retracked
a retrospective journey

Jaideep Mehrotra's personal journey, as he relives the essence of innumerable train rides and captures some unforgettable moments through his evocative canvas

retracked, or retract as one might interpret the title, serves to archive as well as talk about a retrospective journey. Visually, I'm attempting to relive the essence of what we were ...

The Indian rail system, which inextricably linked the length and breadth of the country, long before air travel and email, is a part of all of us. The younger generation, as they have other options in modes of travel and communication may not have the same memories that I do of my youth – the innumerable journeys by train, the smells and idiosyncrasies of every state and station we traversed. I wanted to relive those years.

For me, the partition of India always conjures up images of trains, the actual channel which enabled people to choose their side of the border; of refugees atop trains and of crowded stations.

The boy yelling "Fantaaa-Ooorange" and "*chaiii*," the tea served in *kullads* (earthen cups) - still leave their gritty taste in my mouth.

I read more books on trains than anywhere else. I read anything I could lay my hands on and buying a book at the station always marked the beginning of every journey. The longer the journey, the more I read, picking up books from stations on the way. The books always transported me into another world! In fact, I

TOP: Paperback rider

ABOVE: School party

TOP: Fanta orange
BELOW: Sleeping car
BOTTOM: Night lights

still remember some of the books I read on my train journeys.

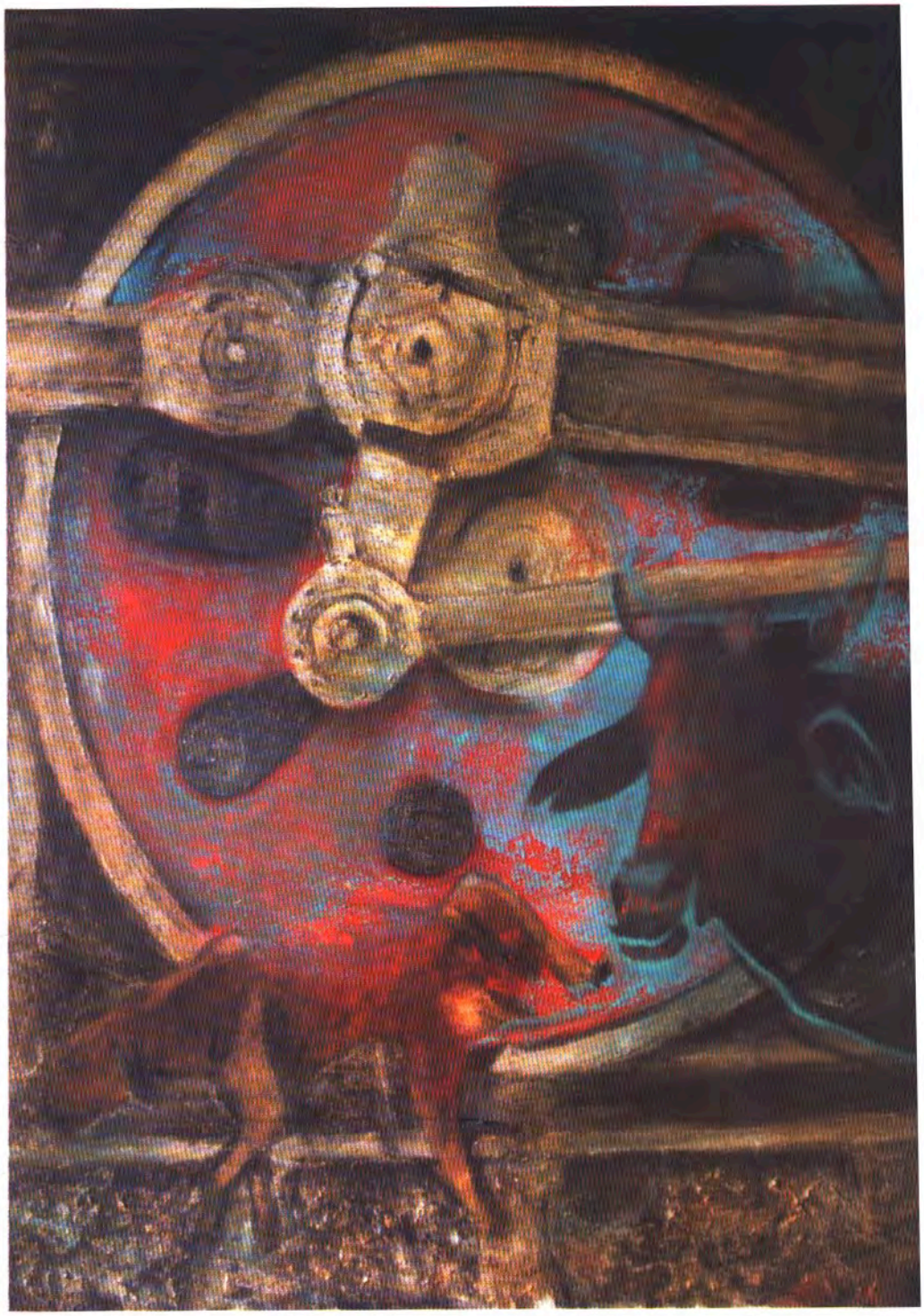
Watching the ever-changing scenery, studying different hues and colours along the interminable tracks, observing various characters at stations, are all etched in my memory.

I have vivid memories of the blue night light, the three-tier bunks and weighing machine. I have tried to recreate these images with my personal interpretation, paralleled with the shock of transformation, subtly woven into the work – as the laptop in the "Night Lights" and the 'Orange Mobile' phone juxtaposed with the soft drink seller.

ABOVE: Sub division

RIGHT : Union of reds

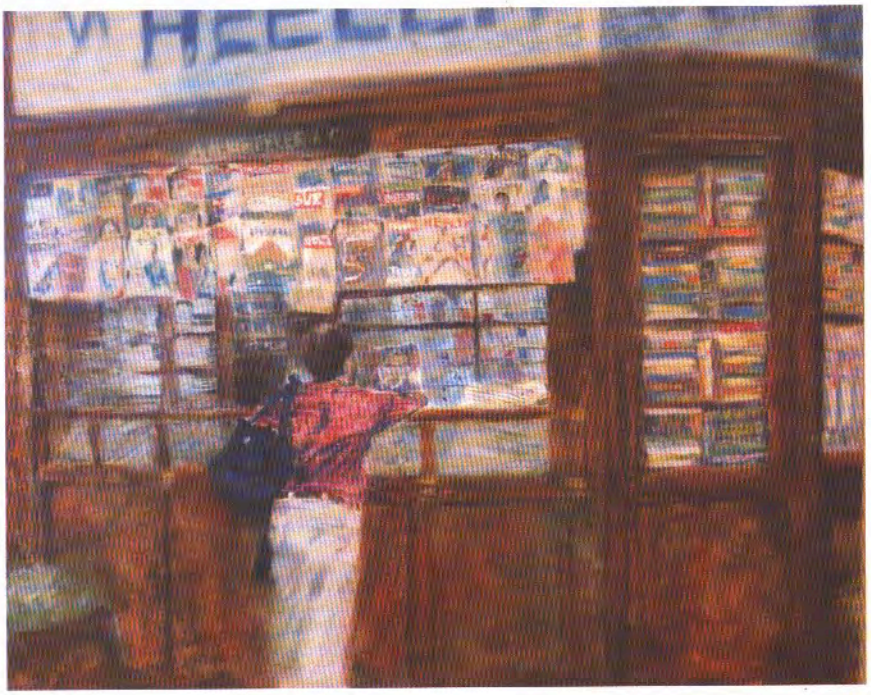
The boy yelling "Fantaaa-Orange" and "*chaiii,*" the tea served in *kullads* - still leave their gritty taste in my mouth

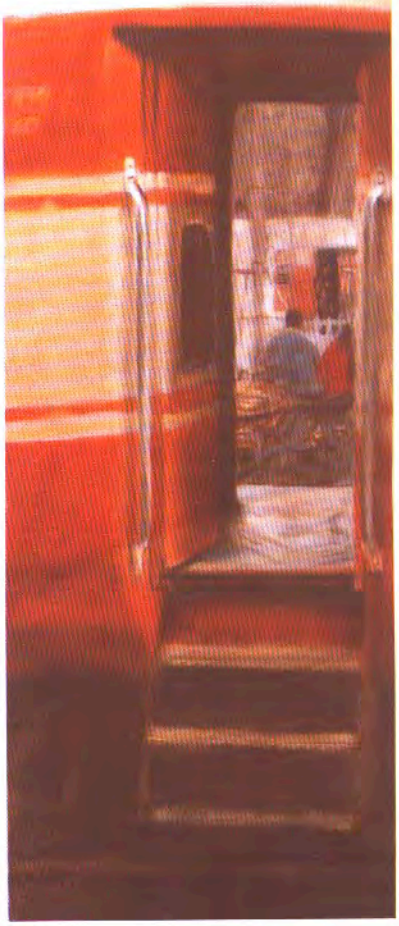


ABOVE: Steel Wheel

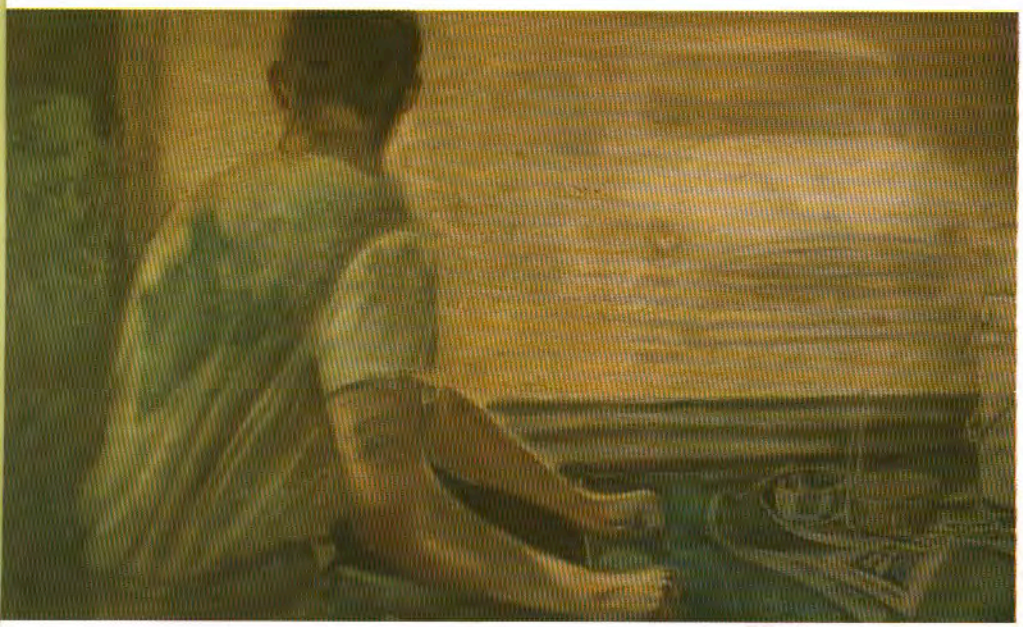
Buying a book at the station always marked the beginning of every journey

I have vivid memories of the blue night light, the three-tier bunks and weighing machine





ABOVE: Wheeler dealer
TOP RIGHT: Double take
BELOW: Weight a minute



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ABOVE: Indians Express (ion)
BELOW: Miles with Coal Train