

# The sum of its parts

**PREVIEW** Project Cinema City is a grand exercise exploring the relationship between Hindi cinema and Mumbai.

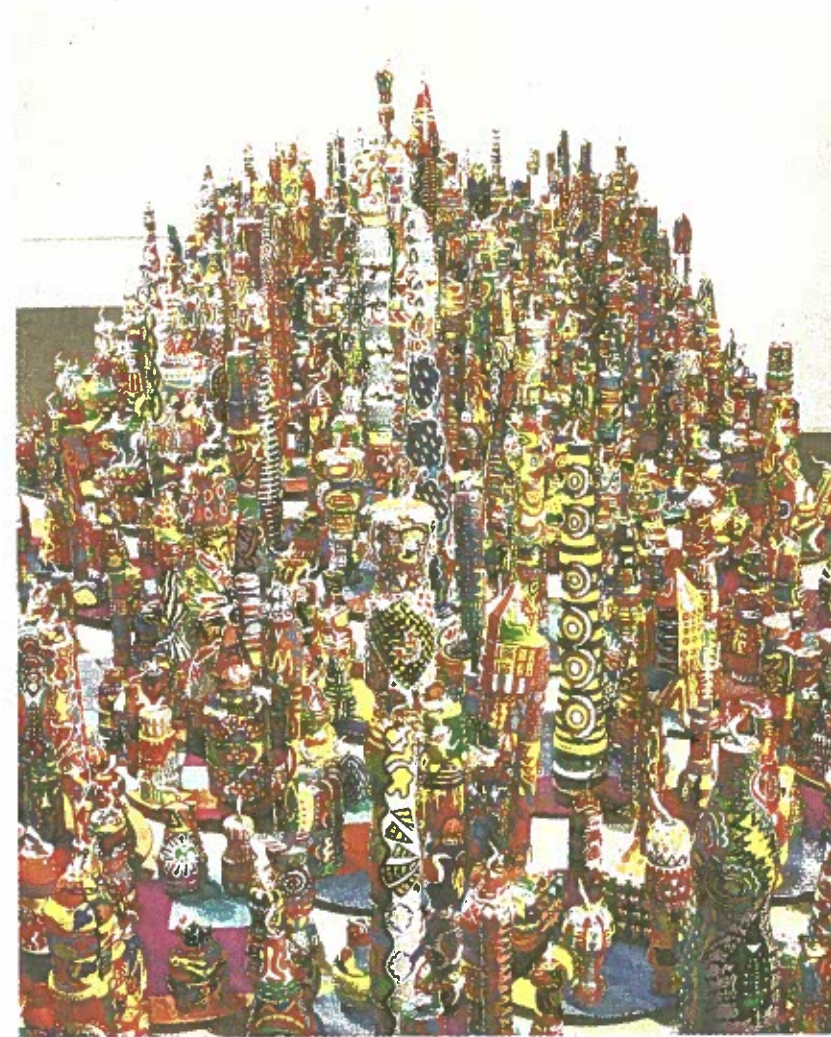
SHAILAJA TRIPATHI

If you choose to not get overwhelmed by the intellectual aura of the visual arts, you would be able to see the clear intent of this massive exercise known as "Project Cinema City: Research Art and Documentary Practices", an art exhibition that will kick off at National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi this Friday. Through 12 art projects, it brings forth the relationship between Mumbai and cinema, for there is much more to a scene being played out on the big screen. Hindi cinema's production processes and how they fuel various other relationships with the city is what is central to this exercise put together by Majlis, an interdisciplinary arts initiative, and the Kamla Raheja Vidyandhi Institute of Architecture (KRVIA).

So, a dozen quirky artistic explorations set out on this journey. While some are collaborative projects between filmmakers, architects, designers and visual artists, a few are individual efforts. "One of the projects undertaken by KRVIA maps the whole city. It explores the linearity of Mumbai's entertainment industry through an installation using pipes. It's the story of the whole city. It talks about the railway line and how it clearly segregates North Mumbai from the South. Politics, ghettos, economy and migration are part of the larger picture of the project. People come to be part of the industry, become stars, but so many end up in the lower rung. The whole industry is economy and it also creates ghettos," says artist Archana Hande who, along with Madhushree Dutta, has co-curated the project.

The exhibition has travelled from Mumbai where, again, it was showcased at NGMA. Even as the content remains the same, the difference in the space — compared to NGMA Mumbai, NGMA Delhi is a horizontal space — will add to the discourse. "It will be structurally different, so the narrative will change," adds Archana pointing out that they won't be able to do as many walk-throughs as in Mumbai as most of the participating artists are Mumbai-based.

Archana says one project seeps into another and in 'Miscellaneous', she says, the linkages are quite evident. "It's a kind of library of created objects which again maps the city. For instance, the artists take the example of Dharavi and

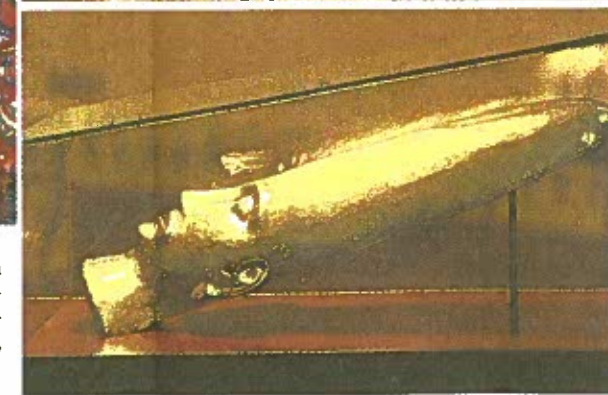
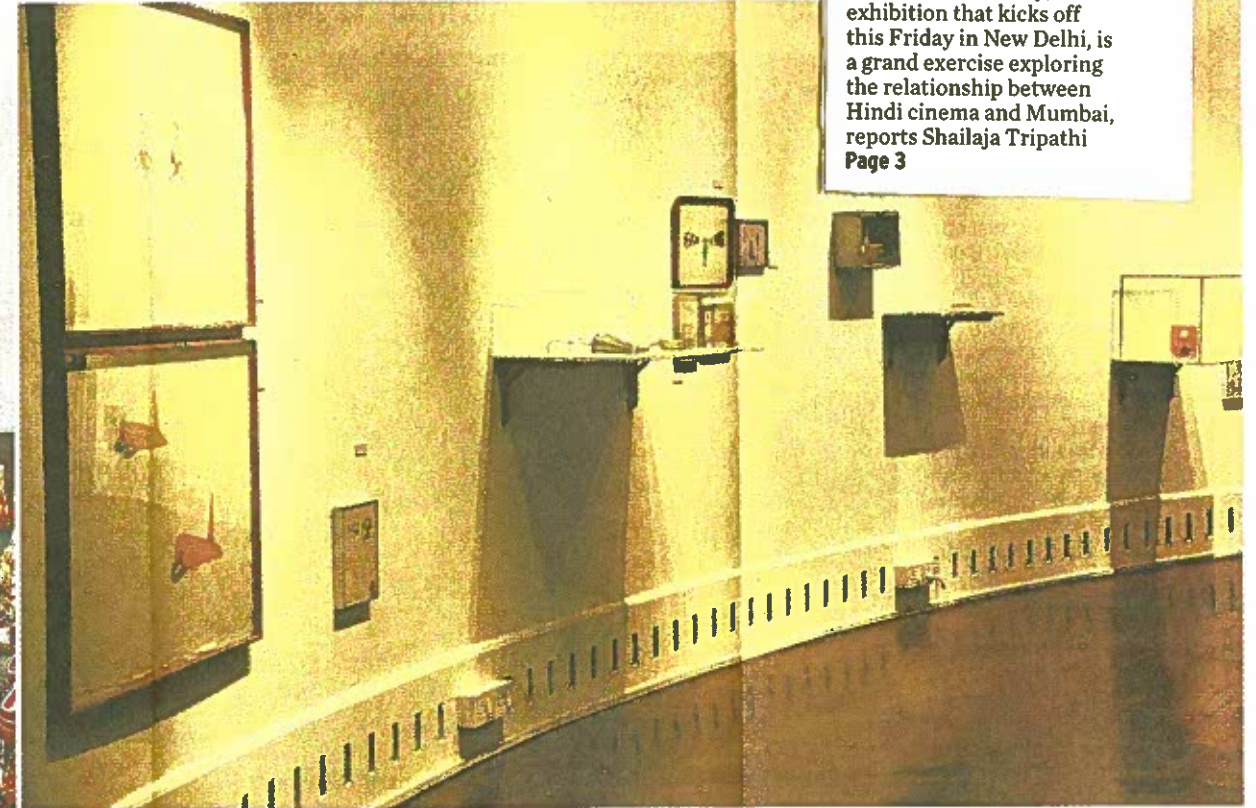


how it is portrayed in different films like 'Taxi No. 9211', 'Dhoom' and a few more. All of them star John Abraham and the cinematographically metes out a similar treatment to the labyrinth by showing it in a particular manner. That's how I will study Dharavi through entertainment." The project has been done by film researchers Paromita Vohra and Shikha Pandey, and artist Kausik Mukhopadhyay.

The works deal with different aspects of cinema, like studios, bazaars, materials and memories. In one project the artists create an imaginary studio through labels obsolete and new. The

installation gets another dimension with the video of three women recollecting their memories of watching cinema in different parts of the city, playing out on the installation.

One is dedicated to the sweatshops, an indispensable part of the film industry. "It is interesting to note how one industry fuels so many others, like there is a person who is licensed to recycle the film reels in Mumbai from which silver is obtained. So we aren't talking about Hindi films but things related to it, like the slums, theatres and the ghettos. The project will keep expanding and altering to include other



**CONNECTING THE DOTS** (clockwise from left) Anant Joshi's sculptural installation; Shreyas Karle's 'Fetish Objects Museum' and few individual objects from it

industries which exist on a smaller scale."

The showcase also includes 10 short films and one feature film, "Fried fish, chicken soup & a premiere show" by Mamta Murthy, which delves into Manipuri cinema.

Pushpamala N's 'Return of the Phantom Lady or Sinful City'; an installation

by Paromita Vohra, 'So Near Yet So Far'; a series by Atul Dodiya, 'Fourteen Stations', bearing faces of some of Bollywood's iconic villains alongside the names of the stations on Mumbai's Central Railway Line; 'Bioscope or A Game of Cinema-City-Modernity Timeline'; and 'The Calendar Project', featuring fun and witty calendars cre-

ated by artists such as Nilima Sheikh, Arpita Singh, Bhupen Khakhar and Chintan Upadhyay featuring advertisements for different products.

(The exhibition will be on view till September 23 and the 10 short films on Cinema City will be screened at the auditorium daily at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.)

## ART



### Exhibition

Project Cinema City, an exhibition that kicks off this Friday in New Delhi, is a grand exercise exploring the relationship between Hindi cinema and Mumbai, reports Shailaja Tripathi Page 3