



FOR THE BROKEN HEARTED

After the Brexit vote, dating app Remainder has surfaced for single Britons who voted for Britain to "remain" in the European Union. The app lets people find a "bit of comfort" and share their pain. More than 1.5 crore people have signed up for it since its launch.

SNAP SHOTS



Back to the Roots

KAMALA KHAN, commonly known as Ms. Marvel, has soared in popularity ever since she was introduced as a female protagonist by Marvel Comics in 2013. Acting as a little tease for Ms Marvel fans, Marvel through their latest comic traces the roots of the Pakistani-American superhero from New Jersey and features a flashback that's set during the India-Pakistan partition in 1947. The first few pages of the comic show Kamala's parents, Kareem and Aisha, as Indian Muslims in Bombay in 1947 when the largest human migration in history was underway. They are shown en route to the newly found Pakistan.



Second Innings

SOCIAL ACTIVIST and anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare launched the official poster of director Shashank Udupurkar's Anna, based on his life, on Monday. The film, whose poster features Anna waving to his supporters, has Shashank taking on the titular role and Kajol's younger sister Tanisha Mukherji will be seen as a journalist. For the sake of the society and country, someone has to sacrifice his life. I chose not to get married and serve for the society. In a way, I don't have a family but I have so many people (common people), who are my family," he said. Anna said that besides his much-reversed anti-corruption fight, Anna also features incidents from his childhood, aspects of which people are not aware about. Hazare started a hunger strike in April 2011 to exert pressure on the Indian government for Jan Lokpal Bill, an ombudsman with the power to deal with corruption in public places.



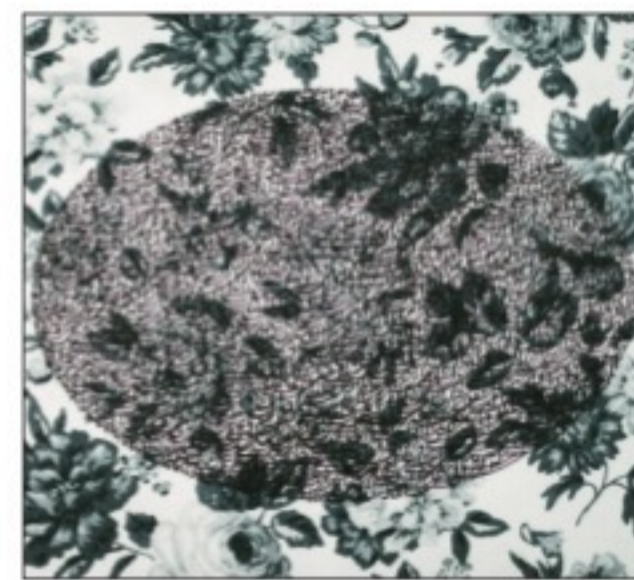
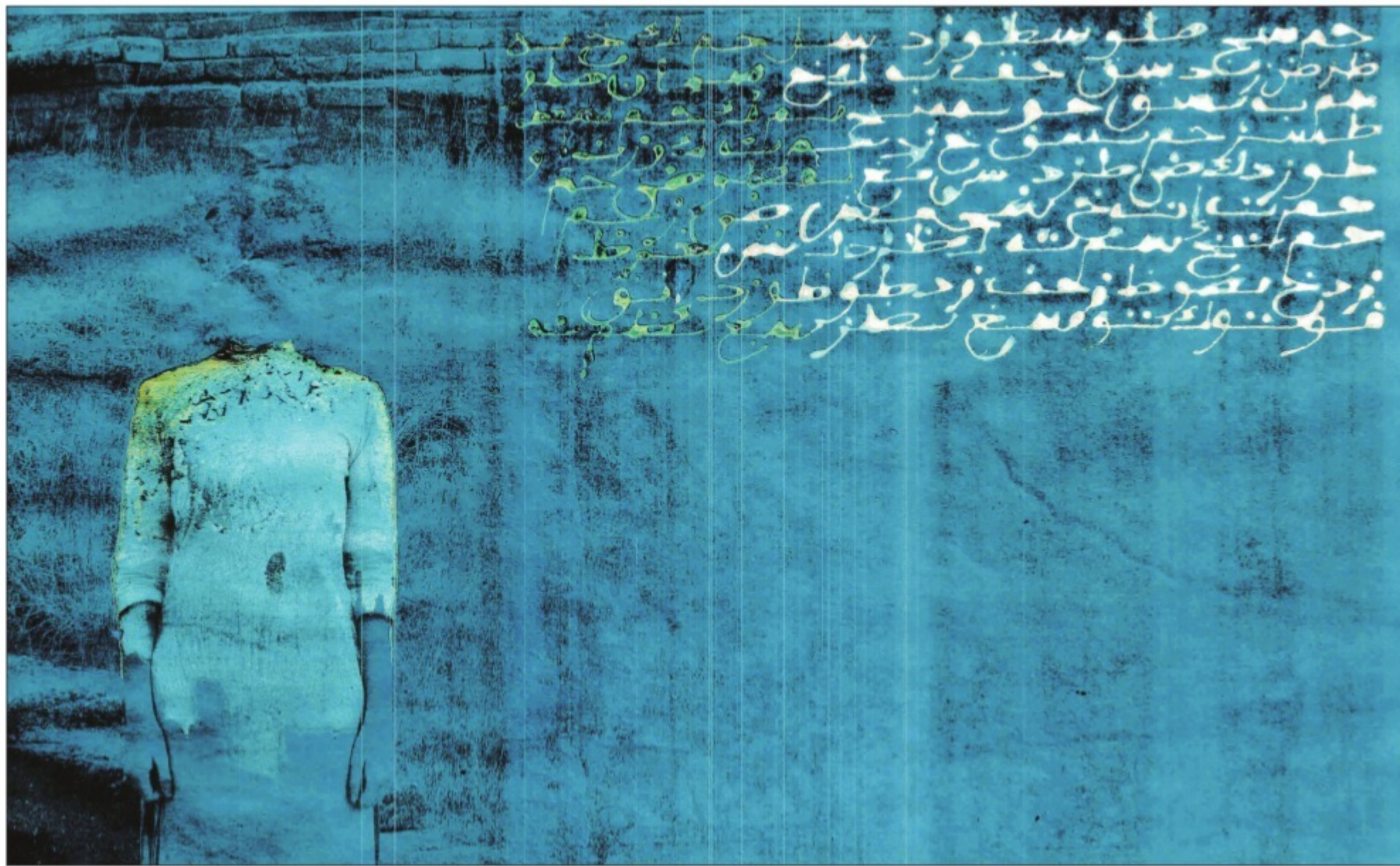
It's War

BOLLYWOOD BULLY Kamaal R Khan (KRX), infamous for his unsavoury remarks on actors on Twitter, is now in legal trouble, thanks to director Vikram Bhatt. A defamation case has been lodged against KRX and Bhatt has also posted a long open letter to him, along with a compilation of derogatory tweets by the former Bigg Boss contestant. "...But can you really call a young, female colleague of mine a whore and get away with it?" writes Bhatt in the letter, in response to KRX's allegations against actor Meera Chopra, who stars in Bhatt's 1920 London, which was reviewed by KRX. In the letter, Bhatt also laments Bollywood's silence over this issue.



Sex-Ed Series

Y-FILMS, the youth wing of Yash Raj Films, is releasing a 5-part fiction series on different themes related to sex and sexuality. Premiering on the Y-Films YouTube channel, Sex Chat with Pappu & Papa will star Anand Tiwari, Kabir Sajid, Sanjeeda Shaikh, Alka Amin and Sachin Pilgaonkar as they talk frankly about masturbation, periods to condoms, pregnancy and homosexuality while answering the questions of a curious 7-year old. The series marks the directorial debut of Ashish Patil, head of Y-Films, and has been written by Gopal Datt and Devang Kakkad. The series is based on research and is ratified by medical experts, and hormonal and gynaecological doctors of the country.



The Word Alone

Three artists challenge the traditional meanings and roles assigned to text and use it to create new visual idioms

POOJA PILLAI

WE HAVE been brought up to believe in the sanctity of the written word — promises are binding when they appear in textual form, histories are deemed legitimate when they are recorded in writing and memories are sanctified as facts when published as autobiography. It is hard to challenge the primacy of the written word, no matter where it appears; this is why, even as we watch movies in languages we know, our eyes are constantly reading the subtitles. This is also why so many of us, as we move around the world, feel an almost compulsive urge to read out hoardings and signs in our mind or why, when confronted with a book in a script we can't read, the feeling is almost one of betrayal.

At an exhibition titled "In Letter and Spirit", which is being held at Mumbai's Tarq, three artists seek to challenge this hold that the written word has and look at text as purely a visual form. Saubiya Chasmawala, Youdhishthir Maharjan and Muzzumil Ruheel, each find their own way of taking apart and effacing text in order to find meanings which are independent of the literal meanings of the words. As gallerist Hena Kapadia says, "Rather than using text as ancillary, each of these artists engage deeply with the text in their work, whether with its narrative nature, symbolism, or materiality."



(Clockwise from top) An untitled work by Saubiya Chasmawala; Beneath Her Feet by Youdhishthir Maharjan; Muzzumil Ruheel's work titled He Wrote of Their Glory; Maharjan; Chasmawala and Ruheel

New Hampshire-based Maharjan, for example, seeks to explore what he describes as the "thingness of text". He says, "They are independent of meanings pre-assigned to them and independent from the burden to relay my message. They can truly and freely be themselves. It is all about the text. In other words, my works are self-portraits of the text." He does this by "reclaiming" pages from used books and layering his interventions on them; in Beneath Her Feet, for instance, he has painted over all the text on a page, leaving only the alphabet O visible, everywhere that it appears. He has then, in a delightfully playful touch, doo-

dled clouds around each O, thus creating a work that is whimsical, but also pointing out that letters, by themselves, are little more than random figures. Ruheel's work uses text to reclaim different things; these could be the details that get lost as a story makes its way from the narrator's mouth to the output of the scribe. Or it could be, as cultural critic Ranjit Hoskote says in the catalogue essay, that they reclaim "script from scripture" and decrees of jurists, the exhortations of pamphlets. Perhaps, Hoskote suggests, calligraphy can also be reclaimed from its description as "decorative art" and transformed into the basis of a new

graphic idiom. The intricately-layered forms constructed by Ruheel, using Urdu calligraphy, reveal the sheer beauty of the textual form, free from any meaning assigned to it. In fact the Karachi-based artist has used the written word in the past in an attempt to free it from any pre-assigned meanings or labels. For instance, a previous work, Please Read It Carefully, played with the perception that Arabic calligraphy looks sacred, but the actual words could have utterly mundane meanings. He recalls, "The pieces would read texts like 'think before you see', 'what is written', 'look at me' and 'touch me', but these were written in a font that

looked scared, and that achieved the purpose when the audience would look and talk about the works with religious reverence. It was amusing for me to witness how the audience remained in their oblivion and praised the visuals for its 'religious significance'."

The works by Chasmawala are perhaps the most personal and her approach is the most visceral. According to her the words that appear in the Arabic script are nonsensical, because the artist only ever learned to write the words, and never to understand their meaning. This was a conscious decision, she reveals. "When I was a child I was taught to recite verses and I would do that, without really understanding the meaning. But because these words had a certain energy, that was enough for me. Then, in college, I did a course on reading and writing Arabic, but I stopped short of understanding the meaning, because it wasn't essential for me. The visual form of the text was enough." For the Vadodara-based artist, the actual, "surface" meaning doesn't matter because what she wants to get at is something deeper inside. In her works, this is represented by incisions and scratches made on the surface. "To go inside, I have to make a wound on the surface. Then, when I don't find anything inside, I come out and make a suture and that becomes an expression of my story," she says.

"In Letter and Spirit" is on at Tarq, Mumbai, till July 2

Keep Them Kisses Comin'

Delhi-based band Hoironng on their latest album and not taking themselves too seriously

SOMYA LAKHANI

THREE YEARS ago, Bangalore-based Kamal Singh released his solo album The Resurrection of the Princess of Woe and Her Vampire Hound Posse, under his project Hoironng. Soon, music journalist Akhil Sood wrote a review praising the sound, and Delhi-based drummer and filmmaker Akshat Nauriyal shared the online link to the record on Facebook calling it "album of the year". Little did the boys know back then that they will soon be creating and innovating that sound together. Months later, when Singh was in Delhi, he found himself jamming with Nauriyal, who got Sood on board as the guitarist. "The first time we jammed together, I knew there was something here," says Nauriyal. Last month Hoironng released their third 14-track album, Mwah, in Delhi. Bassist Avinash Manoli joined the band at their gig held at Summer House Cafe. The album is available on Bandcamp.

A post-rock, punk record, Mwah is all about loaded conversations and analytical commentary about anything and everything around the boys' lives, which has been cleverly put to music that makes you want to sway and sing along, and is reminiscent of the glorious '90s. Apart from their love for that decade, the common thread, really, is that they do not take themselves too seriously. "There was a time when I would incessantly send emails to everyone about the music I was making or get on MySpace. Now, I've made peace with the fact that I have made music and it's out there for people to hear. By not taking ourselves too seriously, there is no pressure on us," says Singh.

Without a PR overdrive, or an exaggerated social media presence, and not a single photo shoot of them together, Hoironng has managed to create a niche following purely by the music they make — a rarity in the scene nowadays. This, in fact, is reflected in Two to tango, a song that comments on the audience lauding the push-button artistes. "It ends with an epiphany almost — 'you are more famous than we will ever be,'" says Nauriyal, with a laugh.

It was in 2014, when Singh was in Delhi doing a course on music therapy, that Hoironng played extensively — from pubs in Delhi to music festivals such as New Wave in Goa, NH7 Weekender in Delhi and Magnetic Fields in Alsisar, Rajasthan.

With Singh back in Bangalore, the three have recorded the album in bits over the last one year. "He writes the lyrics and the music, and we record the drums and the guitars here separately. Akshat and I have given more inputs in this one than the last one, Dandaniya Apradh (semi-disco)," says Sood. Nauriyal reiterates that "this is the closest Hoironng has come to creating a sound that represents them". Other tracks on the album include 47 RR, Pushup bra, Dhakan, Saraswatika, and Puke, among others. Ask them why the album is titled Mwah, and Sood says, "There is no reason, really. We spent no time coming up with it. It's the punk sensibility of going ahead with whatever and not fighting any internal battles". That Hoironng is a Manipuri expletive might also have something to do with this sensibility.

As for another Hoironng album in the pipeline, Nauriyal says, "Kamal is a chronic songwriter, he never stops. I am sure he's already writing stuff".



(From left) Avinash Manoli; Kamal Singh; Akshat Nauriyal and Akhil Sood. Amit Mehra