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Coordinated collection and documentation of environmental landmarks in the city - Bombay

Visual Communication

Special Project

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## APPROVAL

The Visual Communication special project entitled

Coordinated collection and documentation of environmental landmarks in the city - Bombay

by Geeta Arvind Joshi is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Design degree in Visual Communication.

Guide :

Date:

Chairman:

Internal Examiner :

External Examiner :

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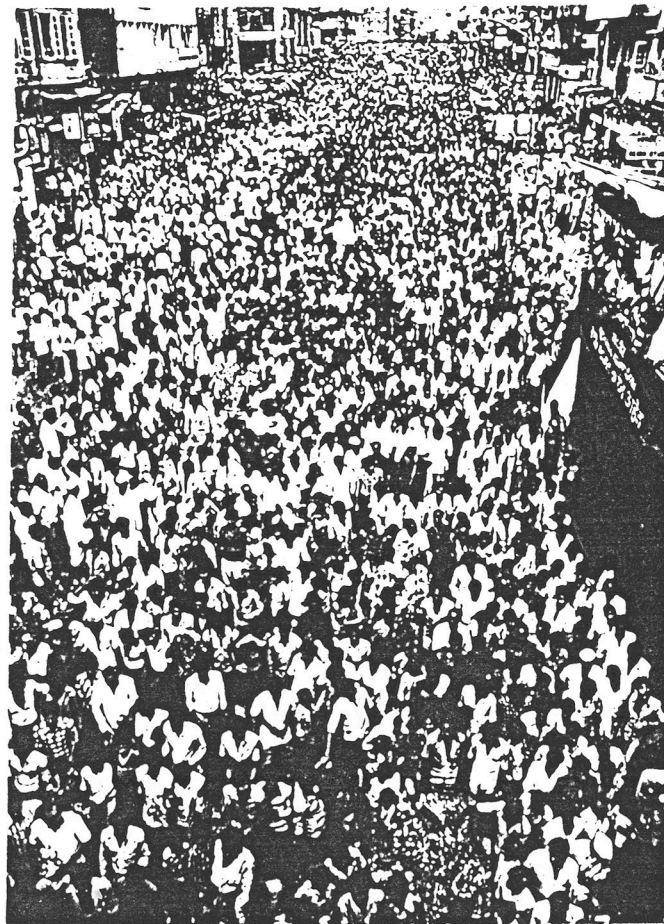
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## Introduction

Bombay - the name conjures up a juxtaposition of contrasting images. It is the city of the affluent and the poor, the skyscrapers and the slums, old style Gothic architecture and new style buildings. It is a city that has vast ethnic diversity with its truly cosmopolitan population with different customs and languages. It is a city that accepts and welcomes all but at the same time indifferent and respects privacy. It is the hub of industrial activity and is the commercial capital of the country. It is a city in which the business man, the artist, the worker and the intellectual feel at home.

The capital of Maharashtra State 'Mumbai' - as the city councillors would like it to be known to the world today in acknowledgement of its patron goddess 'Mumbadevi' - is affluent, modern, throughly urbanised and one of India's fastest growing cities. Bombay is a gritty, impossible, unforgettable place. Bombay is a mixture of different communities. Cosmopolitan character in nature, it is a unique city. It is an image of intense activity. It is a city ever in search of modernity but never forgetting its past. It is a city of towering skyscrapers and over-crowded slums. It is a city of bursting crowds and rustling traffic, yet it is a city of great orderliness. It has child beggars, pavement sleepers and sprawling urban slums, noise, tangled traffic, skyscrapers, fashionable apartment blocks. The very poor, who have emigrated from villages in the surrounding regions to seek a better fortune and the very rich merchants, industrialists and film stars. It is also in a very special sense India's most cosmopolitan city. The Indian subcontinent is a home of people as diverse, ethnically and in terms of languages and custom, as those of all the countries of Europe put together and no city is more representative of this diversity than Bombay to which people from

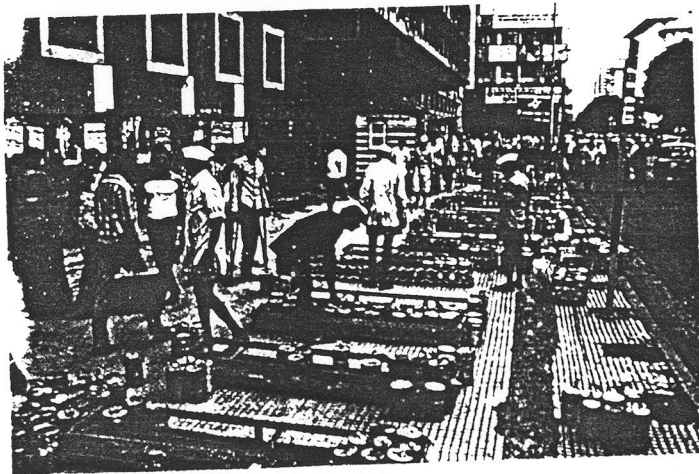
almost all parts of the country have gravitated. The charm of Bombay lies in the cheerful warmth with which it accepts and welcomes all. It is a city which respects your privacy and your right to live as you please.





Bombay is the ultimate shopper's paradise, offering stunning creations in gold, silver, leather, cotton and silk. Unique characteristic of Bombay is chic boutiques and pavement shops are equally popular among the fashion conscious.

Above all what characterises Bombay is a certain air of frenetic activity and the momentum with which it whizzes through life, everything moving in well-oiled synchronisation. Things are more organised and people are more self-disciplined and civic conscious. Bus queues, sometimes shaking over a kilometre long are never broken.



One of the best examples of Bombay's creative organisational ability is its unique dabba system. This is a specially tailored system of transporting dabbas of home cooked food to offices in the city where thousands leave their homes at dawn to reach their places of work. The boxes bear clever identification marks and are very rarely lost or delivered to the wrong person.



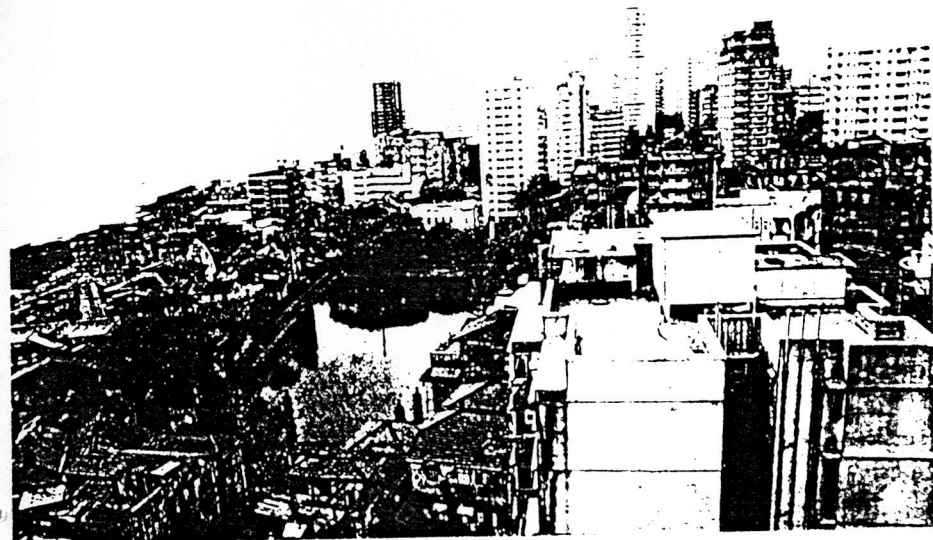
Bombay is a city of contrasts and contradictions. A city which juxtaposes magnificent victorian Gothic buildings with cubistic apartment towers and pavement tenements. Where overpopulation has put such a premium on space that an office in a prime commercial area often means a man with a brief-case sharing two sq.feet of corporation pavement with wandering cows and vendors and still notching up a turnover of a couple of lakhs. It is a city where multi-millionaires and common labourer enjoy their 'paan' from the same roadside shop. Eating out culture of Bombay is also unique. Life in Bombay has its own very special flavour. It is a city that never sleeps. From sunrise to midnight life here enacts an endless drama of events.

## History

Bombay began life as seven separate moss-green islands of unspoilt loveliness, full of shimmering bays that welcomed ships and merchants from all over the world. The earlier settlers were the Kolis-fisherfolk, from whom came the gift of a name, Mumbai, after their patron goddess in whose honour they built the shrine of Mumbadevi on the largest of the seven islands. Then came the Aryans who contributed the gift of a rich, cultural, religious and linguistic heritage. Bombay remained a part of the kingdom of Aparanta or North Konkan in the second century, followed by the Mauryan occupation and then the Chalukyans, from the 6th to 8th centuries, when the city of Puri on Elephanta island was established as the Chalukyan capital. Later, the Silhara kings gifted the city another temple, that of Walkeshwar at Malabar point. The encouragement of trade and commerce gradually led to the influx of people of varied races and religions such as Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Zeroastrians, Christians and Persians, who were initially responsible for laying the foundations of the ethnic mix of what constitutes the population of Bombay.

One and a half centuries of uneventful Portuguese rule later, and very little change in its status as trading post and fishing villages, Bombay came to the British as a part of the dowry of the Portuguese princess Catharina of her marriage to King Charles II of England. The king rented the islands to the British East India Co. till the government itself took over. Eventually Bombay became part of the Indian Union in 1947.

Bombay in the first three decades of this century was a magnificent city. The topographical history of Bombay has been one of the continuous reclamation from the ever threatening sea, until the separate islands with marshes in between were virtually fused together into an integral land mass which it is today. But yet, its very form has been its limitations, bounded by the sea on all sides there is no scope for growth. Bombay had become the city of opportunity and people started flocking in, in ever increasing numbers to its shores in search of fortunes. The population increased in leaps and bounds. The Bombay of today is a congested, overpopulated, strained city bursting at its seams.





## Aim of the Project

Task is to articulate conceptually and pictorially the image of a city. Hence mainly the attempt is to understand what comprises the image of a city. For this understanding landmarks and how they lead to create an image of a city is important. Landmarks means points of references. In my opinion landmarks can be classified in two main categories.

1. Physical
2. Non-physical

The physical landmarks are the various monuments like the Gateway of India, the Rajabai Tower, the High Court building, the Flora Fountain, the Nehru Centre, the Stock Exchange building. The non-physical landmarks are the cultural landmarks like Irani Restaurants, dabbawalas etc.

Further landmarks can be classified as

1. Historical, 2. Architectural, 3. Environmental,
4. Cultural, and so on.

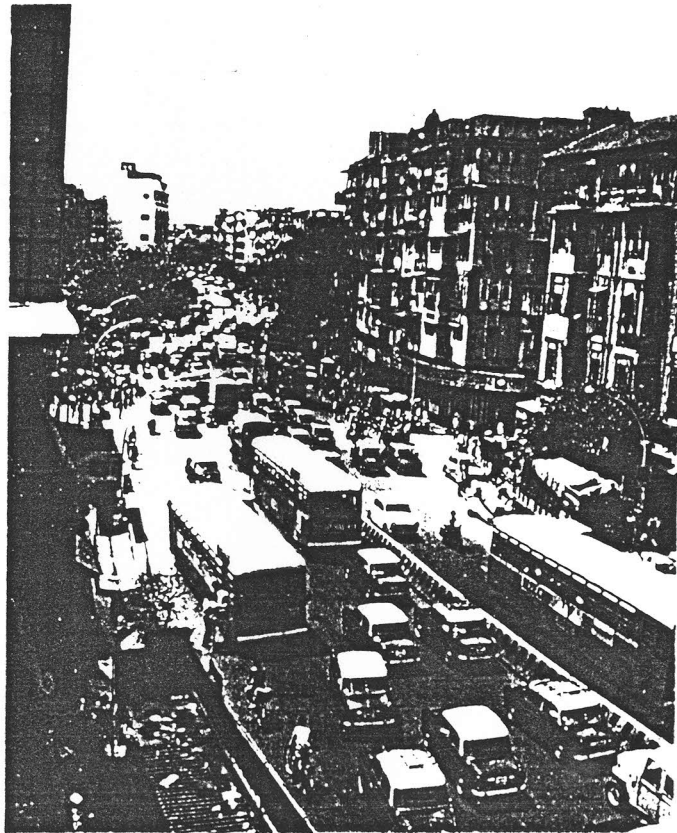


Image of a city is sum total of these diverse landmarks. The project is to represent the image of a city through visual means. So I tried to represent this through various ways. For showing these landmarks, I decided to take some theme and using that theme as a binding thread I tried to build a story. Through this story I can show the landmarks in a very subtle way and I can make it more interesting.

First I listed out what are the typicalities of Bombay like

1. Speed
2. Crowd
3. Time-machine

Then I thought of taking some theme to represent this typicality.

1. City as a symbol of progress
2. Hope, struggle and rewards
3. City on the move

Out of these three, I decided to take a theme City on the move. Because Bombay is a city of intense activity, city is always changing, so I thought of showing this image of a city through the eyes of various people. I thought of taking various view points.

1. Image seen through the eyes of a stranger/visitor.
2. Image seen through the eyes of a designer. Here I can show purity - contrast - deterioration.
3. My own view point. Here I can show strangeness, conflict which is existing. Traditional and modern.
4. Image seen through the eyes of a youth.  
Glamour/fashion.
5. Typical stop happening from morning to night.
6. Hawkers/sellers point of view in the busy street.

Through this story I can show all Architectural/  
Cultural/Historical/Environmental landmarks.

Change again I can show through buildings - old neo  
gothic style buildings and new sky-scrapers. Here I  
can show various architectural buildings or landmarks  
combination of old and new - traditional and modern.

For ex.

Old

British neo gothic

Arch

V.T.

Rajabai Tower

Elphinstone College

Museum

Town Hall

University

The High Court

Gate Way

Asiatic Library

Flora Fountain

New

Nehru Centre

Taj Hotel

Stock Exchange

Kanchanganga

Through this I can show change in the buildings -  
how the style, architecture is changing and how that old  
spacious buildings are turning into the match box houses.  
Here I can also show huts and sky scrapers.

## Theme

### CITY ON THE MOVE

Nothing is static in Bombay - the people, the trains, the street scape, the machines in the numerous factories and even the market places, the bazzars are constantly on the move. Life in Bombay is like a machine, always moving.

Crowds of people at all times of the day moving towards their places of work in trains, cars, buses and on foot constitute the major dynamic element of a city on the move. Packed trains, buses moving north to south in the morning and south to north in the evening pouring thousands of people at a time are the most important means of transport within the metropolis.

The architecture of some of the landmark buildings of the city of Bombay is a witness of change that permeates through the social, cultural and commercial fabric of the city. Old style neo-gothic buildings like VT station and Rajabai Tower, Elphinstone college are now giving way to skin and bone style buildings of Stock Exchange, Nehru Planetorium and Kanchanganga.

The constant influx of population into the city from outside leads a dynamic quality to the life in Bombay. People come from far and wide to make their fortune in the city. Some come to set up business and some to try their luck in the film industry and some of them for just make a daily living, they gave a very unstable character to the city. The city accepts them all through at the cost of breakdown and deterioration of civil amenities. Here people can get work but no place to live. There is a mushrooming of slums and sky-scrapers on the reclaimed land.

The city provides a kaleidoscope of diverse religious, cultural and social life fused into a cosmopolitan culture. We find the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs living harmoniously together. The diversity in this unity is manifest in pockets of various religions and ethenic groups like Girgaum and Shivaji Park of Maharashtrians, Bhendi Bazar of Muslims, Bandra of Christians, Matunga Sion of South Indians, and Ghatkopar of Gujarathis. The social life comes alive in the city during the various festivals. Diwali, Gokul-Astami, Christmas, Id, Parsi New Year. These festivals add both colour and glamour to the city life.

Life in Bombay is rich with cultural and intellectual activity. The numerous theatres, performing art centres, the film city, art galleries, libraries provided outlet for the creative pursuits of the Bombayite.

The Mahalaxmi Race Course and various stadiums and the numerous gymkhanas provide the Bombayite the sport centres to channelize his energies into creative sport activity.

Final output will be in the form of a folder/folders containing various photographs. This is a very good exercise in photography.

### Brief Note

Historical landmarks are fading away. If these landmarks are gone then the city will lose its identity. These landmarks are soul of Bombay, so attempt should be made to preserve these landmarks.

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