemical can seriously harm the lungs, create gastrointestinal issues, and result in diseases like typhoid if this water, which has a high percentage of ammonia, is swallowed -long-term exposure to heavy metals like lead, mercury, and arsenic can result in hormonal problems, conjunctivitis, and hair loss.

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