

COWBOYS AND INDIANS

Oil, ink, bleach and photography on canvas.

During my travels in India, I was standing outside a well known landmark and tourist attraction when an Asian boy approached, requesting me to take his photograph. The photograph repeatedly used in 'Cowboys and Indians' has a total of seventeen boys in it, who suddenly 'turned up' for the snap. As I took the photograph a large number of tourists with camera's began snapping away at me, creating a bizarre performance of contrasting surrealism. On one side of the lens was an image of poverty stricken India, whilst around me were surreal images created by Western wealth. This image of The Taj Mahal pays tribute to all the charity aid workers who commit their lives to helping people in need, and highlights the corruption involving the middle man, the cowboy, whose responsibility it is to ensure that all aid reaches its destination safely. On occasions it doesn't.

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X 10
a boy appears
and enters the frame
for a snapshot
and a moment of fame

X 10,000
a shanty desert
that will only deliver
a fly – blown life
by a dead river

X 20
a group poses
to mark the occasion
of another Taj Mahal
tourist invasion

X 50,000
a last gasp
an anonymous grave
debris tossed
on a tidal wave

X50
a town heaves
with traffic and noise
and thousands of other
anonymous boys

X 1000,000
a thousand souls
who did not choose
to become statistics
on the evening news

X 100
a sun sets
on a dusty plain
where all eyes turn west
and dream again

X 5000,000
a photograph
is all that remains
of discarded lives
and unknown names

X 1000
a pinprick resort
where the wealthy feed
built with the cash
of corruption and greed

X 1,000,000
a million memories
we all forgot
save for a smile
in that single shot