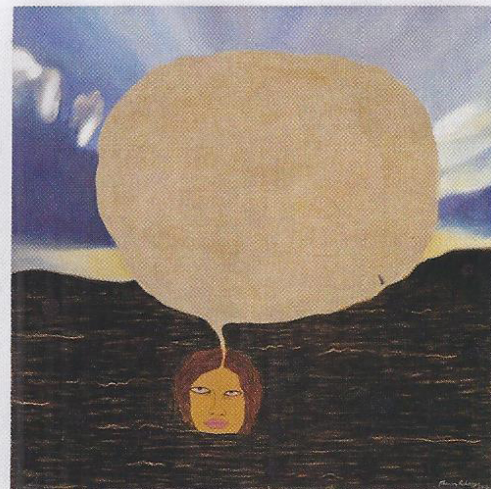




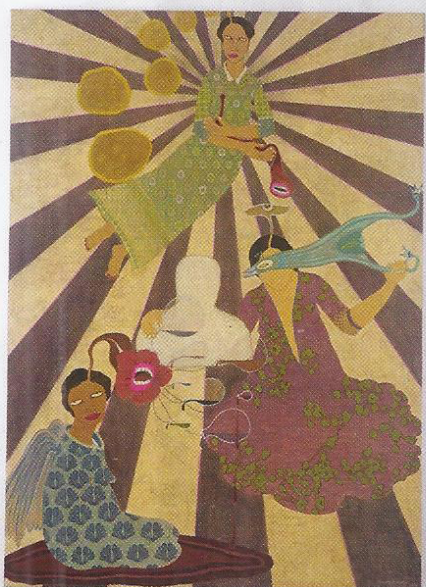
LIFE WITHOUT MY LOVE



THOUGHTS (I)

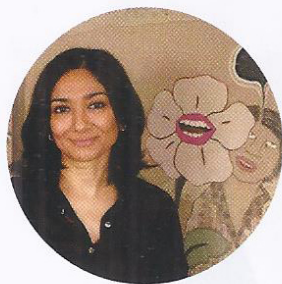
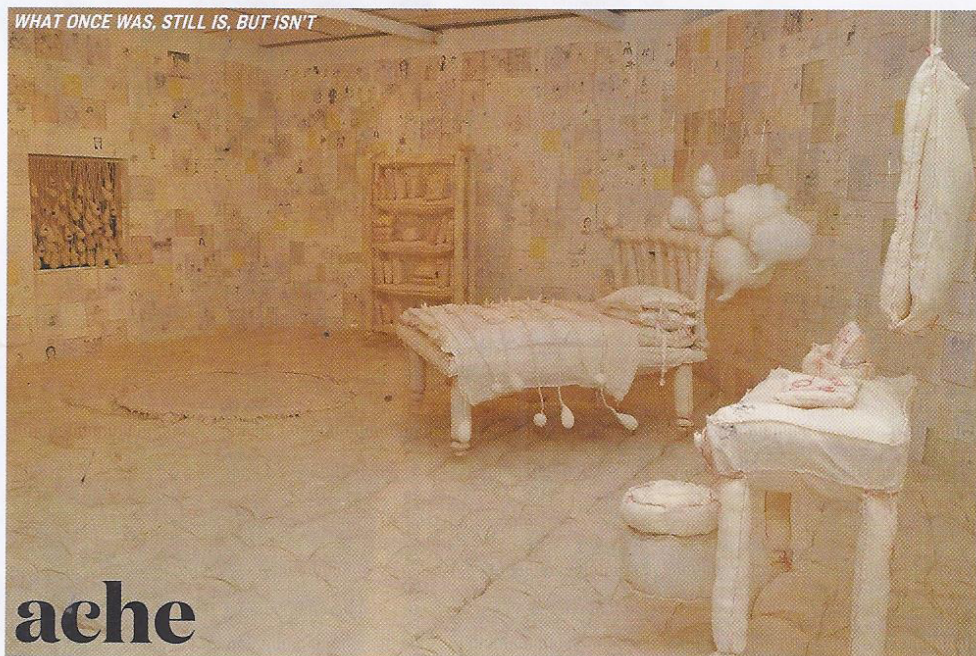


AFLOAT



MISSING

WHAT ONCE WAS, STILL IS, BUT ISN'T



## Art ache

Artist **Dhruvi Acharya** relies on her sense of the absurd to stare down grief

Much has been written about the devastating tragedies that inspired artist Dhruvi Acharya's first solo show in India in eight years. Her father died the day after her New York exhibition opened in March 2010 and later that year, her filmmaker husband Manish Acharya passed away in an accident. But according to Acharya, it was neither grief nor anger that moved her to paint. "It was love and gratitude," she says. Creating art helped her heal.

*After The Fall* is a decidedly absurdist (even surreal) collection of paintings and one large site-specific installation that she describes

as a "soft sculptural bedroom". A recurring motif is the empty speech bubble, reinforcing the influence of comics in her work. They represent what Acharya calls "the unspoken thoughts we often can't put into words." Acharya, who graduated from the esteemed LeRoy E Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art, maintains that her process of creating art is meditative.

"My work is like an emotional and visual diary where I draw my experiences and try to get a better understanding of life and death—and everything in between," she says. Despite the striking paintings,

it is the installation *What Once Was, Still Is, But Isn't* that is the standout piece at her show. The bedroom—where all the furniture is floating and the walls are covered in 1,800 drawings made over 20 years—represents "an ethereal space that is real but not—much like the early days of grief, where things don't really make any sense."

After a fall, the only way forward involves gathering the courage to rise again. "And after fall, come winter, spring and summer. Nothing is permanent," promises Acharya.

*After The Fall* is on till November 19 at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai

— NEVILLE BHANDARA