

Excerpts from book reviews

**PROJECT CINEMA CITY**

Eds. Madhusree Dutta, Kaushik Bhaumik and Rohan Shivkumar,  
Tulika Books / Columbia University Press, 2013

It comprises 30 written essays that engage with the subject matter in direct or tangential ways; a dozen or so visual essays; and three sections that document the films and artistic outputs of the project as a whole. Interwoven among these are lush color photographs, drawings, and graphics that relate (directly or not) to the essays, films, and artworks; fascinating snippets of empirical data, for example, extracts from a series of interviews with women spectators of all ages and backgrounds, and delicious ephemera such as a small white envelope within which one finds—on cheap, pink paper—a blank “Format of Agreement (Artistes/Technicians)” as used in the film industry. The book is immensely tactile and visually alluring: heavy paper, vibrant colors, sophisticated design, and exquisite print quality. One has to gasp at its audacity.

**Rosie Thomas**

in *Bioscope: South Asian Screen Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, Sage  
Journals

And this city is an unruly enterprise that cannot be contained either by film or film criticism alone. The *mise-en-scène* leaks out, into the lives of cinema houses, book stores, billboards, studios, cabarets, magazines – any site or object that can accommodate visuality. It is this visual excess, this leakiness, this spillage of the visual beyond the many frames that seek to contain it, that this book most powerfully captures. This is thus a truly cinematic book, as well as a true Bombay book. It is an act of *détournement*, a brilliant collaborative effort to capture Bombay by resembling, in its own visual and varied takes, something of the excess of this greatest of cinematic cities.

**Prof. Arjun Appadurai**

Foreword, *Project cinema City*

If you can imagine a book that combines the experience of an art exhibition, an archive, a seminar and a guided city walk -- all going on at the same time - then you've pretty much imagined Project Cinema City. This book, which won the Printed Book of the Year award at the first edition of the Publishing Next Industry Awards (September 2014), seems to want to redefine what a book might be. It is huge, a massive hardback potha that runs into more than 550 pages, and heavy - larger and heavier than any coffee table book I've seen, and with a hundred times more reading material, too. It is capacious, filled with many kinds of voices. It might be useful to think of them as multiple guides on that walk through the city of cinema: some have gone far ahead of you, and are describing the view from up there; some are telling long and complicated stories (which are fun in parts, but sometimes all you want to do is sit down); some are recording and taking pictures so you can later 'remember' what really happened, and some, inevitably, are talking above your head.

**Trisha Gupta**

in Biblio: A Review of Book, Nov-Dec, 2014