

# City's dates with cinema

Artists pay tribute to Mumbai's relationship with its films by collating eras that influenced them the most

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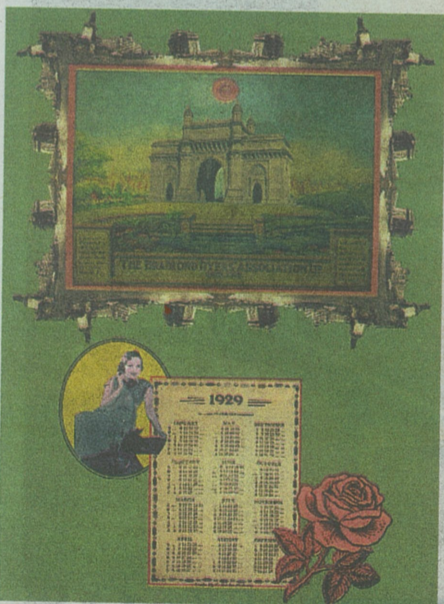
This Saturday onwards, the National Gallery of Modern Art in Fort will become the venue for an exhibition that celebrates 100 years of Indian Cinema — Project Cinema City. Curated by filmmaker Madhusree Dutta and visual artist Archana Hande of Majlis (Centre for Interdisciplinary Art Practices in Mumbai), the show brings together several artists, including Atul Dodiya, Nalini Malani, Sudhir Patwardhan, Meera Devidayal, Shreyas Karle, Shilpa Gupta, Nilima Sheikh, Ranbir Kaleka, Vivan Sundaram, Tushar Joag, as well as filmmakers such as Kamal Swaroop, Paromita Vohra, and Avijit Mukul Kishore. They pay tribute by recreating the era that influenced them the most.

The exhibition comprises paintings, art installations, video art, short films, maps and calendars. These artworks explore the relationship of Mumbai with the cinema that it makes. Dutta says, "Creating calendars and cinema were two of the most popular art forms in the city in the 20th century. Both were symbolic of Mumbai. Those artists who created calendars were also involved with the process of making films, and this show is a tribute to them."

Some of the participating artists talk about their work.

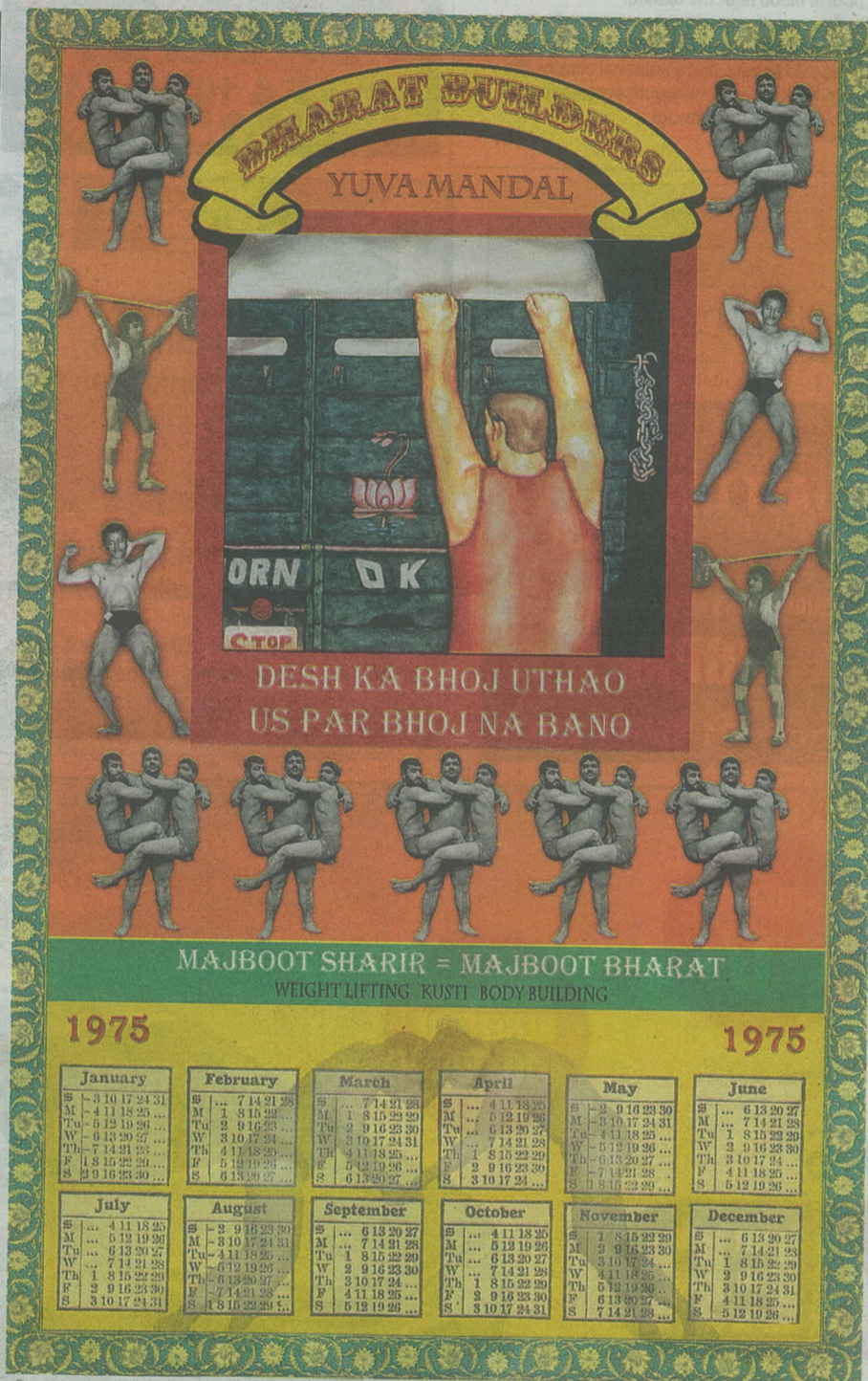
## ARCHANA HANDE | SILENT FILMS

I have been working with found images in my works, and relooking at history and placing it in the contemporary context. Mumbai for me in every era is about cinema. Since the silent films of the 1930s fascinated me, I have used an image of a popular actress of that era — Zubeida. The Gateway of India, which I have placed against the Mughal background, is the doorway to the city.



## NILIMA SHEIKH | THE NOTION OF EXOTICA

In the 1940s, the notion of exotica was developing around the world. Our theatre and painting were also taking that concept further. I have used an image of Shakuntala and Menaka from the Raja Ravi Varma painting as well as Surubhi theatre, which I used to be a part of.



## SUDHIR PATWARDHAN | INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON THE 1970s' YOUTH

I came to Mumbai in 1974. This calendar is a reflection of my work from around that time. I was creating images of working classes and the influence of the left and right wingers on them. The youth

were a target for these political groups and through Yuva Mandals, attempts were made to capture political power at the grass root level.

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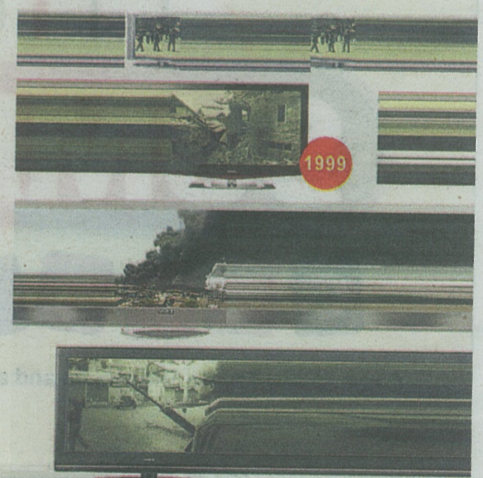
## SHREYAS KARLE | THE 1990s POPULAR BEAT

In the 1990s, Michael Jackson had come to India, Govinda was the Hero No 1, coaching and dance classes used to come up with these pocket calendars, which were available in the train. By bringing together all of these elements, I have tried to capture the pulse of the city.



## MEERA DEVIDAYAL | THE CINEMA AND THE MIGRANT

Over the years, migration has been an important theme in Hindi cinema. The shoe stall suggests a low-end migrant; the telephone is the connection between him and the world that he's left behind. Tum Kab Aaoge is a trademark image from the series, which used the taxi-driver as a metaphor of the migrant. It's a filmy picture which suggests that someone back home is waiting for that migrant who's working in the city.



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## SHILPA GUPTA | THE CABLE TV BOOM

The 1990s made a deep impact on me. It was the decade when we were exposed to globalisation and sectarian violence. The cable television boom gave us access to information that we didn't have erstwhile. We felt violence but didn't experience pain. It was all very cosmetic.

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## Celluloid scores a century

Artist Atul Dodiya finds Bollywood's villains, such as Mogambo from Mr India and Gabbar Singh from Sholay, far more inspirational than the heroes who vanquished them. "They are much more interesting as characters," he says. "Most of them were also played by much better actors than those who played the heroes."

Dodiya will pay tribute to these iconic baddies through an exhibition of 14 oil paintings on display as part of Cinema City, a multidisciplinary project that has

**WHAT: CINEMA CITY EXHIBITION**

**WHERE: National Gallery of Modern Art, Sir Cowasji Jahangir Public Hall, M G Road, Fort; CALL: 22852457**

**WHEN: May 19 to June 29, 11 am to 6 pm, closed on Monday**

**ENTRY FEE: ₹10**

been in the works for the past four years and is now culminating with an exhibition at National Gallery of Modern Art, Kala Ghoda. Initiated by NGO Majlis, a centre for rights discourse and interdis-

ciplinary arts initiatives, the exhibition will showcase art works such as calendar drawings, paintings, installation and movies, created by artists Puspamala N, Shreyas Karle, Anant Joshi, Atul Dodiya and Sudhir Patwardhan; and documentaries by filmmakers Avijit Mukul Kishore, Rafeeq Ellias and Renu Sawant.

In addition, the students and faculty of Kamla Raheja Vidyamidhi Institute of Architecture have created an interactive installation on the sweat shops of Bollywood.

In May 1912, legendary filmmaker



Dadasaheb Phalke started shooting Raja Harishchandra, the first Indian feature film. The project, therefore, celebrates 100 years of Indian cinema this month, and seeks to highlight the influence of cinema and the visual and performance arts on Mumbai's social life, architecture and real estate.

- Riddhi Doshi

■ (Above) A still from Certified Universal, a documentary by filmmaker Avijit Mukul Kishore

■ (Right) Bharat Builders, a calendar drawing by artist Sudhir Patwardhan

