

A wave rolls in on a sand construction spelling out BRINK. Below it run thin veins of sand reaching from the brink structure. The wave washes the structure out and the wave recedes and the meaning of Brink appears carving into the sand.

Brink : “ A point at which something, typically something unwelcome is about to happen; the verge”.

A warm sunny morning welcomes the waves onto the sandy beaches of coastal Mumbai where the fishermen folk practice their family business of fishing. The beach is surrounded by high-rises on one side and has tetra pods placed close to the beach. The tetra-pods signify coastal decay and stripping of the Beach. The water keeps moving and coconut trees sway in peace. A kid plays on the beach as he creates sand hills and drinks from the coconut kept by his side. After he finishes drinking the coconut water he dips the shell into the water slowly and catches a fish into it. The child waves goodbye to his father, a fisherman who sets out into the sea every day to make a living. He walks back home. His mother anxiously awaits the return of her husband with a basket over her head. She sorts and dries the fish. The fish are dried out on a bamboo structure which one after the other for about a day. She then goes on to selling the fish. This is the typical day of a working class family from the Koli community.

The setting of the interior of the Koli house and colony is established as footsteps walk to the home. The curtain flies up and reveals the inside of the home. The home is a simple, 1 Kholi home with baskets strewn around along with some dried fish. There is a small idol of Mumba Devi sitting by the back wall right under the window and a single light bulb, hung down from the ceiling lights the room up to a dim, almost enough brightness. The singular window of this fisherman household gives them a view of the outside world. The grill of the window screams out their occupation fish laced onto it. Polyester curtains fly about in the wind. The water playfully caresses the sand with a frothy smile and teases it as it recedes. The coconut trees sway in agreement of the peace and subtle audio-visual textures. A newspaper comes flying from the left side and sticks to the window from outside and the text reads : “The Beach of Pondicherry goes missing. Is Mumbai next in line?”. This is when the wave comes towards the house, and the sound of the waves crashing is heard.

When you look towards the right, far off in a distance , a man is seen in a distance defecating onto the beach in a rather casual manner. This unpleasant scene may upset a privileged visitor. Meanwhile the affluent migrants of the city defecate in their rest-rooms in an orderly manner and flush. The ironic part is that when the landscape is expanded, a little towards the left – you see a sewage rivulet running into the mighty

ocean, contaminating it. Imagine, the top view of Coastal Mumbai tainted with contamination spreading through the Arabian Sea. One might wonder the correlation between affluence and effluence and what it means to be privileged in the true sense. The water keeps running and reaches the edge and drops down. Water drops trickle down with all the problems faced by the Koli community. The water falls into the basket on the head of the fisherwoman. The water overflows out. This weight is too much for her to hold.

While we connect globally with the help of the internet and convenience based services we disconnect locally. The local is disconnected. While the Kolis face a multitude of challenges in their lives like Competition with imported fish, rising prices/inflation, lack of demand, health problems, younger generations not wanting to continue the family business, etc., the biggest problem in the recent events was the lockdown due to the pandemic. India announced the lockdown and extended it 5 times. Work from home was an option for many who owned a computer and their work permitted it. But how can one catch fish online? While the privileged managed to get food, water, safety for the most of it, the coast suffered. With the lockdown and section 144 imposed, fishermen couldn't get out into the sea, catch fish and earn a living. This went on for 2 months.

The fisherman looks out of the window again. The fish motif

fish motif on the grills morphs into jail bars as time passes outside. The hands holding the bars look weaker and bony over time.

Release of the lockdown is announced as the bars open and move upwards. The beach and sea look clean, promising and fertile. Alas, just as the lockdown opened up, the warnings and impact of the cyclone stopped movement again. Wind blew, storms brewed, trees fell and roofs flew. The electricity went away while it thundered outside. While the working class migrants struggled to find their way home, the inhabitants of Mumbai lost their homes along with their livelihood.

A large wave charges towards the open window. The Tide is hungry and enraged. It forced itself in through the window and destroyed everything. The daughter woke up and realized that the storm had passed and they remain untouched. But they were so close to be wiped out. On the brink of extinction. If they get swallowed by the sea, we, the city dwellers will be next. The whole of Mumbai will be submerged and a loss of 22 million will be on their own conscious.

The water in the glass you mindlessly filled with ice cubes to save you from a hot, muggy day starts rising without your knowledge. You just considered your convenience, comfort

and not the threshold of the container or the nature of the liquid. It was bound to rise. The water now swirls around at the edge of the glass, almost falling out, but not yet. It's only a matter of time before you lose control of the situation. Is this a disaster waiting to happen?

If this isn't a warning enough then what is? If 26th July wasn't a warning enough then what will be? Mumbai is a city of amnesia, it never sleeps, it keeps changing over and over again. We seem to have forgotten that Mumbai was fabricated out of the sea and it could very well, very soon be engulfed again into it. The sea will swallow Mumbai, it's just a matter of time. Our natural barriers (mangroves) get uprooted and we replace them with a unnatural sea walls and tetra pods. How big can we build this wall to protect 'Mumbai Meri Jaan'.

The fishermen community seem to be the most at loss with the evolution of Mumbai, a city that literally emerged out of water. Mumbai was once upon a time, a modest collective of 7 islets which later developed into what Mumbai is today thanks to migrants, economic and infrastructural development, reclamation of the sea. With the drastic rise in population over the years in Mumbai, the fishermen residencies called Koliwadhas have been reduced to shanties literally on the edge of Bombay.