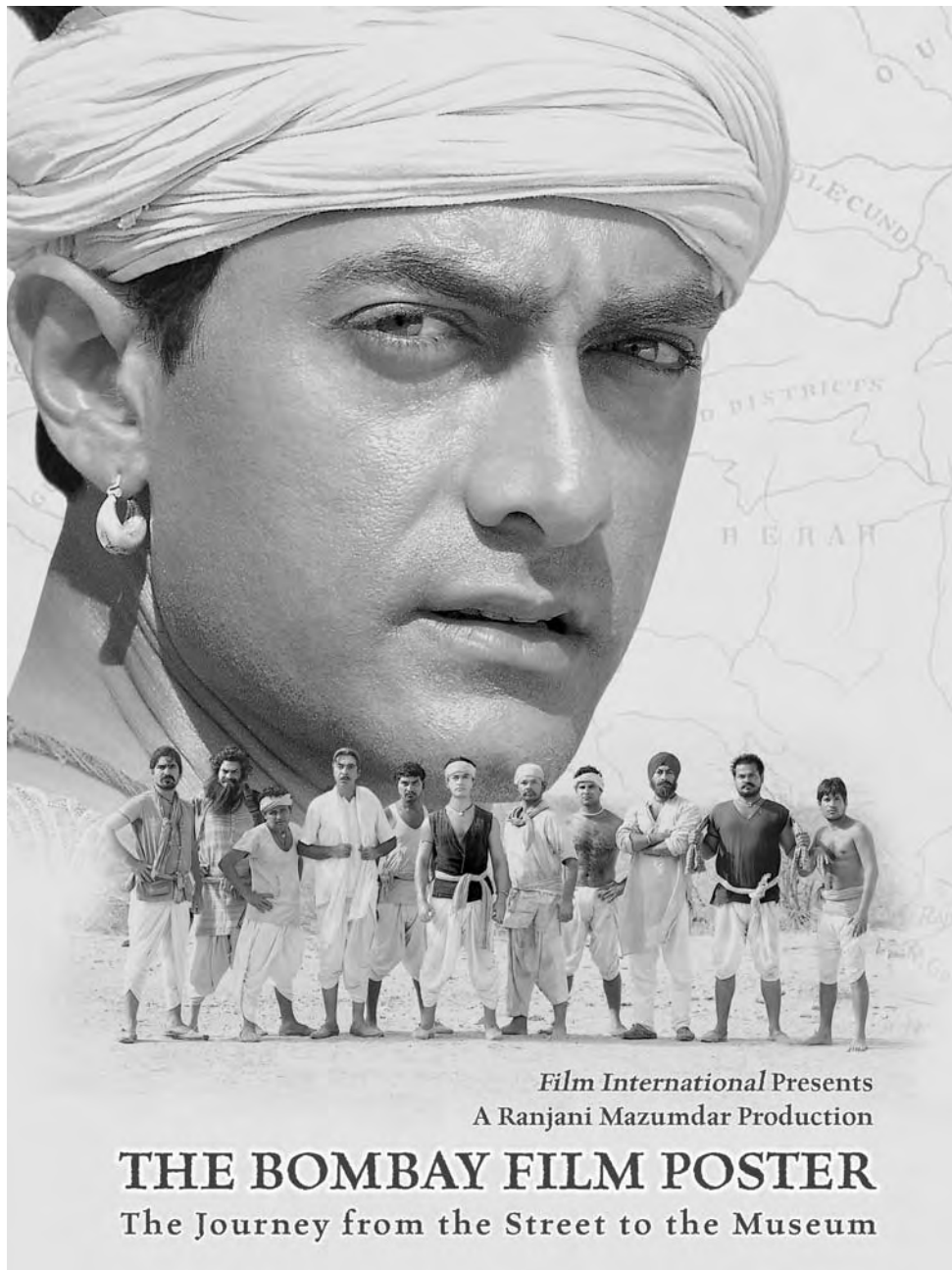


Marketing has always been central to the film industry all over the world, now more than ever. Here, **Ranjani Mazumdar** takes us through the short artistic and economic history of film posters in India.



PUBLICITY IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION is determined by an understanding of the importance of the visual in a world where images saturate our everyday lives. The decade of the 1990s has been an important one for the Indian film industry following globalization. The entry of television, the transformation of urban space, the expansion of the internet and the arrival of new technology has made its mark on the film industry, shaping both its aesthetic impulse as well as its marketing strategy. While the 1990s may have been a decade of major transformations, the industry today is suffering its worst ever economic crisis with almost every film doing badly at the box office. The role of film

publicity which was always important even in the past, has today reached an entirely different level. Rajesh Grover, the head of *Endeavor*, a marketing company set up in 1998 suggests that publicity and marketing have traditionally represented only five to ten percent of a film's success or failure at the box office. But today it determines 40 to 50 percent of a film's success.

Grover suggests that in the contemporary landscape the media becomes a place for competitive promotion and marketing.<sup>1</sup> These shifting practices and concerns have influenced the life of the traditional Bombay film poster in two very different ways. First the rise of new technology and visual

spectacle have transformed the look of the former hand painted film poster. On the other hand the new digitally created poster has in turn led to a desire to see the former hand painted poster as an "art object". Both these tendencies reflect the nature of contemporary transformations where the drive for visual spectacle and the nostalgia for an older form coalesce within a context where new financial concerns, entrepreneurial zeal, marketing and publicity mechanisms seem to be working in tandem.

This essay first charts out the infrastructure of contemporary poster production and distribution, locating it within a historical context of circulation, technological change and urban transformation. This charting out is essential for an understanding of my main argument that while contemporary publicity and television fare have brought about major transformations in the look and financial value of the poster, it has also triggered off a nostalgia for the former hand painted poster. Recognizing this change collectors and new institutional players have stepped in to reinvent and create a powerful new commodity whose journey from the street to the museum needs to be explored.

#### Technologies of Production, Distribution & Circulation

It is difficult to give an exact date for the origins of the film poster. Lithographic printing was introduced in India in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was used to first print religious imagery.<sup>2</sup> The first full length feature made in India, *Raja Harishchandra* (1913; dir: Dada Saheb Phalke) was a mythological. Newspaper advertisements, handbills and publicity booklets of the film can be traced, but no references to the use of posters have been found. The poster of the film *Kalyan Khajina* (1924; dir: Baburao Painter) is perhaps one of the earliest to have survived.<sup>3</sup> It was designed and painted by the director Babu Rao Painter himself. Posters were usually hand painted on canvas and then used as the design source for printing on cheap paper. Since print publicity was the most important form of publicity, booklets of film songs and stories, handbills and posters flourished in the studio era with the poster becoming the most significant and dominant form.<sup>4</sup>

Historically the poster has been important as a traveling form that moves from city walls to lavatories, to *pan* shops to huts. Used as a decorative form in small hotels as well as to promote film culture, the poster is both an advertisement as well as a cultural icon. Posters have circulated within urban centres for many years. Their presence outside cinema theatres and on city walls has been a prominent visual aspect of most cities of the country. In many parts of small town India, posters are pasted on to covered rickshaws with a man making announcements over the loudspeaker. In the big cities, the older forms of film promotion are slowly undergoing changes with the arrival of new digital technologies and the powerful presence of neon light advertisements in the streets. Unable



JAVED AKHTAR, CHANDAN SIDHWANI  
PRESENT



# DIL CHAHTA HAI

AN EXCEL ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

LYRICS  
JAVED AKHTAR  
MUSIC  
SHANKAR  
EHSAN  
LOY



CO-PRODUCER  
PRAVIN TALREJA  
PRODUCED BY  
RITESH SIDHWANI  
STORY, SCREENPLAY, DIALOGUE  
& DIRECTION  
FARHAN AKHTAR

www.t-series.com

to compete with the glittering lights of the new city, film posters seem to have moved away from the centre to the periphery. In Delhi for instance, posters are displayed primarily in the old city or in the dilapidated cinema halls of the Eastern and Western parts.<sup>5</sup> In small town India or what film distributors refer to as the 'interiors', posters continue to be plastered on walls.

The poster industry today is an elaborate structure that requires about five to ten percent of the overall budget of a film.<sup>6</sup> It is a crucial part of the print publicity packet designed for every film.<sup>7</sup> In all there are seven or eight major design houses, all located in Bombay.<sup>8</sup> Work is contracted to these design houses who then prepare the print publicity package which includes posters, photo sets, audio cassette and CD covers and brochures. Following design, around 1,50,000 posters are printed and then sent out to the various distribution territories by the printers directly.<sup>9</sup> India has five major distribution territories with Bombay as the largest one. Given the scale of diversity and the vast interiors of the country, audiences are often segmented and fragmented according to what the distribution network sees as culturally and socially specific.

Therefore the *A*, *B* and *C* centers have come to represent three different streams of audience com-

position for the distributors. *A* centres constitute the big metros like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Bangalore, Chennai and other big cities. The *B* centers are the smaller towns, also known as the interiors and the *C* centers are the places where a special group of films, usually low budget semi-porn films, circulate. The compositional life of a film poster in India depends on the way the distributor works through these territorial divisions. Sanjay Mehta, a leading distributor based in Delhi suggests that the 'urban cosmopolitan' sensibility of the *A* centers

**The poster industry today is an elaborate structure that requires about five to ten percent of the overall budget of a film.**

gives the distributor some freedom with the poster. The use of a guitar in a poster may not be acceptable in the interiors. Therefore a new set of posters are usually designed locally to match the audience taste of the interiors. Mehta suggests that the guitar is then turned into a gun for the benefit of the *B* Centre audiences.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly the popularity of particular stars in certain regions can change the look of a poster. The principles of star power according to regional sensibilities and audience expectation work to influence the design of the poster just as they play a role in star decisions for particular films. Action films are usually considered successful in the *B* centers

and in some *A* centers. Here the posters highlight the melodramatic power of anger, the male body, guns, technology, cars and stunts. The figure of the woman is fairly marginalized here. The family films on the other hand a big staple of the *A* centers highlight the carnivalesque aspects of the new Indian family, joyous celebration, coy gestures, colourful wedding attire and the presence of many women. Romance plays a crucial role in the projection of the family films.

Most distributors and printers feel that posters coming from Bombay offer a generic form that attempts to create a universal appeal for a stratified and highly differentiated audience structure. While these posters remain very important, distributors feel it is imperative to address the tastes and preferences of their specific audience base. Local designs are therefore made to buttress the publicity mechanism for particular geographical territories. In North India, the local designs use Hindi writing as opposed to English which is what Bombay sends out today.<sup>11</sup> In Bengal the posters sometimes use Bengali titles. Popular religious festivals can also shape the look of the poster.

In U P during Id, the local designs have "Id Mubarak" written in bold right on top of the poster to cater to what they see as the "Muslim

belt". Similarly, Diwali and Holi also play an important role in projecting particular films as festive offers for the holiday season.<sup>12</sup> Around 70 to 80,000 local posters are printed for a big budget film. Usually if a film does well in the first week, no new posters are created, however if the first week goes badly, alternative designs are created to attract audience attention. As many printers and distributors have indicated, the clock starts ticking for them on the first Friday of a film's release. The fate of the film at the box office shapes the way the distributor makes 'judgements' about his audience. If the returns are low then elements that are seen as popular and acceptable get added to the local design of the poster, irrespective of their actual existence in the plot of the film. The film poster is therefore an emblematic instance of popular culture, marked as it is by various levels of social, cultural and economic transactions.

Posters travel an elaborate journey moving through techniques of production, design composition, right from the colours used to the layout, and the final printing process. In the past photographs provided by the producer were creatively duplicated on canvas by painters. It took one week to design a hand painted poster image which usually combined elements of action and stars, along with the credits. The artists were specialists in poster designing but not well known painters. The average canvas image was 30 inches wide and 40 inches in length. In the absence of enlargement lenses, the size had to be the same as the final poster print. The canvas image was then photographed in natural sunlight using a traditional camera. The original design size was reduced after 1985 when new enlargement lenses arrived in India.

This was followed by a period when the poster industry adopted what they popularly refer to as the "cut and paste" method. Here photographic images of the film were cut out and compositionally arranged to create the final poster. The colour scheme for the background and other embellishments were added with the paint brush. The cut and paste has therefore been a combination of the photographic and the painted. The designers work through their ideas in consultation with the producer and the director. The designer is sometimes given the script and in the absence of one has to rely on the different ways in which the film is represented by its creators. The key issues that any designer would look for are songs, script, actors, locations and so on. The designer is also provided with many stills from the film. If these are not good enough, studio and outdoor photo shoots are organized with the lead star cast.

All the photographs are then scanned. The process of selection takes days as the designer tries out different ways to layer and compose the posters with the available stills. The arrival of computer technology has made way for greater digital manipulation, forms of layering, color corrections and multiple images. The ability to try out different compositions on the computer is seen as enabling greater flexibility to represent the multiple dynam-

ics of any film. Along with the breed of high profile established designers in Bombay, a parallel economy of local designers has emerged in other cities. These designers are comfortable with computer culture and regularly download star images from the internet to design local posters. The proliferation of computer shops of every kind, has made accessibility to this technology easy. There are many former designers who are now sitting in computer shops, composing for election posters, low budget films (particularly C circuit and local designs for the interiors), government health campaigns and so

### The designers work through their ideas in consultation with the producer and the director.

on.<sup>13</sup> Despite their creative skills, none of the local designers get paid like their high profile counterparts in Bombay.

Given the chaotic nature of the film industry, almost all the decisions concerning the design composition are taken on an ad-hoc basis. There is rarely a script for the designer to see. Simrat Brar who designed all the posters for *Lagaan* (2001; dir: Ashutosh Gowariker) recalls that this was one of the rare projects for which she was given access to both the script and the songs which had already been shot. The theme of each film is usually broken down into two or three central thematic. Brar saw *Dil Chabata Hai* (2001; dir: Farhan Akhtar) as a film that dealt with "attitude, freshness and an international disposition". Brar subsequently tried to establish the three themes together in different posters.<sup>14</sup>

Trained as a designer at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Brar started her career in advertising. While the Bombay film poster has always had its own unique form of presentation, Brar recognizes that today the look of the poster, its design aesthetics and paper quality is now increasingly dependent on various trends within commercial advertising. Since many of the designers are now joining the film industry with a background in corporate advertising, the overlap of techniques is not surprising. The production cost of the poster before computerization was approximately rupees 1.50 per poster. Today the average cost of a poster is about rupees seven or more given the budget of the film. A representative of *Silver Point*, the leading printer of posters in Bombay who control sixty percent of the printing in the industry claims the average cost has gone up because of better quality art paper, new printing technology and designer fees.

For a big budget film last year, *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gumb* (2002), the producer spent about two crores on the print publicity which was one sixth of what actually went into the films overall publicity.<sup>15</sup> *Silver Point* is well known in the corporate world for their printing work and like the designers bring advertising skills to the printing of film posters. Unlike in the past when print and the preview trailer for theatrical exhibition were the only forms of publicity, today television, professional campaigns led by the stars/director/

producer, and radio, are all part of the publicity network. *Endeavour* sees itself as an organization that works through all these different sectors to prepare the entire marketing strategy of films with print publicity as only one part of it. *Endeavour's* creator Rajesh Grover insists that film needs to be marketed like any other product and this entire process has to be professionalized since the film industry was never geared to such a framework. Endeavour expects anything from 15 to 20 percent of the overall budget of the film. The publicity is then planned as a campaign that includes every form of promotion. Today the overlapping worlds of advertising, fashion, film and television have produced a new culture of aggressive marketing. The fluid movement between advertising and the film industry is also reflective of the new aesthetics of consumption emerging with globalization.

### Television, Urban Space and the 'New' Poster

The link between consumption and the aestheticization of urban space has been explored by several scholars the world over. It is in the processes of circulation that the commodity form acquires magical properties. In India the visual power of globalization can be easily seen in the radical transformation of many parts of the city. The rise of multi-plexes and refurbished movie theatres, the emergence of shopping malls, coffee shops, ATMs and neon light advertisements across the prime districts of many of the big cities have introduced a different regime of spectacle. Added to this is the transformation of both the home and the outside where cable television has in a dynamic way changed the eye's optical capacity to wander through diverse locations of the world.

The proliferation of visual "surfaces" linked primarily to the spectacularization of consumerist display has transformed the nature of street interaction in some parts of the city, even as the coexistence with older forms of display continue to be present in other parts of the city. Whatever the exact nature and extent of the transformation in India, there can be little dispute about the emergence of a distinctly different regime of visual culture where electronic surfaces and other forms of aestheticized display seem to have created a scopic fascination for visual euphoria. In the midst of the visual sensations that define the times that we are living through, like the cinematic form itself, the poster has also acquired that distinctly 'new' glossy look.

The coming of cable television in the 1990s created a new space for film publicity. Initially, song sequences were released for count down shows. Soon organized short trailers were created to publicize the film. The trailers have to make their presence felt in the clutter of programming, advertising and music. People from the world of electronic advertising are now asked to make the trailers spectacular and dramatic. The trailers make sure that the audience is given an array of foreign locations, action, romance, music and star presence. Having

emerged as a prime site for film publicity, the relationship between television and the film industry has deepened as virtually all the channels are now showcasing 'Bollywood'.

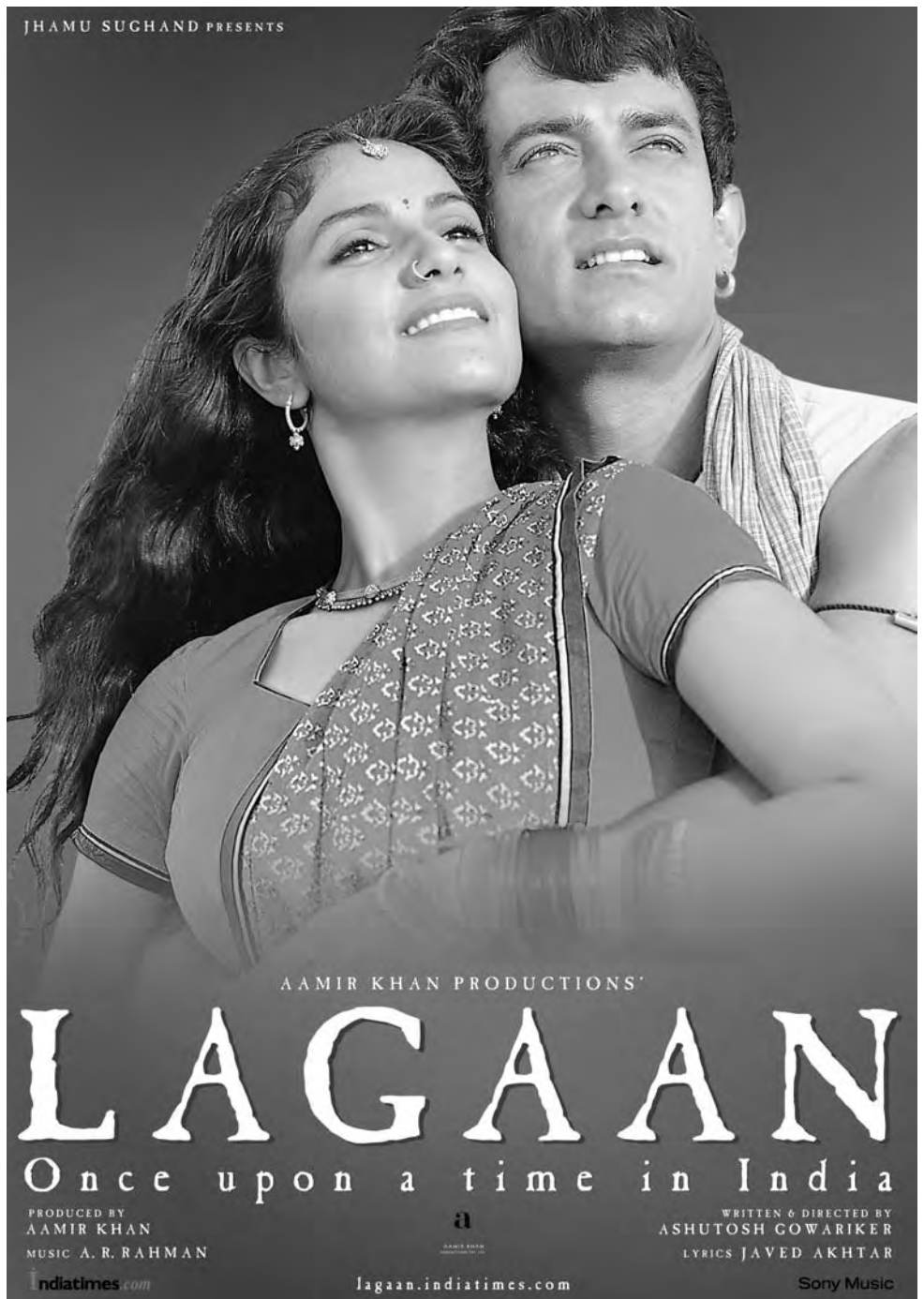
Rahul Nanda, the man responsible for introducing digital technology in 1992, wiping out the "cut and paste" method that was still prevalent at that time<sup>16</sup> sees television as the main reason for the 'new look' of the poster. Nanda saw the big painted

Having emerged as a prime site for film publicity, the relationship between television and the film industry has deepened as virtually all the channels are now showcasing 'Bollywood'.

hoardings as "kitsch", where "actors looked dirty, painted and tacky". He introduced the first digitally created billboards into the city. For Nanda, film advertising in the 1990s "started looking classy and sophisticated". Nanda faced initial resistance from traditional designers but computer technology finally became the dominant mode of poster designing. "Today print media can look like electronic media" says Nanda who sees the internet and global television as the markers of a new era where visual culture moves in a seamless loop between the print and the moving image<sup>17</sup>. Clearly the desire for gloss and sophistication is fuelled by a transformation of the visual scape that is visibly articulated in the arenas of architecture, advertising, film and fashion.<sup>18</sup>

As the texture of the built environment undergoes changes, through novel uses of steel, glass and light, we enter a zone of urban movement in certain parts of the city that is spectacularly aestheticized, magical and seductive. One of the major additions to the built environment that we have seen in the last few years is the entry and presence of television in public space. Television in its new incarnation has also entered the dynamic rhythms of public life and space in seemingly unobtrusive ways. As coffee shops, restaurants, airports, department stores, bars, shops that are both small and big, fast food chains and other public spaces generate the visual culture of "ambient television", the perceptual sphere of the distracted gaze experiences the visual dynamics of the electronic media.<sup>19</sup>

We encounter the television set in more places than just our home as it integrates itself within the rhythms of urban life. This pervasive and continuous interaction with the rapid movement of images, whether MTV or News, film songs or cricket, both at home and in public (in small towns and big cities) pushes the film poster to match the aesthetics and the shiny quality of the television screen while at the same time also appear in a more organized and ordered pattern. Both Simrat Brar and Rahul Nanda have indicated how the look of the poster needs to overlap with the promos appearing on television. The visual appearance of both forms need to be similar in order to create a seamless engagement

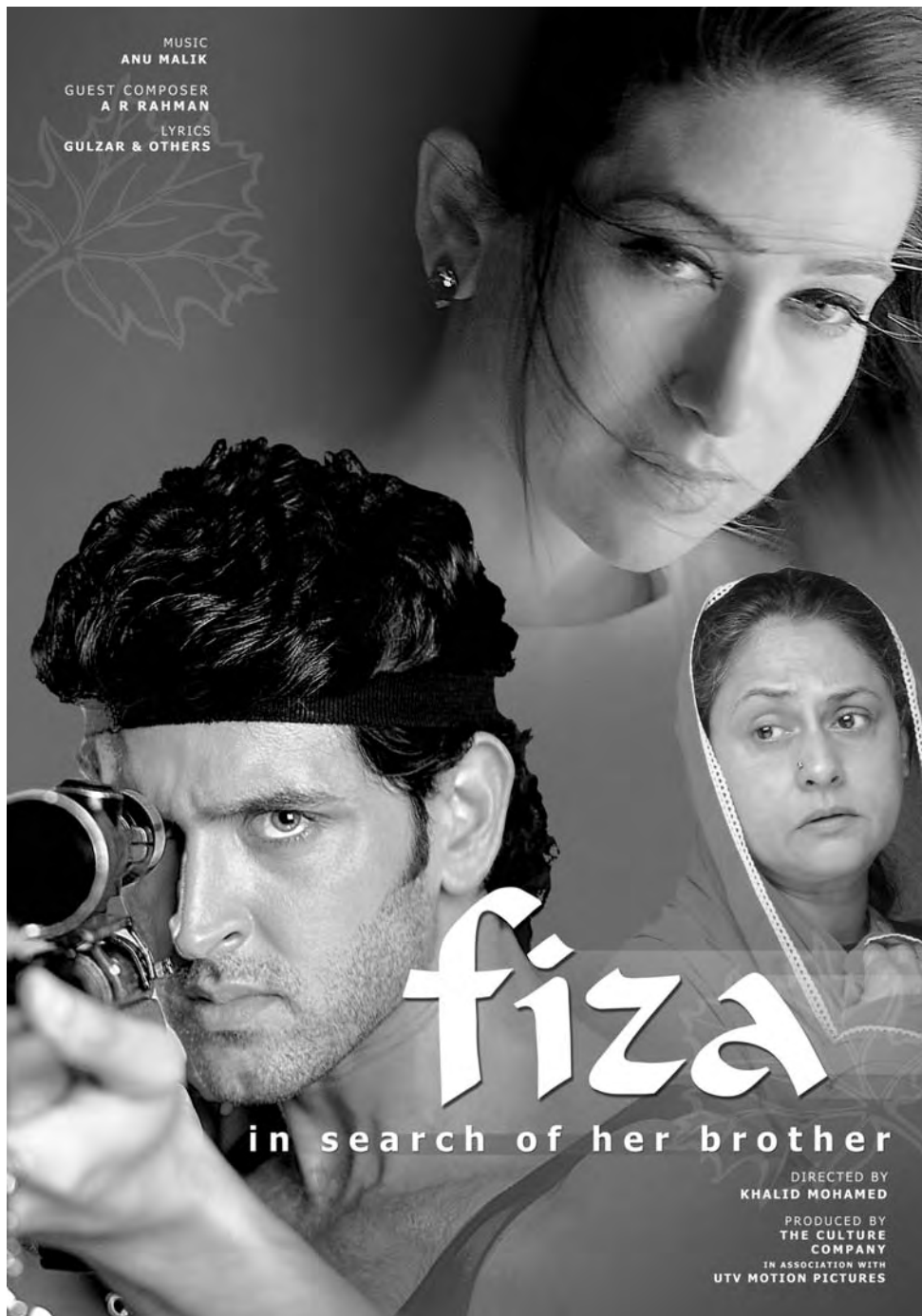


with the films publicity. The spectacularization of urban display requires a different order of aesthetics since as many have suggested, new technology has enacted ineradicable perceptual shifts on the spectacle. In this scenario, the hand painted cinematic image, once ordinary, now a lost art acquires the status of a unique 'art' object.

#### Nostalgia & Artistic Aura in the Digital Age

Walter Benjamin, in his well known theses on the destruction of aura after the birth of the photograph had envisioned a time when multiplication and mechanical reproduction would enable the possibility of art becoming a genuinely democratic form, accessible and available outside the rarified

space of the art museum<sup>20</sup>. In a strange twist, the original handpainted film poster which was seen plastered on walls in various parts of the country and available for a price of five rupees in the streets till the early 1990s, has now acquired the status of an 'art' form as collectors enter the field of preservation, display and sale of the traditional poster. This process can be seen as an instance of what Arjun Appadurai has described as commoditization by diversion where value is "accelerated or enhanced by placing objects and things in unlikely contexts".<sup>21</sup> The objects referred to here can be seen in the domain of fashion, domestic display and collecting. Appadurai suggests that this narrative of diversion rests on the commodities removal from its customary circuits through a coming together of the "aes-



thetic impulse” and the “entrepreneurial link”.<sup>22</sup>

Initially overlooked as an art form because of its direct relationship to commercial networks of publicity, today the gradual disappearance of the traditional poster from the streets and public places where it had traditionally found a home, has made it a more respectable item to be studied, looked at and placed within the rarified atmosphere of galleries and homes. Just as the photographic, digitally created image becomes the dominant icon in contemporary poster culture, the handpainted, “authentic” Bollywood poster acquires auratic power as collectors, and museums compete with their own collections. Now framed as a dying art form, or as a print of cultural history, the traditional poster acquires the status of a new commodity even as the

contemporary form itself gets more commodified and influenced by techniques of advertising. As collectors vie for the possession of posters that are subsequently sold in the market at exorbitant prices, the former film poster enters the chain of commodity exchange, once easily accessible but today a rare item and piece of artwork. Collectors deploy their entrepreneurial skills to divert the poster away from its customary circuit, in the process accruing it with “aesthetic power”.

A collection can be defined as “a set of natural or artificial objects kept temporarily or permanently out of the economic circuit, afforded special protection in enclosed places adapted specifically for that purpose and put on display”.<sup>23</sup> Here the collected objects are not preserved for their usefulness but for

their ability to produce a regime of meaning that can participate in the exchange process between visible and invisible worlds. This formulation is interesting in the case of the film poster. Once the digitized image became the dominant form, the older hand painted image which evoked a cinematic past different from the one we are living through, had to be made invisible for a while. Suddenly the easily accessible poster, once available in the streets and

Several collectors who had been collecting for a while became important players. Exhibitions of framed film posters are now being held at galleries in Bombay, Delhi and London.

with distributors, has today become inaccessible. Something has clearly changed. Several collectors who had been collecting for a while became important players. Exhibitions of framed film posters are now being held at galleries in Bombay, Delhi and London.

The emergence of OSIANS a new auction house in Bombay has been a striking development working as it does to introduce the framework of the art auction to create value for popular culture. OSIANS has been set up by its chairman Neville Tully with the principle idea of building an artistic cultural infrastructure in a new manner by which the arts can be made the “centre of a development process so that one day a value system can emerge that can give the popular arts a credibility”<sup>24</sup>. Tully designed OSIANS as a place that is for the moment financially independent of government, corporate sponsorship and philanthropy – all of which according to him had to be made secondary by creating a new mechanism through which from within the arts wealth could be generated and systematically redistributed to build an institutional framework of documentation, archiving and so on.

To this end OSIANS has created the auction house as a vehicle for generating wealth, a process that goes hand in hand with replaced financial value. In the last three years OSIANS claims it has given financial credibility to something which did not have that scale of value. Cinema memorabilia and the poster as one of the prime components has been made to piggy back on the fine arts. This was possible because the fine arts according to Tully had reached a certain credibility which was not just aesthetic but also financial<sup>25</sup>. The poster which was always a part of street culture is in the process of becoming a new art commodity through OSIANS’ drive to create financial value.

For an auction last year curated by Neville Tully himself, more than hundred film posters were up for sale. The interesting thing about this exhibition/auction was that film posters were included as part of an art exhibition. The average price of a poster is anything between rupees 15,000 to 40,000. In the introduction to the catalogue, Tully says that by positioning “a *Deewar* poster, with all its loud colours, seething energy and emotional links, ‘besides’

While there is little dispute about the existence of a new regime of visual culture linked to television, the persistence of older images that signify a different register of time has also proliferated with the entry of cable television.

the tranquil contemplation of a Gaitonde water colour, many new and unseen inter-relationships will open up, naturally changing the perception of each in the process<sup>26</sup>. Respect for anything comes only with financial value, a belief that OSIANS is aggressively promoting in the film industry and outside. Justifying the auction as essential for people to take documentation, preservation and archiving seriously, Tully has managed to get almost 300 small time collectors and dealers from across the country to hand over their collections for small sums of money.

The first major collection was purchased from Hussaini, a film buff whose personal collection of over 25 years was bought for Rs. 100,000.<sup>27</sup> While OSIANS is an internationally placed and connected auction house, people like Hussaini are film lovers connected to the outskirts of the industry. After Hussaini's death, his sons were compelled to sell their collection because the family desperately needed the money.<sup>28</sup> Most people had access to these personal collections with historians, journalists, students and film critics regularly visiting the individual collectors to check or buy things for a nominal sum. This dynamic has radically changed with OSIAN's entry as a major collector and international auction house. Suddenly the easy accessibility has gone with the new financial value of the poster.

The question of ownership of film memorabilia has had a complicated history. For Tully, the producer starts with all the rights but once the distributor starts using it, it is public material and no one has rights over it. The actual physical poster is public property. Tully says the copyright issue lies with the artist if it's a handpainted poster, it lies with the producer if the producer has a contract with the artist. If the artist claims to have copyright he has it over the original paintings from which the negatives are made. In India however there was no paperwork until the 1990's. There was no contract, everything was based on trust. It is this nebulous situation that has given OSIANS the power to step in and buy material from traders and small time collectors. As an internationally connected auction house that has the means to hold gallery exhibitions and auctions across the world, clearly the organization is managing to successfully repackage and present the popular film poster as a new art commodity while at the same time creating a new economy and network of financial transactions around the poster.

Art as Tully says is the most expensive commodity in the world simply because it is seen as a form that embodies history. As the aura of 'art' descends to swallow the popularity of the former film poster, we are left in a quandary about the future of this image. The inaccessibility and exclusivity of the 'rare' film poster can be easily overcome by almost everyone who has access to computer technology. A simple scanned duplication, colour corrected digitally to make it sharp can then be printed out

for mass marketing. If done so it will surely disrupt the current status of the classic film poster as 'art' object available only to a select few. What exactly led to this sudden desire for the old poster is difficult to chart out instantaneously but clearly the rise of nostalgia in a moment of hyper visual intensity needs to be recognized.

While there is little dispute about the existence of a new regime of visual culture linked to television, the persistence of older images that signify a different register of time has also proliferated with the entry of cable television. Channels like Star Gold, Sony and Zee are all engaged in the telecast of older films which in the pre channel days only had Doordarshan's Sunday night screening time as its exhibition outlet. The proliferation of channels and particular programmes geared to evoke a nostalgic journey into a cinematic history has led to a situation where the hyper moment of the here and the now co-exists almost spectacularly with past images.

Star Gold's black and white films, Javed Akhtar's programme *Rahen Na Rahen* where he introduces older films, the evocation of memory in the programme *Yadein* on the same channel, documentary programmes on stars and directors of yesteryears, are now being churned out to occupy the space and time offered by so many channels. Bombay films, both old and new appeal to a cross generational audience which is what television tries to negotiate through its programming. As black and white and colour, old and new, then and now, past and present coexist in the landscape of the contemporary in more powerful and spectacular ways than before because of television, nostalgia and popular memory come alive.

The flashback into the past, a common trope of many Bombay films works through television to create multiple time zones, generating the desire for possession, control, sustenance and tactile fulfillment. Collectors of artifacts and objects, posters and photographs, paintings and old books recognize the power of nostalgia within modernity. The collector engages in the process of diversion precisely to enhance the aesthetic power of his/her collection. The hand painted film poster today is a collector's item, a commodity enclosed and rarified in the museum, a product of nostalgia, "entrepreneurial genius", popular memory and modernity.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Rajesh Grover, Bombay, April 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Kajri Jain, *Of The Everyday and the National Pencil: Calendars in Postcolonial India* Journal of Arts & Ideas No.27-28: 1995

<sup>3</sup> Rachel Dwyer & Divia Patel *The Visual Culture of Hindi Film* Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey: 2002:110

<sup>4</sup> It is not my intention here to chart out a historical chronology of the different influences and artistic achievements of the poster. For a history of the development of the film poster see *ibid.* Patel and Dwyer's chapter on

film advertising presents us with the details of early film publicity and the transformations over time.

<sup>5</sup> The Bengal Act 21 of 1976, section 3(1) says "whoever defaces any property in public view by writing or marking with ink, chalk, paint or any other material, ...shall be punishable with imprisonment...or with fines...or both". This was later extended to other states like Delhi. The implementation of this act has affected both Calcutta and Delhi. Bombay continues to be a city where posters are plastered regularly. Even in Delhi and Calcutta, there are many areas of the city, particularly the older parts where posters can still be seen on the walls.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Gul Sugandh, *Glamour Publicity*, Bombay, November 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Posters are usually released in two batches. The first release is concurrent with the music/audio release, usually seen in music shops and electronic markets like Palika Bazaar in Delhi.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the well known design houses are, *Glamour*, *H.R Enterprises*, *Abel & Will*, *Studio Links*, *Epigram* and *Endeavour*.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Gul Sugandh, the owner of *Glamour Publicity*, Bombay, November 2002

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sanjay Mehta (A distributor based in Delhi), August, 2002

<sup>11</sup> Interestingly all the early posters used to have Hindi, English and Urdu titles.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Ajay Kapoor (printer), Delhi, February, 2003

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Ajay Kapoor (Printer), Delhi, February, 2003

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Simrat Brar, Bombay, November 2002

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Saifi Shah of *Endeavour*, Bombay, April 2003

<sup>16</sup> The "cut and paste" method is still prevalent in the local designs of some of the smaller budget films, particularly in the C circuit.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Rahul Nanda (H.R Enterprises), Bombay, November, 2002

<sup>18</sup> Janet Ward *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920's Germany* University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: 2001:1

<sup>19</sup> The term is taken from Anna McCarthy's work on the role of television in public life. See her *Ambient Television: Visual Culture & Public Space* Duke University Press: Durham & London: 2001

<sup>20</sup> "The Work of Art in the Era of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations* Schocken Books: New York:1969: 217-251

<sup>21</sup> *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* Cambridge University Press: 1986:28

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Krzysztof Pomian *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris & Venice, 1500-1800* Polity Press: Cambridge: 1990:9

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Neville Tully, Bombay, April 2003

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> See the catalogue *A Historical Mela: The ABC of India: The Art, Book & Cinema*: OSIAN's & Mapin: 2002

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Hussaini's son Feroze, Bombay, April, 2003

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

**RANJANI MAZUMDAR** is an independent filmmaker, film scholar and visiting faculty at the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre (MCR) at Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi.