

# 'Jhakaas', mumbai'

A study of beautiful chaos.

By Hatty Pedder



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Hatty Pedder is an observer. An observer of people, places and things. Of life and all its glorious and often bizarre details. Of fun things, sad things, mundane things and absurd things. Through an artist's eye that is kind, inquisitive, witty and at times gently cutting, we get to share her unique perspective. Hatty has a profound talent for helping us see beyond the mundane and capturing the passage of everyday life in ways that are illuminating, extraordinary and fascinating. As viewers we are drawn into the world she so closely observes allowing us to take pleasure exploring the exquisite detail which is a hallmark of her work. Hatty sees things we don't and expresses them in ways we can't.

Hatty undertook two journeys for this exhibition. The first was the physical exploration and documentation of the vast and chaotic city of Mumbai. The city itself offered her unbound inspiration and an overwhelming choice of subject matter. But as we can see in the finished pieces, certain aspects of Mumbian life rose to the surface of her consciousness and fired her imagination. The ever-present traffic, the melting pot of religions, policemen and of course Bollywood, all found their way into this body of work.

The second part of Hatty's journey centered around exploring and experimenting with new techniques and materials. Her introduction of coloured and mirrored acrylic, and aluminum, to her creative arsenal is a master stroke. The flat, shiny and colorful characteristics of the material contrasts and compliments her intense, descriptive and quirky black line work perfectly. This combination of media works on numerous levels to capture and bring to life the personality and dynamic of this sprawling metropolis.

This exhibition represents a triumph of personal and artistic challenges that have confronted the artist over the last year or so. She faced them all with tremendous courage and conviction and it shows in a body of work that is fresh, alive, insightful, imaginative and as always, distinctive.

Thanks for sharing your journey Hatty. Jhakaas!  
Amazing! I believe we will all enjoy the ride.

Kurt Blanckenberg  
Director  
The Mojo Gallery

# 'JHAKAAS!'

Mumbai – A study of beautiful chaos.

by Hatty Pedder

Hatty Pedder's latest body of work is a life-affirming celebration of India's largest metropolis. In this city of contrasts and extremes where affluence and abject poverty sit side by side, the artist has set out to capture moments that are at times filled with kaleidoscopic vibrancy and others with mundane intimacy. Yet through her amazing sense of detail and ability to express a feeling through even just a quirky black line, every piece captures our imagination and invites us to relive the moment with her subjects.

The show's title 'Jhakaas!' captures both the subject's spirit and the artist's interpretations. As a word 'Jhakaas!' originates from the colourful 'desi' street dialect used by Mumbaiers - and simply translates as 'amazing!' Not only does it perfectly express that burst of Mumbai life Hatty encapsulates within her work but it also gestures towards that strong sense of identity the people of Mumbai hold close.

As we are taken on this investigative journey through the streets and alleyways of Mumbai, the layers and complexities of the city's many spiritual facets are exposed and explored.

Both underlying and direct references are evident; we see religious trinkets as car ornaments, we see Bindis, we see Jesus, we see a Swami. Even the artist's use of neon acrylic sheets to backdrop several pieces of her work radiate with religious homage; they glow. They pay tribute to the idea of auras and Chakras that fill Mumbai's air with intoxicating spirituality.

But it is the artist's fascination with the eccentricities of her piece's unlikely heroes and her desire to tell their stories that enlighten and engage. Anchored in the absurd, her satirical organic black line work expresses the human experience in a delightfully unpredictable capacity. Either alone or with a powerful mix of colour and collage. The artist's inspired use of vivid acrylic backgrounds, extravagant wooden frames and gem collage perfectly mirror the ever-changing energy and character of one of the world's most fascinating cities.

This body of work is intelligent, uplifting and full of unexpected wit. And I can't agree more with the French writer Jean de la Bruyere's observation that "when a work lifts your spirits and inspires bold and noble thoughts in you, do not look for any other standard to judge by; the work is good, the product of a master craftsman."

## Hatty, let's ask the most obvious question first – why Mumbai?

Following on from my last exhibition 'The Social Seen' where I had concentrated on and been inspired by life in Dubai, I wanted to try something different but still utilize my reportage style of working. India has always been somewhere that's fascinated me. The vibrant colours, exquisite weddings, the spirituality...

My first trip to India came during a very difficult time in my life and was part of the healing process. This was a very spiritual time for me, and the first time I had ever truly done anything alone. I stayed with some dear friends in Mumbai, who are art collectors and work together as part of a photography and production team. I had a place to stay and the opportunity, so thought why not take it and go?

## What captivated you most about Mumbai then?

I arrived expecting to be inspired by the glitz and glamour of Bollywood but instead I was captivated by the vehicles there – the cars, bikes and buses – they were just everywhere and really created that feel of fast frenzy and chaos. I loved that feeling in Mumbai. These bejeweled gaudy vehicles had personalities of their own in a way. But underneath it all the real thing that struck me most though was the spirituality of the place. I wanted to capture the strongly evident feeling of religion everywhere in my work, a place where even cars are blessed and adorned with religious icons.

## From an aesthetic point of view, did the 'look' of India ignite any inspiration?

I found the colours in India particularly inspiring. Bright vibrant hues, combined with neon colours to capture those electric qualities of the city. In these pieces of work, I wanted to show the aesthetic chaos, surrealness and beauty of Mumbai. I took so many photographs when I was there, everything you see are real scenes and are inspired by everyday life and people.

## Did India inspire any new ways of producing your work technique wise? Certain aspects of this exhibition are quite different from your other series.

My work will always revolve around my detailed reportage style. It is my signature and which I am known for. But it is important for me that my art form evolves and reflects aspects of the subject matter. You will find I have introduced both acrylic and aluminum sheets into this collection. This new use of materials has added another dimension to my images and given them a slick polished counterpoint to my more gritty and spontaneous line work. This graphic feel helps capture the juxtaposition of earthy spirituality and hard commerce I experienced in Mumbai.

I've experimented more with materials, surfaces and presentation. They've all been used to help establish that uniqueness and energy of Mumbai from a first time visitor's point of view.

## What inspires you to create and how do you keep motivated when things get tough in the studio?

I am very passionate about my work and am usually full of inspiration. I do however have periods when I have over painted or over exhausted a concept and then just start, as I say, wasting paper. When this happens I normally try to push through it but that doesn't always work, so am forced to take a break. I always find after a break I come back with fresh new inspiration and tend to change direction in what I am doing. I think it's really important to stop and reflect now and again on what is being created and to be experimental and try new things.

## Your pieces can feel spontaneous and fluid and at times quite chaotic (in a nice way). Is your studio the same?

The state of my studio definitely reflects what I am working on and can get rather chaotic! I have everything in order in my studio as I work with so many different mediums. When I am creating complex collages my workspace gets absolutely covered in magazine cuttings, different papers, feathers and anything else I'm experimenting with at the time.

## If there was one piece of art you could own what would it be?

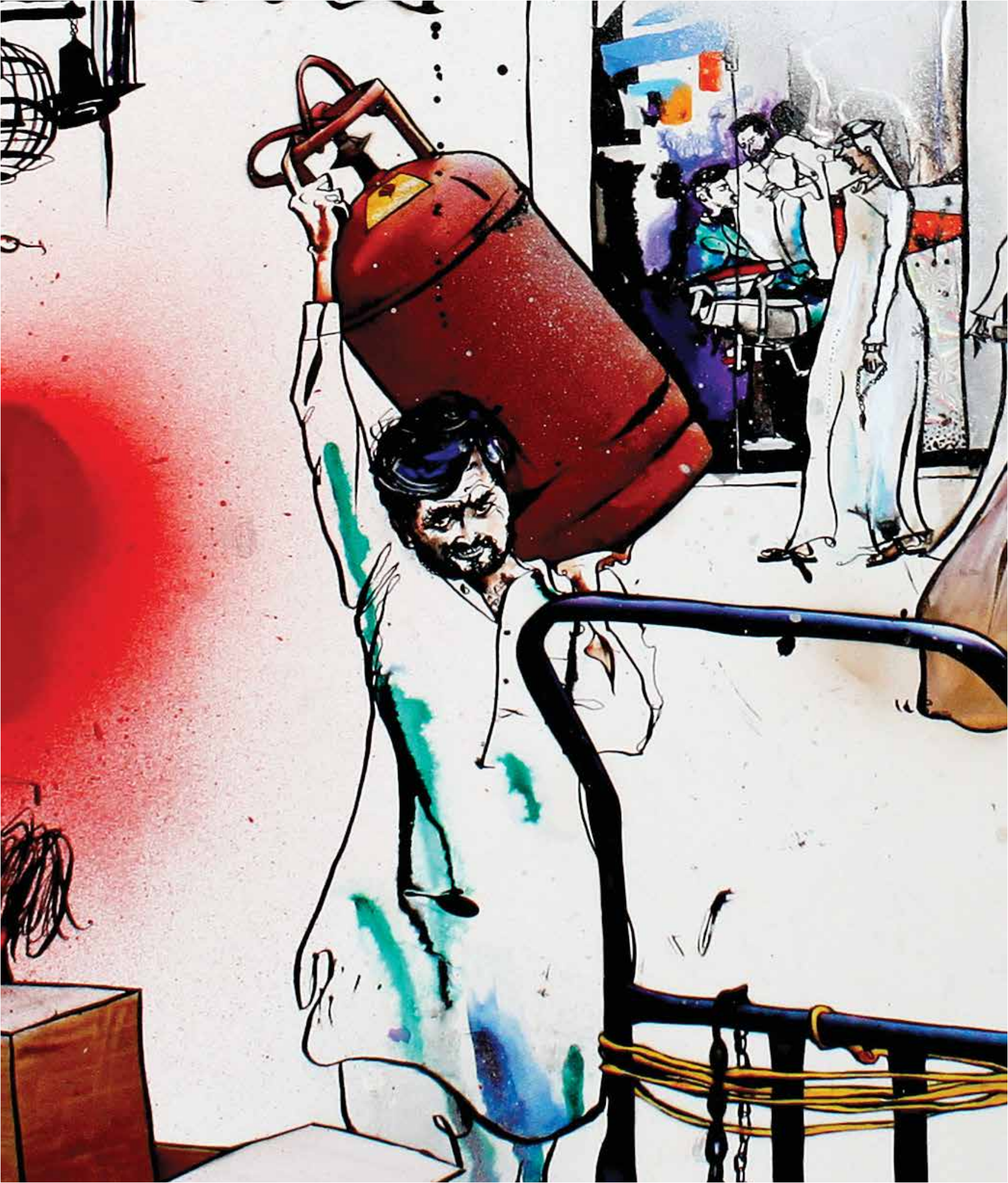
There are so many! I would love to own "The Kiss" by Klimt, it was the first image I truly fell in love with as a child and it personifies the idea of 'beauty' so perfectly.

## Was there a particular painting or artist that helped inspire you to become an artist?

From as far back as I can remember the only thing I ever wanted to be was an artist. I grew up in a creative environment; my Father was an amateur artist and so were my Grandparents so I guess it was in the blood. I remember being extremely fascinated by Aubrey Beardsley's black fluid ink linear work with its stark and dynamic compositions.

The starting point for all my work - however complex it becomes - always originates with a simple black ink line. William Powell Frith was another artist who has greatly influenced me with his detailed compositions, which can be seen in my reportage larger pieces. My work for this collection however certainly has more of a Pop art feel than my previous work, with a stronger usage of photomontage combined with touches of Surrealism.



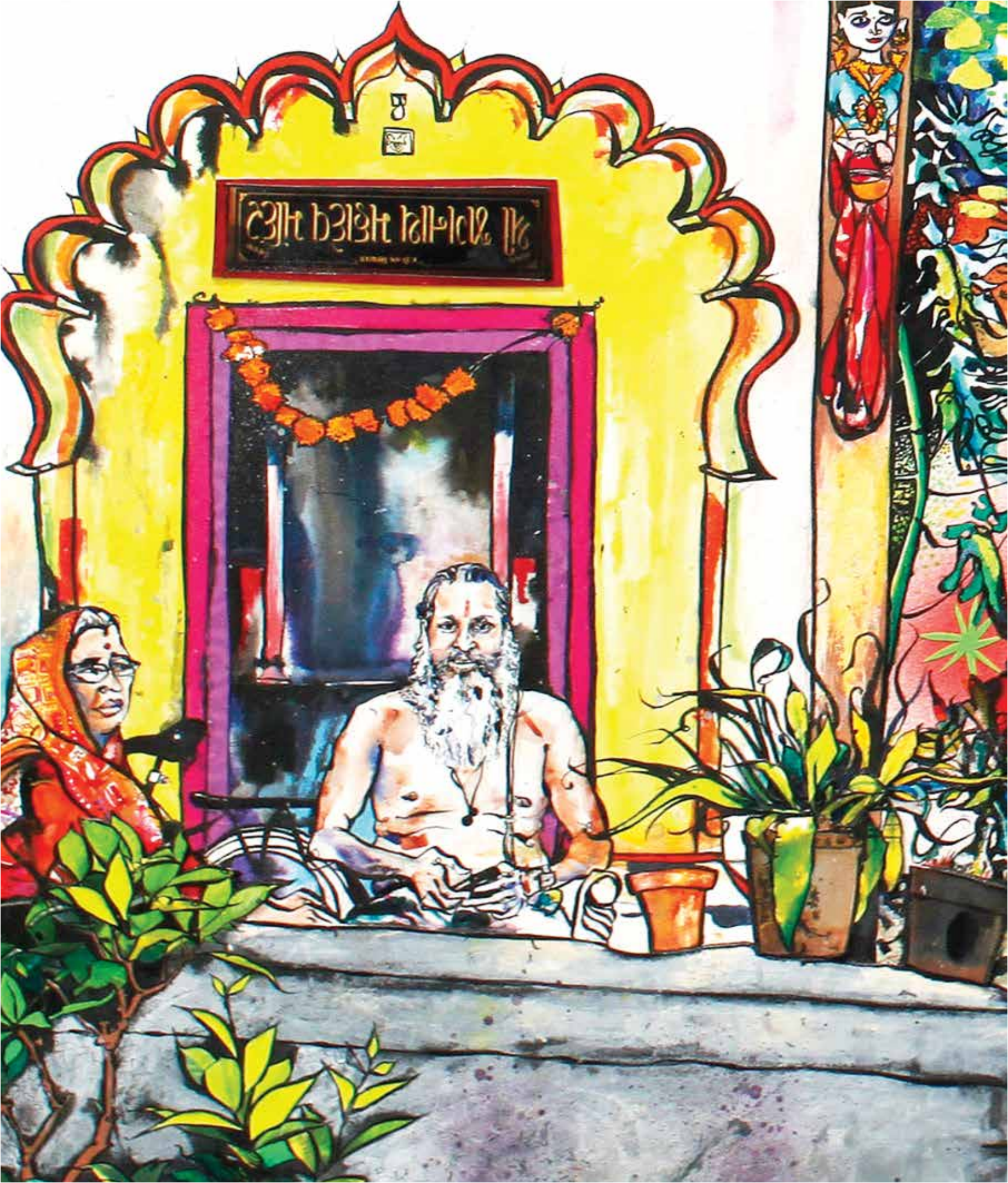


**ALUMINUM** | Mixed Medium

125 x 158 cm | 2012

This mixed media piece is the genesis of 'Jhakaas'. Here Hatty has recreated the frenzy and chaos of an aluminum market in Dubai. Always drawn in by eccentricities Hatty has many starring roles in this image, such as a man who seems to be shaking snakes as entertainment for the public. Each character is taken from life. Within the context of the rest of the exhibition we can see the evolution of 'Jhakaas' start here. Not only did the subject matter of 'beautiful chaos' (that she first sensed in this particular image) inspire Hatty to seek out this concept in other locations such as Mumbai, but her style, we can see, has started to evolve into the free, loose and vivid aesthetic of 'Jhakaas!'. The use of spray cans and pencil outlines creates an impression of this scene rather than a documentation - this way she is able to extract the movement, the energy and the pure essence of this aluminum market.





**BANGARA GHAT** | Mixed Medium

132 x 83 cm | 2012

This panoramic portrait of Bangara's Ghat portrays the spirit of Mumbai with an electric colour palette that highlights the vibrancy of life in India. Through the use of a single central view point Hatty is able to create a strong sense of symmetry and dynamism within this image; however it is her use of collage and adornment that first pulls in the viewer. Her intricate use of photomontage not only helps draw out the kitsch aesthetic qualities of India, but the different surfaces of texture and shine also help create a sensory spectrum of Mumbai and its soul as a city.

The scene's energy flows through the bustling figures of people and animals alike, Hindu temples back drop the image as birds fly within the radiating presence of these Holy establishments. The beauty of this piece is that because of Hatty's use of intricate details, with every viewing you are bound to see something new. Details such as the mother brushing her daughters hair in the distance are just little moments that help build up the warmth and tenderness of Hatty's work. A viewer can also see, anchoring the piece in the foreground, a figure of a Priest radiating with blissful peace, his eyes inviting us to share in his tranquility. Every person in this image was inspired by a real person, adding an extra reportage quality to Hatty's depiction of Bangara's Ghat.

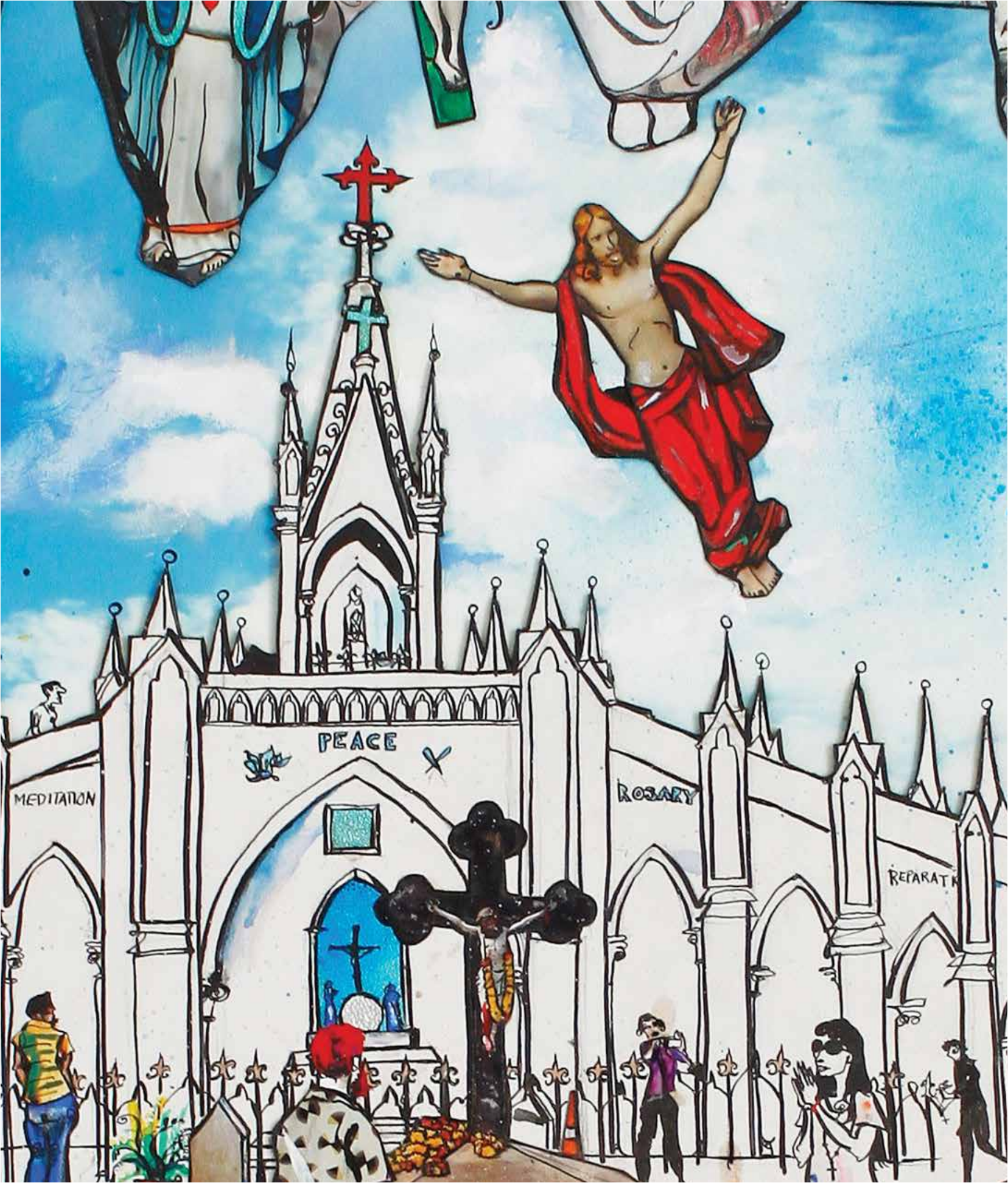




**FRUIT MARKET** | Mixed Medium  
80.5 x 62.5 cm | 2012

This Indian fruit market has been perfectly captured as colours, gems and ornate patterns embellish the image. The scene parades and celebrates the vitality of Mumbai – the fruit is a perfect symbol for this theme of 'life' and 'vitality'. Even though the composition is clean and stark, a viewer still feels a sense of crowded vigor that must have been present at the fruit market as people bustle and squeeze past to retrieve their goods. There is so much detail in this photomontage piece, from gorgeously patterned fabrics to orbs of colour that represent fruit brimming on plates in open stalls.





**MOUNT MARY** | Mixed Medium

80 x 96 cm | 2012

A mixed-media depiction of a popular Christian site in Mumbai is interestingly seen through the frames of a souvenir stall. Jesus trinkets are hanging from the stall ceiling, however the perspective allows them to look as if they are being elevated in the skies of heaven; they seem to swoop over the inked lines of a church. Her use of vibrant sprays and collage that revolves around an electric colour palette encapsulates the pulsating sense of life and spirituality that is felt on the site of Mount Mary.

Like several of Hatty's pieces, a viewer can find something different in this piece with each viewing due to the depth of detail. In the centre of 'Mount Mary' a man is burning a wax leg, a tradition that Hatty felt compelled to 'report'. The burning of the wax limb is a holy offering which the supplicant hopes will help resurrect the health of his leg. The Jesus figurines look as if they are heeding the man's prayers as they hover above the holy flame.





**TRIBUTE TO NORMAN PARKINSON** | Mixed Medium

82 x 103 cm | 2012

Inspired by a fashion image seen in her childhood, the image captures that essence of glamour and India that Hatty admired and yearned to experience. One of the focuses of this ink painting are the fine fabrics and gold of India (seen here as ornamentation on the elephant's head) which, through Hatty's use of fluid lines and bright hues depict these fineries in an intriguing style. This incarnation of the famous photo observes how everything in India is presented as a piece of art; from clothes to animals everything is ornately decorated as a celebration of beauty and creativity.





**THE WALK** | Mixed Medium  
68 x 52 cm | 2012

Hatty became deeply inspired by the idea that everything in India was presented as an art form and as a tribute to beauty and creativity. For example, this alleyway is now a beautiful elephant mural – here made the focus through the use of bright chalk pastels and inks. This mixed-media piece also showcases these women's clothes as a parade of gold and zany fabrics dotted with gems and colour. The city's distinctiveness and personality spills over into its fabrics, gold, paintings, walls, vehicles and people.

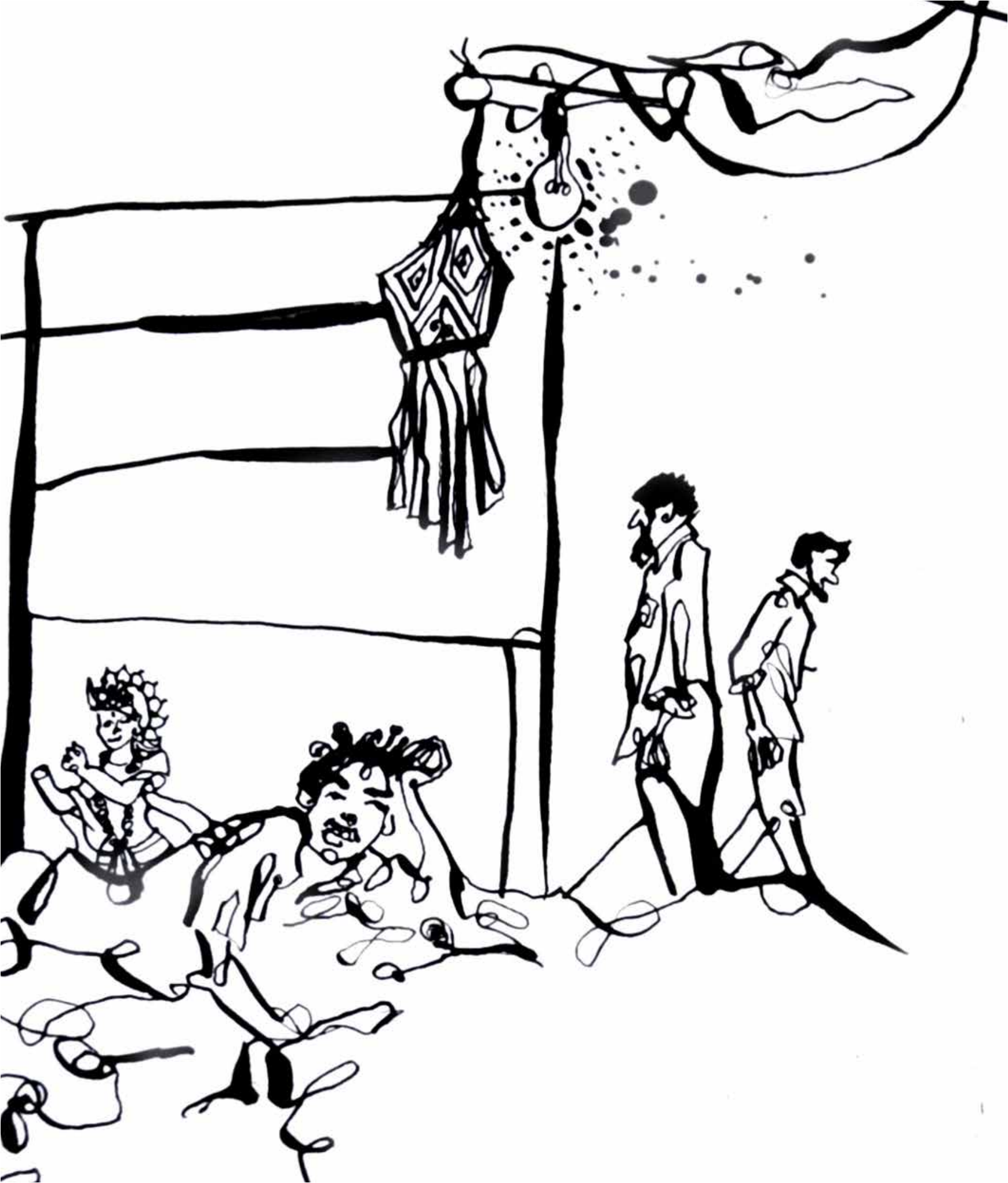




**LIBERTY CINEMA** | Ink  
125.5 x 78.5 cm | 2012

The purity of Hatty's ink line is able to capture the feeling of character and location in this reportage piece at Mumbai's Liberty Cinema. An interesting depiction of the Technicolor Bollywood world that through simplicity and the use of monochrome juxtaposes the dancing colour and gold of the big screen of India.





**SLUM** | Mixed Medium  
45.5 x 54 cm | 2012

This inked portrait of a meal in the slums of Mumbai demonstrates Hatty's ability to portray character and feel through her use of a single, spontaneous line. The purity of this monochromatic portrayal differs from the usual parade of colour and gold we so often associate with Mumbai. The simplicity of this image mirrors the happiness Hatty observed in something as simple as a meal among family members.





**PADMINI** | Mixed Medium

62 x 66 cm | 2012

A man with mirrored shades sits on his padmini like a throne, with shoes politely placed beneath the boot. Unlike several of the other mixed-media pieces in Hatty's Traffic series, the graphicness of this image has been brought out by the simplicity of her monochrome palette (except for the blinking red shine of the car lights). The man and car look as if they are one as he sits with an almost authoritative air, a relaxed counterpoint in an otherwise frantic city.

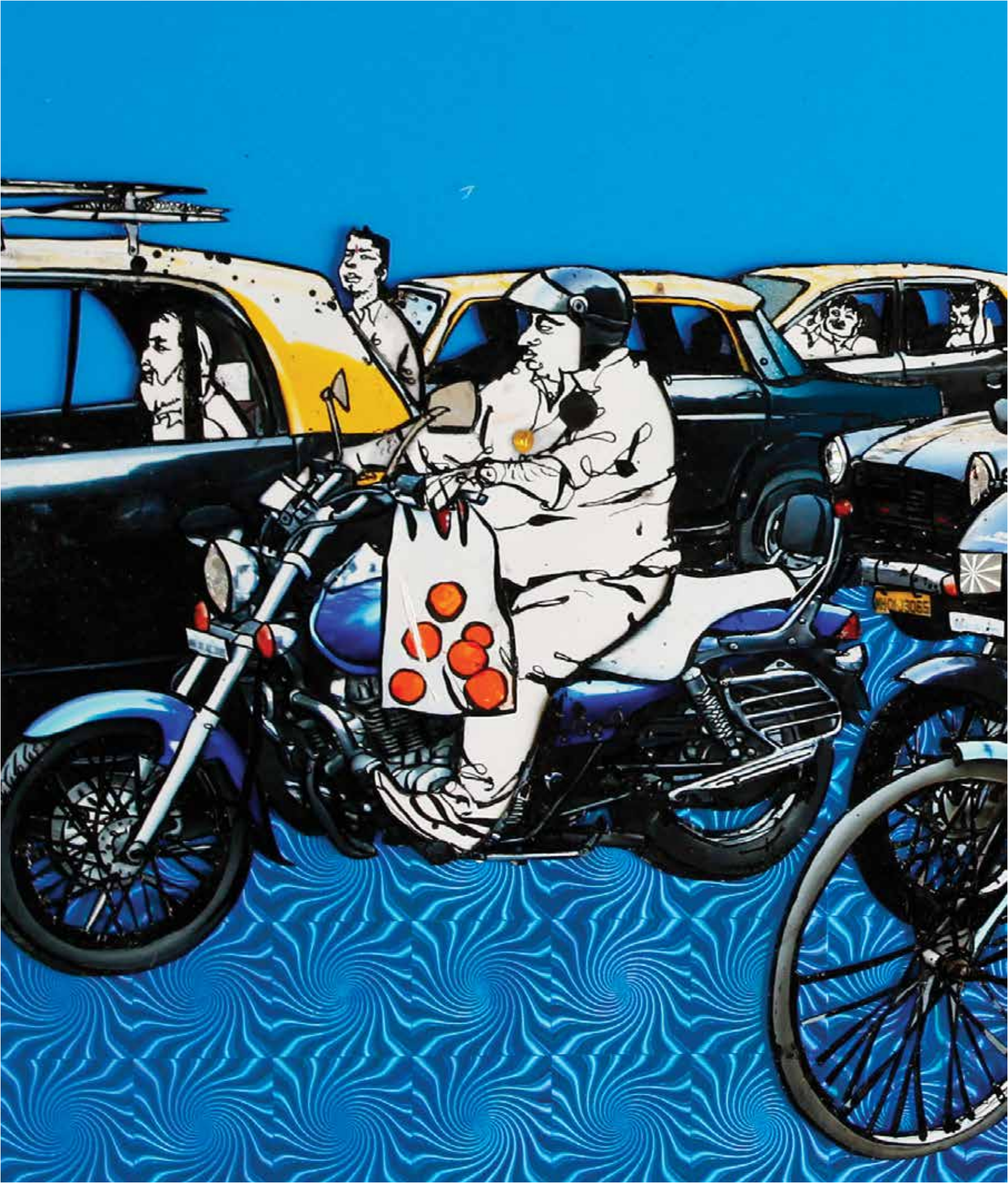




**TRUCK** | Mixed Medium  
57 x 61 cm | 2012

This truck - parked near Mount Mary in Mumbai - with its coloured tassels and painted on face, is a metaphor for Mumbai's joyous personality. Through Hatty's use of photomontage with papers, gems and different surfaces, she is able to create an image that celebrates the kitsch and wondrous image of Mumbai that she so loves. The neon yellow acrylic sky ignites that sense of joy and celebration which abounds everywhere in Mumbai.

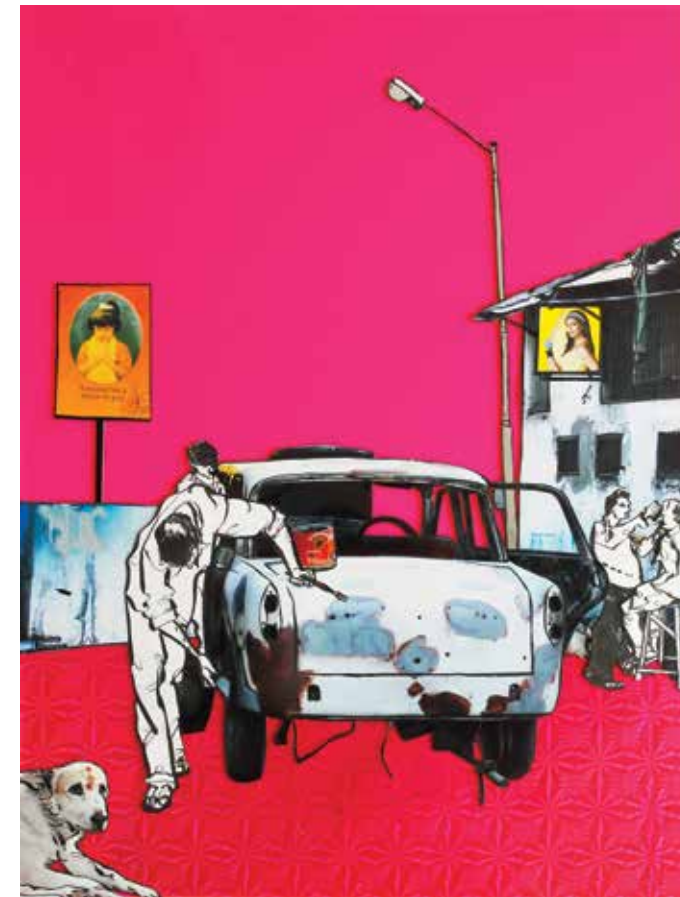
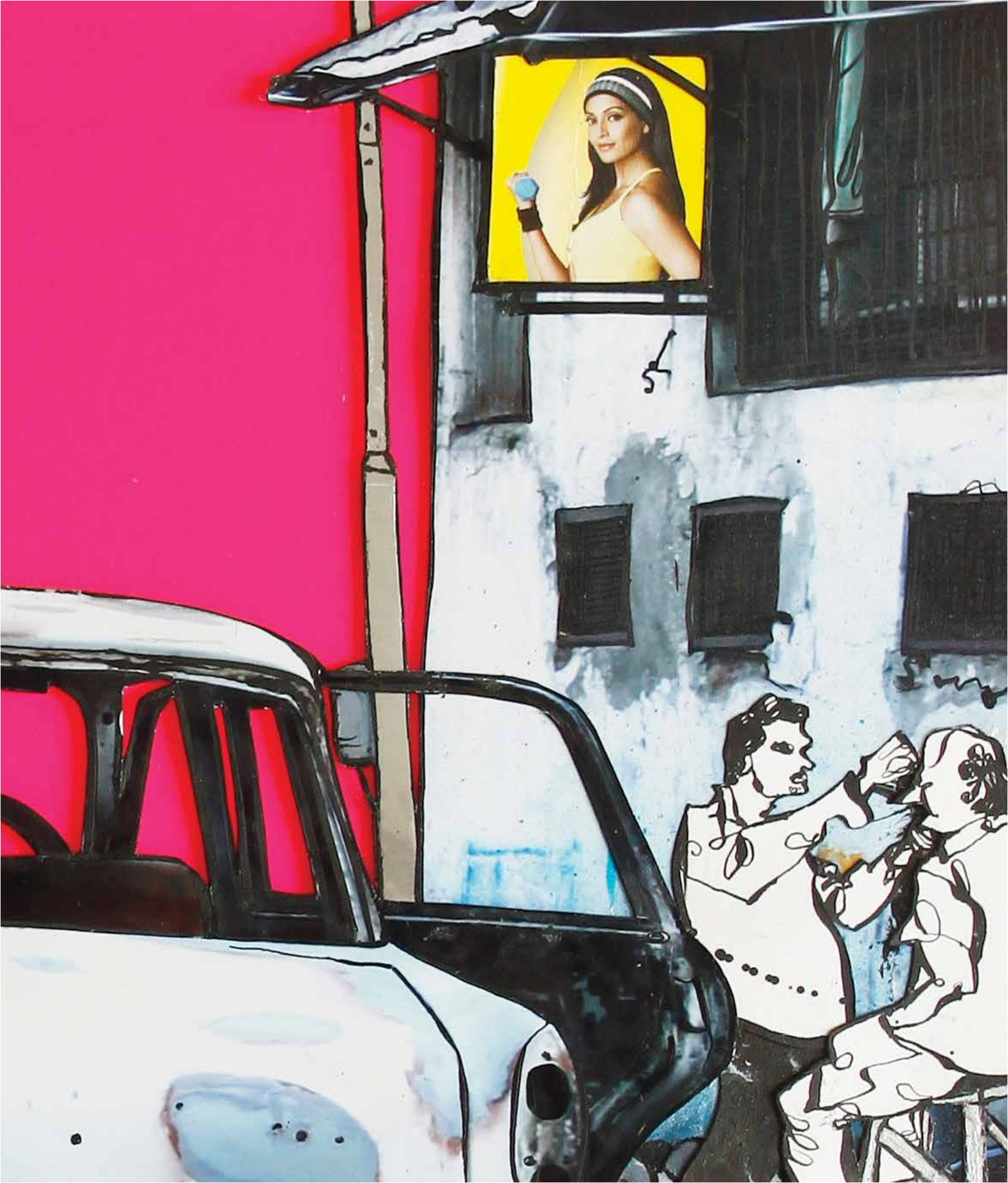




**ORANGES** | Mixed Medium  
68.5 x 56.5 cm | 2012

The serene blue of the acrylic background captures a rare moment of stillness as vehicles wait at a red traffic light opposite the Mumbai train station. Inked characters are seen everywhere: a robust man with a swinging medallion becomes the focal point for the piece. Again we see Hatty pay homage to the kitsch, tinselly vehicles of India through use of gems, papers and trinkets.





**CAR REPAIR** | Mixed Medium  
53 x 65 cm | 2012

Beauty in Mumbai is found even in an old car repair shop; dappled blue patches of mottled steel and peeling wall somehow create a harmonious pattern in Hatty's photomontage depiction of the scene; the vivid pink acrylic helps compliment the hues of Hatty's subject matter. The man shaving in the distance and the Tilak wearing dog in the foreground typify the surrealism of Mumbai.



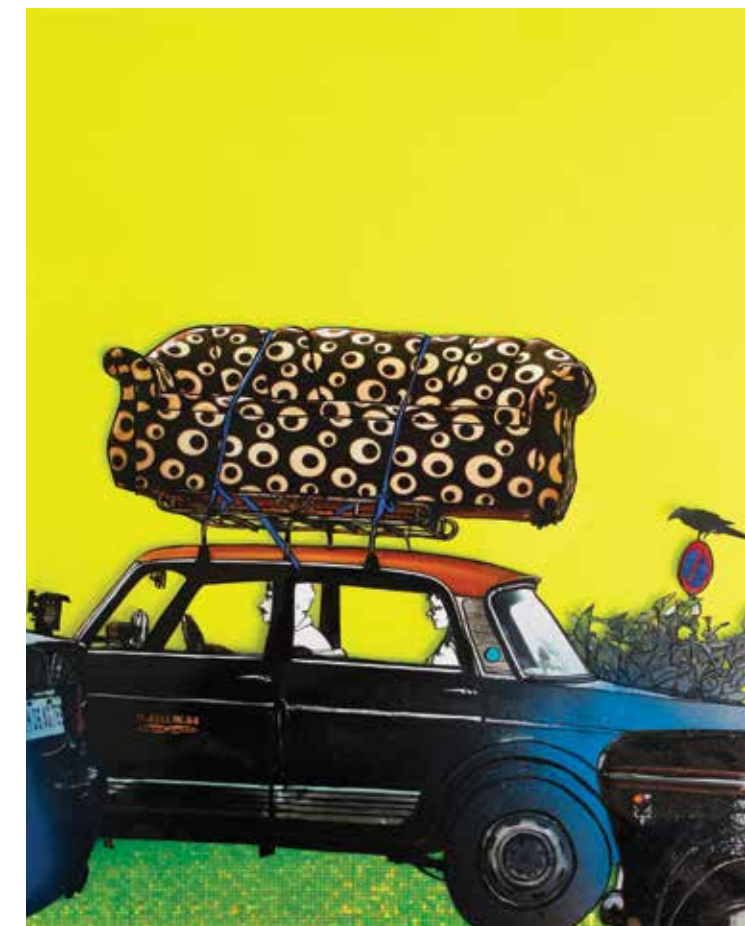


**BANGANGA** | Mixed Medium

70 x 60 cm | 2012

An aesthetically intriguing juxtaposition has been created in this photomontage image between the industrial, rigid mechanics of the motorbikes and the free languid lines of the men on a lunch break. Throughout all the Traffic series Hatty has depicted her figures in simple black outlines so not to detract from the focus of her work - the personality of the vehicles. Here, we also see subtle homage to Hatty's love of Mumbai's spirituality; the face of deity Sai Baba is seen stickered on the front of a motorbike for example.

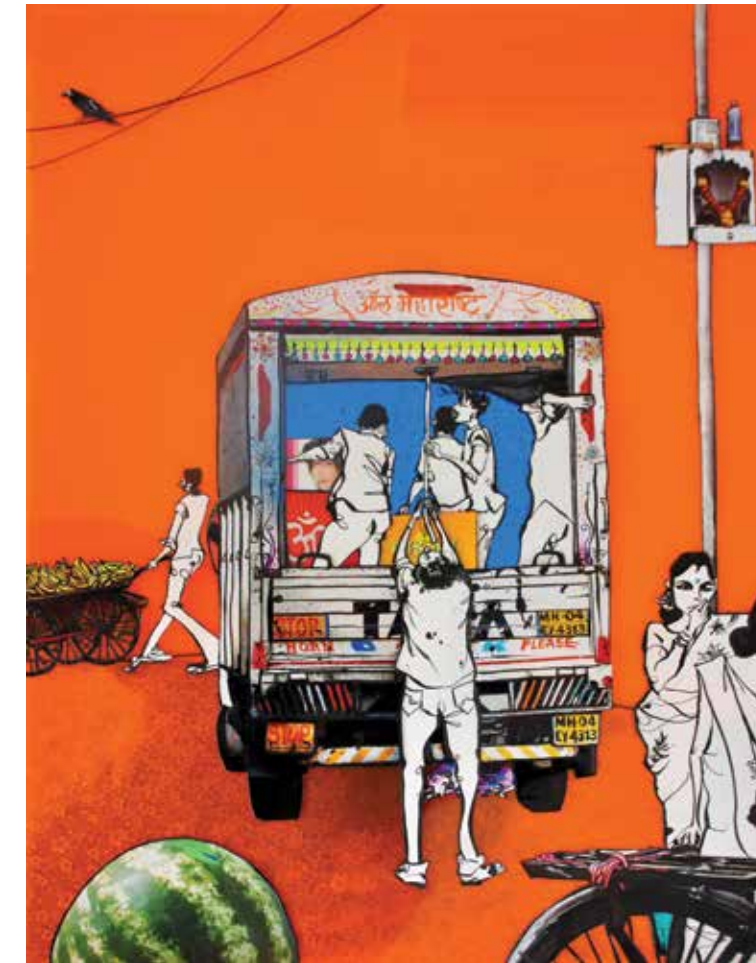
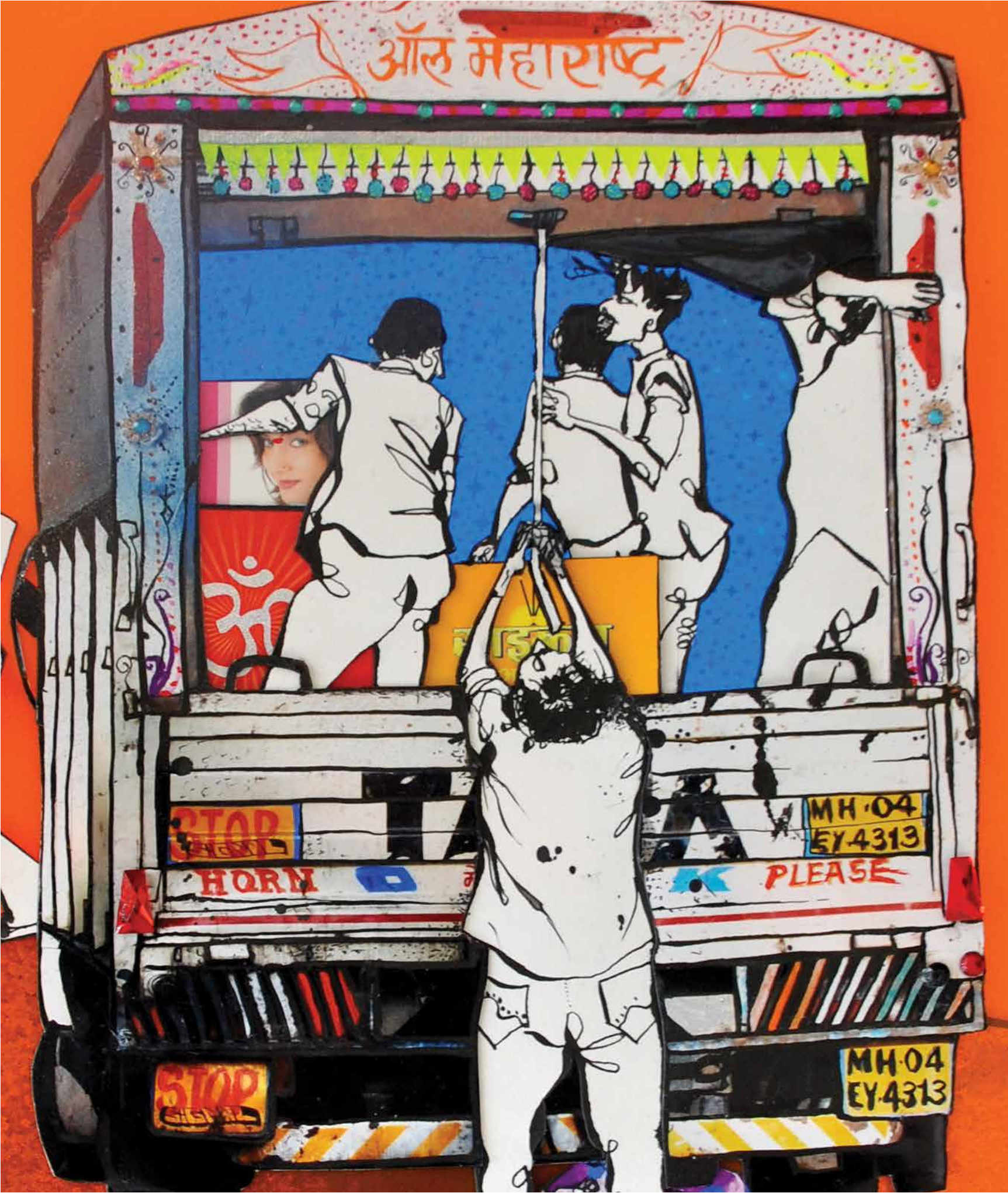




**SOFA** | Mixed Medium  
58 x 66 cm | 2012

On her visit to the Taj Hotel, Hatty was surprised to find that instead of being inspired by the glamour and ostentatious glow of the Taj, her eye was drawn to a padmini delivering a sofa. She talks about the retro feel of the sofa – its particularly 1970's pattern - and the bizarreness of seeing this rather zany and odd-looking piece of furniture and vehicle near the Taj Hotel. Her use of photomontage and inks perfectly represent the eccentric patterns of fabric, alongside this, collaged colours and metallic surfaces bring out the rusted shine of the car. The acrylic neon background makes the image come alive in a way that resonates with Mumbai city life.

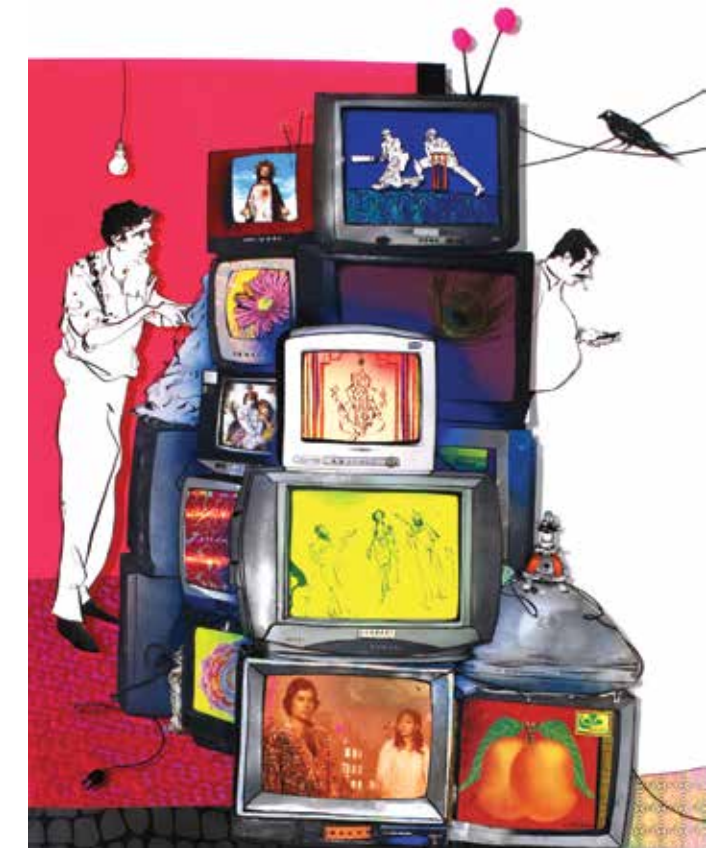




**LOADING** | Mixed Medium  
53 x 65cm | 2012

This photomontage image conveys an unexpected, quirky beauty Hatty observed while watching these Mumbai men at work in the heaving masses of people and heat which is so much part of Mumbai's lifestyle. They are surrounded by bursts of joyous colour - seen in the fruit and the designs on the truck itself. These vivid hues (alongside the electrifying colour of the neon acrylic sheet background) mirror the zestful spirit of Mumbai's buzzing street life.





**MUMBAI DRAMA\_SERIES 1 & 2** | Mixed Medium

86 x 106 cm | 2012

These mixed-media pieces of a TV shop immerse us in an unwitting collage of Mumbai culture. Photo montaged images of classic Bollywood films, religious icons, sports and fashion are a testament to the true identity of this city. The snippets of retro Bollywood films (here starring the faces of Manoj Kumar and Rajesh Khanna) not only celebrate Mumbai Pop Culture but also add to the vibrant fabric of Mumbai's street life.

And then alongside these 20th century cinematic icons are the religious images of Hindu's Ganesh and Krishna, Christianity's Jesus and the Hali Ali Mosque. Together these TV screens are a wonderful symbol of Mumbai as a cultural melting pot.





**GUARDIANS OF MUMBAI SERIES\_1, 2 & 3** | Ink  
(1) 86 x 63cm, (2) 98 x 85cm, (3) 78 x 118cm | 2012

The figures of authority represented in these ink drawings are the shepherds that herd the chaos of Mumbai. However, they often remain unnoticed, these guardians seem to just melt into the landscape at times, their signature beige attire disappearing amongst the hussle-bussle of life that dances around them.

Ostentatious frames make these guardians heros, taking them out of a melting pot of millions and placing them on pedestals.







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