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Balkrishn Laxman Vaidya cannot remember the last time he painted a poster for a new Hindi film.

The 75-year-old self-taught hoarding painter who once ran Studio Balkrishn and worked with the likes of Manoj Kumar and Nasir Hussain, is now reduced to recreating posters of classic Hindi movies - Mughal-e-Azam or Mother India perhaps - for the occasional collector who drops by his tiny suburban studio in Mumbai. Sometime in the early 1990s, digital technology Poster of Mother India



rendered Vaidya's occupation obsolete. "Once upon a time, there were 30 to 40 men working under me," he says ruefully, "those men are now watchmen or drivers. All that is left are the memories."

Ironically, Vaidya's skills are more in demand abroad. Art galleries and museums in Europe and Australia have invited him to give live demonstrations of 'Bollywood Art'. In 2002, the prestigious Victoria & Albert Museum in London held a landmark exhibition called 'Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood', which displayed Hindi film publicity from the 1940s onward. Vaidya also gave an onsite demonstration of how hoardings are painted.