

Through the looking glass



Abhishek Poddar at Tasveer art gallery. —SAIBAL DAS

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June 29: What do you get when you combine a businessman and ardent art lover? India's first gallery dedicated to one of the most promising fields of art — photography.

Abhishek Poddar, founder of Tasveer, India's first gallery dedicated to photography, believes it was a combination of factors that prompted him to start it. "Three of us partners were bored with the art scene. Photography was exciting to us and there was no other photo gallery in India at the time," he explains. He admits that barring recession when anything not need-based took a back seat, Tasveer has done very well. The fact that it is a pan-India gallery also made a difference. The process of selection at Tasveer is also meticulous. "Unless it passes the litmus test (where three of us feel a connect) it will not be approved," he reveals. Iconic images to the unknown photographer have all made it to the walls of Tasveer.

Though the bulk of them are India-based, the gallery does an occasional Tim Hall, Bourne and Shepherd and Marc Riboud. Bengalurean Srikanth Koleri has also made it to must-have list. "His photographs of people living on the edge and making a life out of it in Kash-

mir, post-Tsunami Tamil Nadu and other places is worth a look," says Poddar. An interesting show that is on the anvil is one with Karen Knorr. Giving a twist to her photographs of animals in European palaces, Karen will do the same for Indian animals in royal Indian palaces. "It is something you cannot not enjoy," says Poddar and adds, "It will open your eyes to an art form which is still not considered art by many." And who according to him buys this art? "The serious art collector; the first time home makers who connect more to photographs and also to the affordability factor; and those who buy it so they don't miss the boat," comes his prompt reply. Poddar has a lot going on at the moment. A young artist award has been initiated. A tie up with NID and Srishti School for a photography course; publishing more books which are out-of-the-ordinary — "marrying well-known photographers with well-known writers like we are doing with Naipaul and a photographer," he reveals.

He also plans to start an auction house "though it is still not the preferred way of reaching out to the audience." And he saves the best for last. "One day we are going to see a photography museum, once we start selling enough," concludes Poddar. *