

# BLOCKBUSTERS

## On Canvas

**Bollywood sells – be it colas, automobiles or even paintings.** Bombay's tinsel town has been now become an inspiration for many Indians living at home and abroad.

The most famous example is that of M F Hussain, who recently became a citizen of Qatar. His life has come a full circle – he started his career by painting film posters and hoarding, and later found his muse in Madhuri Dixit, a top Hindi film actress.

Similarly, many others too have used Bollywood as their central theme. Anjana Kuthiala, known for making portraits of Shah Rukh Khan, also exhibited her paintings inspired by the Bollywood blockbuster *Singh is King* in 2008. This love is not confined to Indian artists. Barron Holland, an established European painter, known for colourful semi-abstract works has created several paintings inspired by the mammoth Indian film industry.

Hence it is no surprise that Singapore too is a part of this bandwagon; some Indian artists based here have used Bollywood in their artwork. For instance, Ketna Patel, the designer of Rupee Room, a popular lounge and nightclub at the very popular Clarke Quay used Bollywood as her central theme. She created curtains and couches with fabrics which had montages of old and new movies printed on it. She also introduced delicate lanterns to give you a feel of an Indian street with no electricity and shadows due to dim-lit *dijas* and lamps.

*Countless Hindi movies have been based on English originals. This is truly a case of the inspired becoming the inspiration.*

By a **STAFF REPORTER**

Patel also installed glass beaded curtains, redefining eroticism and loaned out her acrylic Mughal glass window frames to signify the legacy and magnificence of Bollywood.

The colour palette used by Patel was purple and its various shades "as it signifies patriotism and royalty which in a way defines Bollywood to a certain extent," she said.

Patel's love for the film industry has not been confined to simply the Rupee Room. She has also created a major light sculpture for the roof top bar at The Screening Room. The acrylic sculpture which is three floors long is also inspired by the movies. This Amitabh Bachchan fan has created a number of other works which are a part her private collection.

Patel believes that Bollywood is a very powerful communication device. "A *rikshaw-wala* can peep into a banker's high-profile condominium life. Isn't that great? I don't take this subject frivolously, it's more powerful than politics," said

Patel. Elaborating on her inspiration, she added, "I never lived in India but my roots were Indian. The sole way to peep into Indian culture was Bollywood, so my love and connection to India came from movies."

Another Singapore-based artist, Rajul Mehta, has a somewhat similar story. Though born in India, she moved to Israel at a very early age. "The only way to make a connection with my home country was Bollywood," said Mehta. The 41-year-old artist recently exhibited her latest collection of paintings inspired by Bollywood in Singapore. The collection included paintings of Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Sushmita Sen, Shahrukh Khan, Hritik Roshan and so on.

Extensively using pop and contemporary art techniques Mehta's colour palette is very vibrant. "My techniques in painting are not very Indian but I have used lots of colours in my work just like Bollywood. I wanted my work to be rich and colourful," said Mehta. ■

**The sole way to peep into Indian culture was Bollywood and the only way to make a connection with our home country.**



Top: Paintings of Sushmita Sen and Shah Rukh Khan by Rajul Mehta; Bottom: Ketna Patel's Bollywood inspired work.

