

Scenes from an urban village

A photography exhibition captures the architectural intricacies of Dharavi's fishing village



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EVERY place has an identity, but that of Dharavi is built largely on one fact — slums. So, when two youngsters go out to document the visual significance of Koliwada, its fishing village that is nestled in the middle of its bustling main roads, they return to emphasise one thing — it's just like any other village. It's warm and welcoming, filled with pops of colour, and a sense of restfulness.

Back in November, Anushka Samant and Riddhi Varma, 21-year-old interns at URBZ, a collective of urban researchers and architects, started an experiment to document the architectural language of Koliwada with their smartphones. "We'd visit it during times when people were bound to be



resting or staying inside their homes, so as to not disturb anyone. When we got back to the office, urbanologist Matias Echanove loved the images and suggested they be exhibited," Samant tells us. And now, this Tuesday onwards, both Samant and Varma are set to



(Clockwise from right) Anushka Samant and Riddhi Varma; a mash-up of a house in Koliwada; a living room within a courtyard

get an audience for their first exhibition, Koliwada Charcha.

The duo's images capture the essence of community living — you'll see living room set-ups being built inside courtyards, religious motifs, and people chatting by the plinths. "At the exhibition, there will be 40 photographs with 12 mash-ups [digital assemblages]. The idea for the exhibition was strengthened when a colleague did a similar project in Goa; when we saw their photos, it appeared so visually similar. So, we wanted to bring out the idea that it's just like any other place, and that we need to set aside these pre-conceptions," Samant says.

FREE ON February 5, 6.30 pm to 9.30 pm AT Room 56/AB, first floor, T-Junction, Dharavi.
CALL 7738467192