

© Divia Patel, curator, Indian Studies Department

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, England

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The dynamic nature of the film industry and the imagery it produces have influenced a range of fine artists who have observed and reinterpreted it in their work. Artists' responses to this most prominent element of public culture vary from highly critical, as seen in the work of Annu Matthew and Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, to the celebratory work of Maqbool Fida Husain and Doug Aitken. In all these instances, however, it is the ubiquitous nature of the medium which has provoked such emotive responses.

In a series of works entitled *Bollywood satirised*, Annu Matthew explores the position of women in Indian society and addresses the issues of arranged marriages, the dowry system, discrimination based on skin colour and inter-racial relationships. The series is both a response to her own personal experience of life in India (she was born in England, raised in India and now lives in America) and to the fantasy world created by the film industry. Matthew appropriates the most archetypal images used in film posters with all their inherent meanings and through the use of computer technology and the technique of montage she alters and reassembles them, juxtaposing them with text to create new meaning and critical comment. Her work takes the form of a pastiche of the film poster: thus not only are the imagery, typography and scale of the poster being mimicked, but their ephemeral quality is also projected through the deliberate and strategic damaging of the finished work, by the folding, creasing, ripping and pasting of it onto external walls over layers of old and peeling posters. This pastiche provides a fitting means through which to pass judgement on the happy romantic world of the Indian cinema, particularly its creation of an Aryan ideal of Indian womanhood, an ideal which automatically implies an imperfect opposite - the dark skinned woman. In a piece entitled *Fair and Lovely*, Matthew uses portraits of herself as a dark skinned child set against images of fair skinned film stars. These images are superimposed with text that reads 'Don't play in the sun...you'll get dark and no one will marry you. Similarly in *Kala Patti*, the theme is echoed with the

words: ' As a woman, you can be dark and rich, or you can be fair and poor, but you can't be dark and poor and expect to get a good catch', thus highlighting the discriminatory views and value systems which Indian society imposes on its women. Here, as in much of Matthew's work, the subversion of meaning is achieved through the inclusion of substantial amounts of text.

Matthews exploration of the subjugation of women also addresses the variety of extreme acts of violence against them. In *The Acid Thrower*, the artist highlights the plight of women who have been the victims of acid attacks, the desired effect being to disfigure their faces and bodies making them undesirable to anyone else and outcastes to society. Matthew projects this brutality by using the imagery and technique typical of posters from the 1970s, a period known for the introduction of violence into the film formula (see chapter 4). Thus, she includes a large scale male portrait with an overly aggressive expression rendered in an overpainted effect and surrounded by many smaller images some of which are of a violent nature. The giant typography is also characteristic of the period and the message is further reinforced through the use of text. Matthew's work therefore serves to reflect the reality of an unjust society that exists behind the 'ideal moral universe' of the Indian film, and by using a product of the medium itself to achieve this she invests these images with new meanings and forces audiences to look at them anew.