

KAHANI DESIGNWORKS

DESIGN STUDIO

How often do you think about your city and its heritage? Or feel like you're part of its very fabric? Most of us find little time to explore what our city holds beyond the chaotic traffic and the crazy population. But in Mumbai, two designers, Ruchita and Aditya Madhok, are doing their bit to enhance cultural engagement. They have come up with a beautiful visual narrative of Mumbai City, called *Storycity Mumbai: Exploring a City by the Sea*.

Together, the Madhoks run *Kahani Designworks*, a communication design practice. Aditya grew up in Bangalore and channelled his curiosity by training in graphic design and brand strategy at the *London College of Communication*. And Ruchita grew up drawing and painting, and thought she wanted to be an artist until a chance trip to the *National Institute of Design* in Ahmedabad took an unexpected turn and the 16-year old decided she would study nowhere else. So, she went on to train at *NID* in Exhibition Design, and in Scenography at *Central Saint Martins* in London. They met while studying at the same university. A few international stints and a wedding later, they now lead the team at *Kahani*.

The unique project started by them comprises a map and a 40-page booklet. The map presents a visual landscape of the city, marked with drawings that represent the location of each object, book, building or location to be discovered. The 24 stories examine the island city's relationship with the sea from ancient times up to the present. 'For us, part of the charm of living in London was that the city feels loved. There are so many books and magazines, novels, maps, stories and paintings about London that make it come alive in many different ways. It made us wonder why no one feels the same way about Mumbai,' Ruchita recalls. 'In our work with museums and art institutions, we had begun to collect many interesting histories but didn't know what to do with them. So we started the *Storycity* imprint as a way to map and share the stories that we've discovered.'

Recently, they created a compendium of art from the *Piramal Art Collection* in a book titled *Smriti*, and are also crafting more odes to Mumbai alongside. A series of maps are in the works, and a new release will be out in early 2016. 'The project was a remarkable journey through the history of Indian art, and has been a rewarding assignment for all of us at the studio. Our series of English, Hindi and Marathi maps are very popular with the visitors at *Dr. Bhai Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum* as was the design for *Litmus Literature Festival* in Bangalore,' says Ruchita.



