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India

₹150



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Gigi Scaria,
Wanderer above the sea, 2009.
Water colour on paper, 84 x 60 in

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Journal



Pushpamala N, *Return of the Phantom Lady or Sinful City: A Photo Romance*

Mumbai, IN

Cityscope: research, art and nostalgia

A show at NGMA celebrates cinema and the city

Both cinema and our lived experience in a city articulate space, time, our identity and sense of belonging and our place in the world. They inform our *Weltanschauung*, and hope to frame our existence.

Cinema and the city — both icons of the modern times — create and preserve cultural images and ways of life. Each acts on the other to check, influence and shape it — making the interactions between the two complex and overlapping.

The new exhibition, *Project Cinema City: Research Art and Documentary Practices*, at the National Gallery of Modern Art presents itself as an enquiry into these social, economic and political interactions between the city and the film industry it houses.

The interdisciplinary undertaking, which coincides with Indian cinema's centenary, tracks the history of the film industry chronologically and in terms of the demographic locations of its producers and disseminators. The project's curator, filmmaker Madhusree Dutta, calls it "a

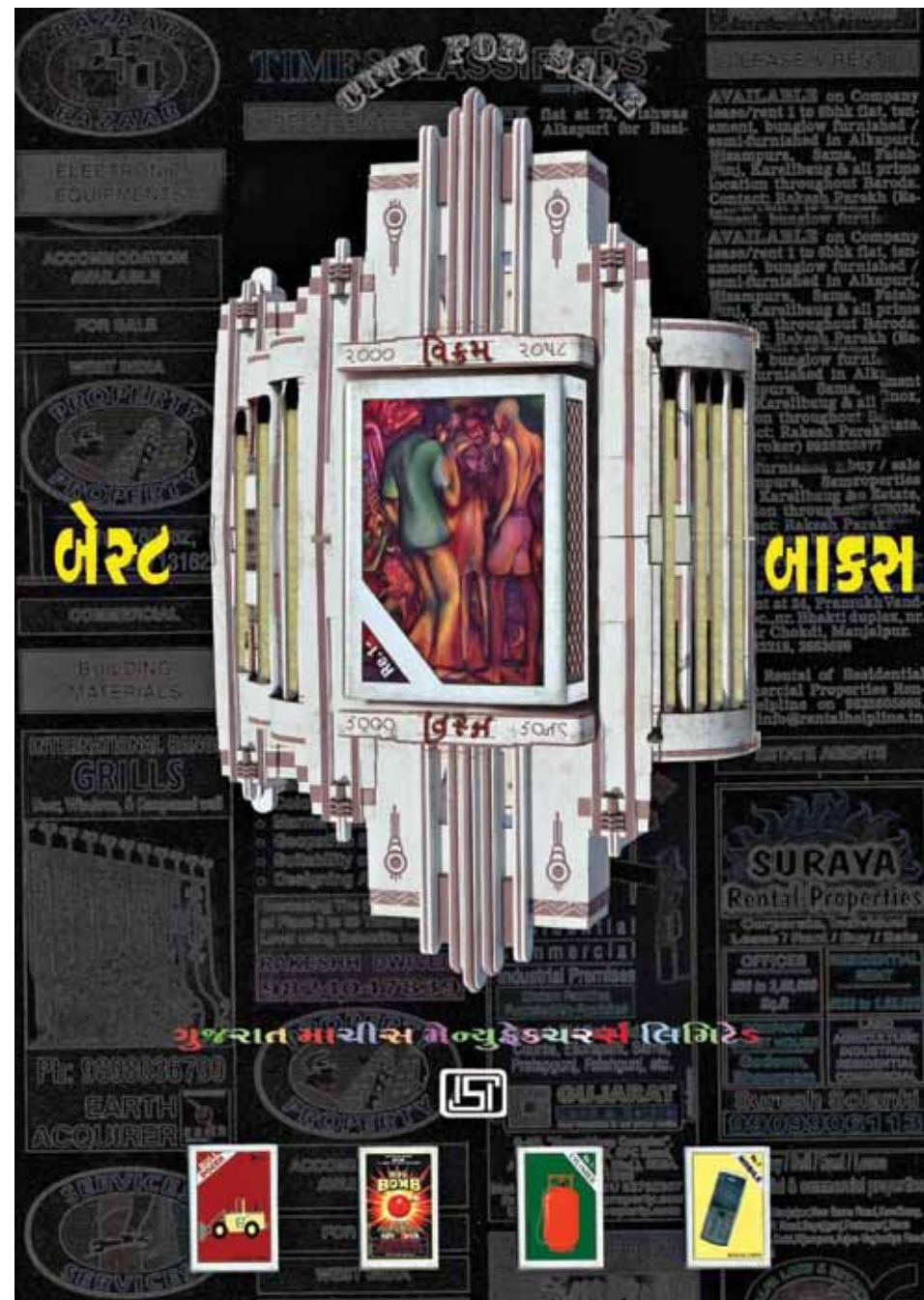
collaborative endeavour in search of the joints between the form and its apparition, between the city and its cinema".

It attempts to study the relationship between the changing configurations of neighbourhoods, their aspirations, and cinema, and the impact this has on the industry's legion, variegated production workshops, labour forms and spaces of dissemination.

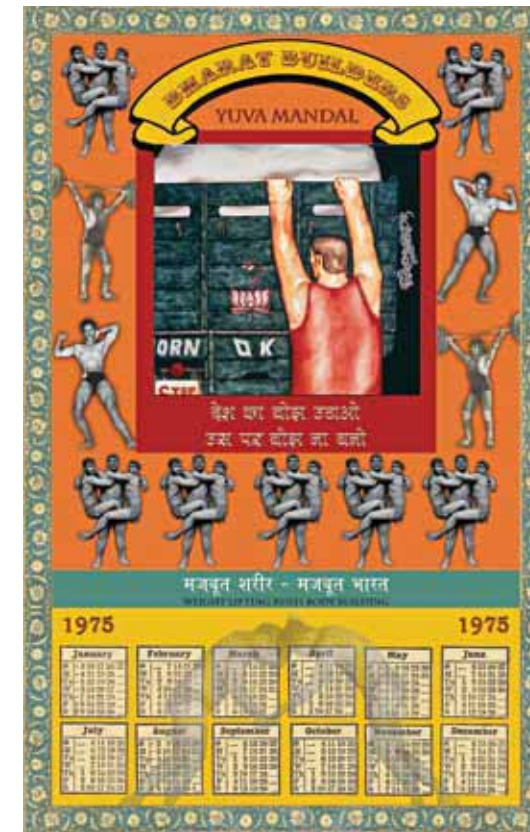
The show uses art, which is informed by historical exploration, to interpret cinema's changing nature — juxtaposing this against the phenomenon of the city. In doing so, the project offers an artistic

means to engage simultaneously in nostalgia and documentation.

The artworks range from serious academic research — a library-cum-laboratory space that collates and archives photographs, texts and maps — to the playful. *So Near Yet So Far*, Paromita Vohra's three-piece sound installation uses a PBX set, public telephone and STD booth as listening stations, as a reference to both the use of distance and longing within the cinematic narrative, and the capacity of these spaces in the city to make the public private. *The Calendar Project: Iconography in the 20th Century* uses either found



Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, City on Sale



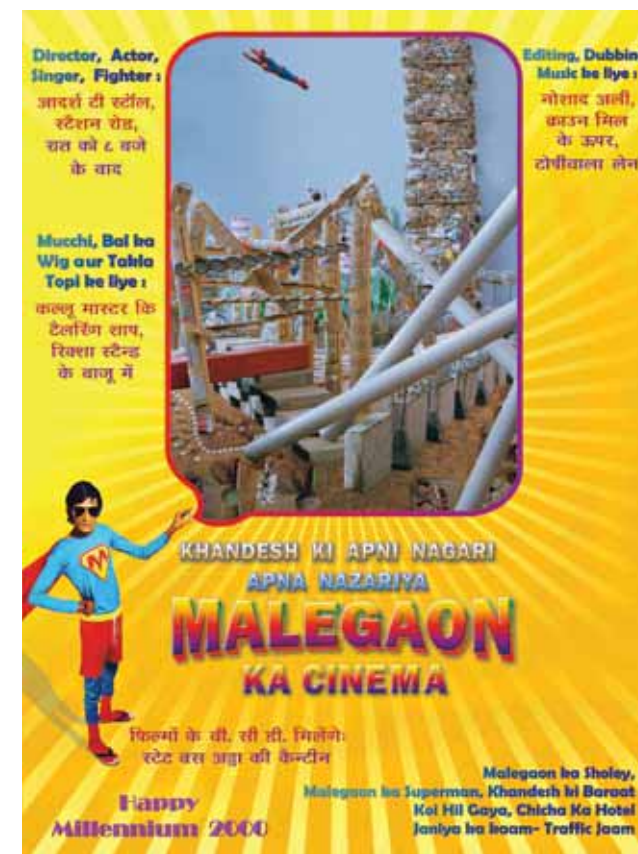
Sudhir Patwardhan, Yuva Manch



Meera Devidayal, Tum Kab Aaoge



The Calendar Project: Iconography in the 20th Century looks at the iconisation and commodification of printed images in the public domain



Vivan Sundaram, Malegaon Cinema



Ranbir Kaleka, Passion Fruit



Cinema City Lived



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images or earlier works of the artists in calendars as an attempt to re-read the iconisation of printed images in the public domain, and how new politics and efficacies had been ascribed to them. Atul Dodiya's *Fourteen Stations* punctures the city into its railway stations, each marked territorially by a Bollywood villain, warning their passengers while helping them orientate themselves. *Return of the Phantom Lady or Sinful City: A Photo Romance* is a sequel to the heroine's first noir-styled adventure. Here the character played by Pushpamala N encounters Mumbai's land mafia and the city's changing face. The chase takes her to old theatres and artisan-

workshops, towards which the city has little regard now. Shreyas Karle's *Museum Shop of Fetish Objects* imagines itself as a museum of cinema in the post-cinematic era. Various fetishes foregrounded by Bollywood — parts of the human body, clothes, words — become sculptural objects, documenting, even caricaturing, scopophilia, objectification and fetishism in cinema and the city. The public museum then becomes a space to renegotiate — break down, reconstruct and reinterpret — history through artistic interventions and public engagement. The show as a collaboration between artists

and researchers "is modelled on contemporary, urban systems of post-industrial production: networks of assembling, processing, manufacturing, recycling ... all independent and yet interdependent". Dutta says that the works are "simultaneously products of research, collation, pedagogy, creativity, criticality, and then, an attempt at archiving". She adds: "In this endeavour of interdisciplinary collaboration, the authors are many, but they are distinct and not faceless. We have attempted a methodology whereby each one's work exists independently, and yet attains fullness and exuberance only in relation to the works of others."

The exhibition has been put together by Majlis in collaboration with the Design Cell at Kamla Raheja Vidyaniidhi Institute for Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVI). Film screenings and guided walkthroughs by artists and curators are part of the exhibition in a hope to facilitate better interaction with the visitors.

Roshan Kumar Mogali

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www.projectcinemacity.com



Bioscope