

Attack of the thought bubbles

■ Gitanjali Dang

In her seminal article *The Laugh of the Medusa* (*La Rire De La Méduse*, 1975) French feminist writer, poet, playwright and rhetorician Hélène Cixous postulated that a woman's laughter could be wielded as a tool of subversion.

In *Two Plus Two Equals*, the recent suite of acrylics and watercolours, by Dhruvi Acharya, one could suggest that mirth is used, perhaps unwittingly though never overarchingly, as a device of sustenance. Though Acharya's work has consistently queried the dichotomous existence of urban women and the troubles and the never-ending choice making processes that plague them, she does so without resorting to the maudlin. Acharya has injected all her paintings with the colours of contemporaneous pop culture, some of which are in the miniature format.

The immense eyes create a



Bed by Dhruvi Acharya

» REVIEW

startling physiognomy and are reminiscent of the saucer-like eyes of Japanese anime. The mouths, unlike the ones found in Japanimation, are shape-shifting entities that often detach themselves from the bodies they belong to and threaten/inundate

the female protagonist with demands.

The predominantly blank thought bubbles or speech balloons, are signifiers of an existence that is hypnotically overwhelming. However, occasionally text loaded bubbled/balloons launch themselves into the lives of the protagonists like alien crafts attempting a reconnaissance or initiating an attack.

In the painting *Bed*, the artist has co-opted the now celebrated rant of "Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a f**king big television, choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players and electrical tin openers," from Chuck Palahniuk's cult novel, *Fight Club* (1996). Crucially these words are not spoken or thought by an angst riddled male protagonist, as was the case in the novel, but by the female protagonist.

At Gallery Chemould, 1st floor, Jehangir Art Gallery, Kala Ghoda till October 4. 11 am - 6.30 pm (except Sunday).