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## LOCKDOWN DIARIES

A **JSW** INITIATIVE

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**Aditya Pande.**  
Cryogenic fever.  
Mixed media on canvas. 146.1 cms x 208.3 cms. 2019. Image courtesy of the artist and Nature Morte, New Delhi.

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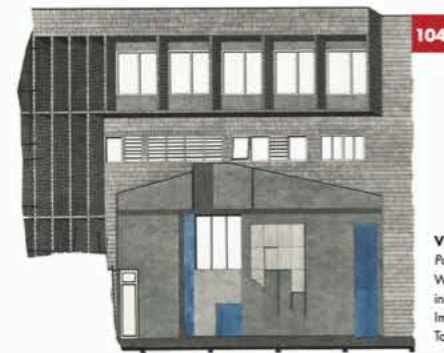


**Arshi Irshad Ahmadzai.**  
Takhti from Kabul (From the Blood Book). Ink on Majher Paath Fabric. 24" x 17.5". 2020. Image courtesy of the artist and Prameya Art Foundation.

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**Vishwa Shroff.**  
Partywall Bombay Series, 3.  
Watercolour, graphite and ink on paper. 25" x 21". 2019. Image courtesy of the artist and Tarq, Mumbai. © Vishwa Shroff.

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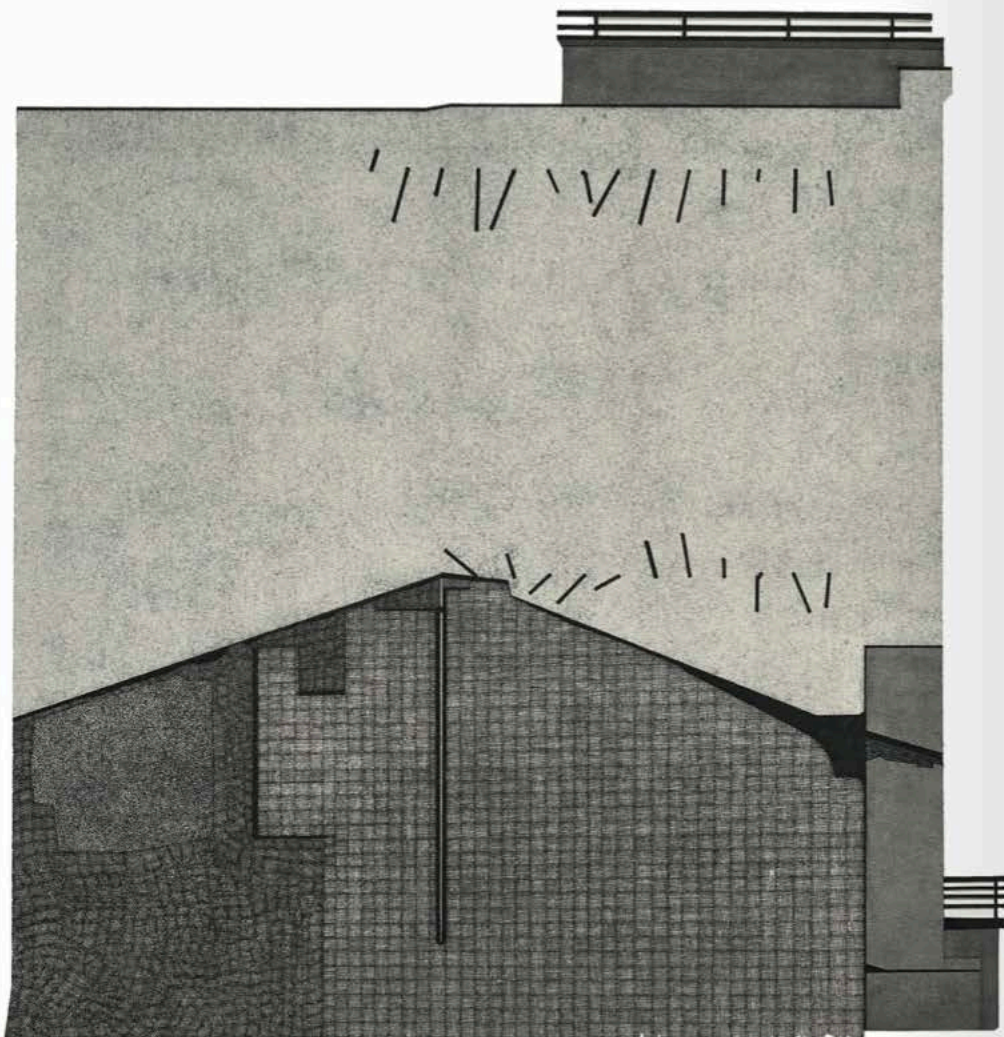


**Prajakta Potnis.**  
2:12 pm (Detail).  
Pencil, acrylic and emulsion on Ianaquarelle paper. 40" x 42". 2019 - 20. Image courtesy of the artist and Project 88, Mumbai. © Anil Rane.

## Use and Change

Vishwa Shroff documents the fantastical afterlife of torn, abandoned and rebuilt residences.

**Sandhya Bordewekar** enters their portals.



The Folly was an ornamental, usually non-functional architectural structure common in the English and French landscape gardens in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was often built to appear like a particular type of a building, like a castle or a tower, strictly for decorative purposes. The English countryside was littered with these, or so P.G. Wodehouse and Agatha Christie would have us believe. Vishwa Shroff's solo show earlier this year, titled *Folly Measures* at Tarq, Mumbai, explored the hidden meanings and fantastical afterlives of built forms and the effects of human habitation and use on architectural spaces.

Shroff's engagement with architectural forms and their relationship with the occupiers of these structures deepened after she created a paper sculpture *Vishnu's Chai* in 2009 for the show *Cutting Chai* at Sarjan Gallery, Baroda, and followed it up with the ambitious *Room*, a collaborative book project (2011). Soon, the simple architectural plan graduated from being a basic drawing to possessing complex patterns that charted uses and changes as the inhabitants re-imagined it over a period of time. While the architectural space bore the traces of age and imprints of wear and tear, it also left visual marks of the innumerable changes and makeovers it was subjected to. Shroff's hybrid buildings delicately expose the layers of history and memory, allowing her drawings to come alive with an active energy.

Shroff has taken references from actual buildings in Mumbai, London and Vadodara in various stages of demolition and conservation, sometimes abandoned, at other times with tenants still living on the fringes. Shroff's

drawings are painstakingly meticulous and detailed, often replicating the intricate jewel-like patterns of old tiles.

The leftover fragments of buildings can be interpreted as Follies, sliced off or fractured while their neighbouring structures still stand vertical, revealing the intimacies of shared walls – a scratched pillar, a sudden patch of colour amidst the encompassing grey indicating the separation of rooms, a horizontal form that could have been an attic, brickwork peeping out of a plastered wall. These interior spaces were once vibrating with voices, affects and activities. In newer structures, the exposed TMT rods stick like twisted arrows in the flesh of its walls, waiting patiently for relief. These reconstructed partition walls depicted in *Partywall Bombay Series*, are residual spaces that linger after a building has been torn down.

Shroff is fascinated by the staircases and landings of abandoned buildings that speak of their crumbling grandeur. The *Bombay Stairwell* series features strange staircases that go nowhere, while remaining attached to their wooden frames. As their fortunes collapsed, the buildings would get divided into smaller units. Tenants would change the chipped or broken floor tiles, introducing a new layer of design. And it is in these small but significant dichotomies, cracks and re-contextualizations that Shroff finds the narratives that she develops quietly, letting the architecture reflect the secret lives of its users, their aesthetics and choices. Her layered drawings not only document the history of buildings but also transmit ideas about age, materiality, ownership and appropriation. /

(Facing Page) **Vishwa Shroff**. *Partywall Bombay Series 4*. Watercolour, graphite and ink on paper. 11.5" x 11.2". 2019. Image courtesy of the artist and Tarq, Mumbai. © the artist.