

## 60-SECOND INTERVIEW

**JENNY BHATT,  
ARTIST AND WRITER**



Through *MokshaShots Episode 12: The Conquest of The Mind*, on display at Gallery Art & Soul, Woeli, Mumbai till February 1, artist Jenny Bhatt attempts to capture the urban understanding of spirituality and salvation in a satirical perspective.

**Could you tell us what the MokshaShots art series is about?**

Moksh, which stands for salvation in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, is considered out of reach for most of us in this lifetime. However, we can get a glimpse of it. I define MokshaShot as a taste of the sublime. Everyone can make their own MokshaShot from what they find fulfilling – art, a holiday, a smile, a Ferrari, chocolate, an epiphany or, even, a tequila shot! This series of satirical works critiques different aspects of urban culture. The paintings often use the traditional Thangka or Mandala as a metaphor to comment on social or cultural issues. To satirise the Indian penchant for veneration, I've created deities called MokshaPets. MokshaBuy is the Consumer Goddess, MokshaBum is the Thinker and Philosopher, while Mokshasura is the Necessary Evil. This series was first shown in Mumbai in 2008, followed by exhibitions in New York, London, Byron Bay Australia and Amsterdam.

**What are you conveying through the 'Conquest of The Mind' edition?**

The 12th edition uses satirical humour to comment on social and cultural practices prevalent presently. It examines the internal and external entities that strive to conquer and influence the mind to fulfil their own agenda. We live in a time when everything is sacred, but nothing really is. Indians like to venerate. We create Gods out of everything: film stars, politicians, musicians, chefs, newscasters and CEOs. Even new versions of old Gods! The advertising industry creates them out of products, icons and mascots. Digital industries create Gods out of emoticons, game characters and stickers.

We then create rituals and paraphernalia of worship – from prayer beads and shawls, now it's all about tees and apps. The MokshaShots series mirrors this, hoping to provoke a closer look and change in perception, of the times we live in (yes, another way to conquer the mind!). I've created a range of limited edition art multiples based on my paintings. The works are multi-layered, with irony along with social and cultural references. They're open to multiple readings and interpretations as well as the inevitable misinterpretations.

**What does the collection on display at Gallery Art & Soul include?**

Besides paintings, there will be a range of limited edition art multiples based on the MokshaShots imagery: art prints, T-shirts, iPhone cases, notebooks, playing cards, mouse pads, coasters and the limited edition collectibles and sculptures in the form of art toys. The MokshaShots series is usually classified under the trendy new Pop Surreal movement. The world over, it is common among artists working in this genre to produce art toys, which has become a genre of Pop Art by itself. This is the first time art toys are being made by an artist, in India. (The products will be available at the gallery for the duration of the show, and at The Bombay Store for a month thereafter.)