



**TAXI STICKER ART
AS PART OF: A FORMAL
FILM IN NINE EPISODES,
PROLOGUE AND
EPILOGUE – A CRITICAL
READER, 2013
MARIO PFEIFER**

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PROJECT 88, MUMBAI	
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Taxi Sticker Art
 Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
 Prologue and Epilogue – A Critical Reader
 Mario Pfeifer

1A_Prastavana, 2012
 Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
 vinyl sheets, unicum
 29.5 × 21 cm



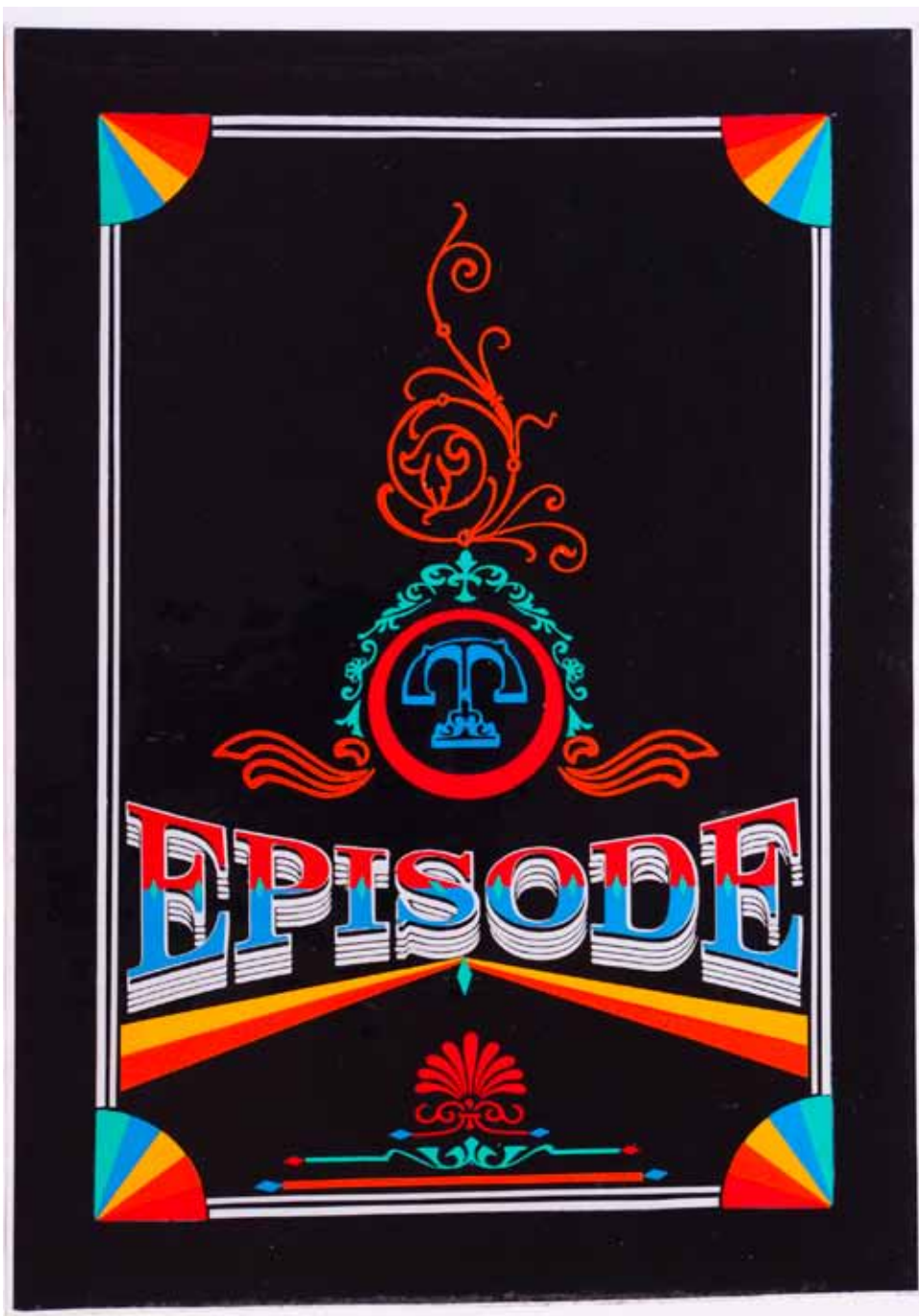
Taxi Sticker Art
 Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
 Prologue and Epiloge – A Critical Reader
 Mario Pfeifer

3A_2_Prakaran, 2012
 Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
 vinyl sheets, unicum
 25.5 × 36 cm



Taxi Sticker Art
 Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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3A_8_Prakaran, 2012
 Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
 vinyl sheets, unicum
 28 × 40.5 cm



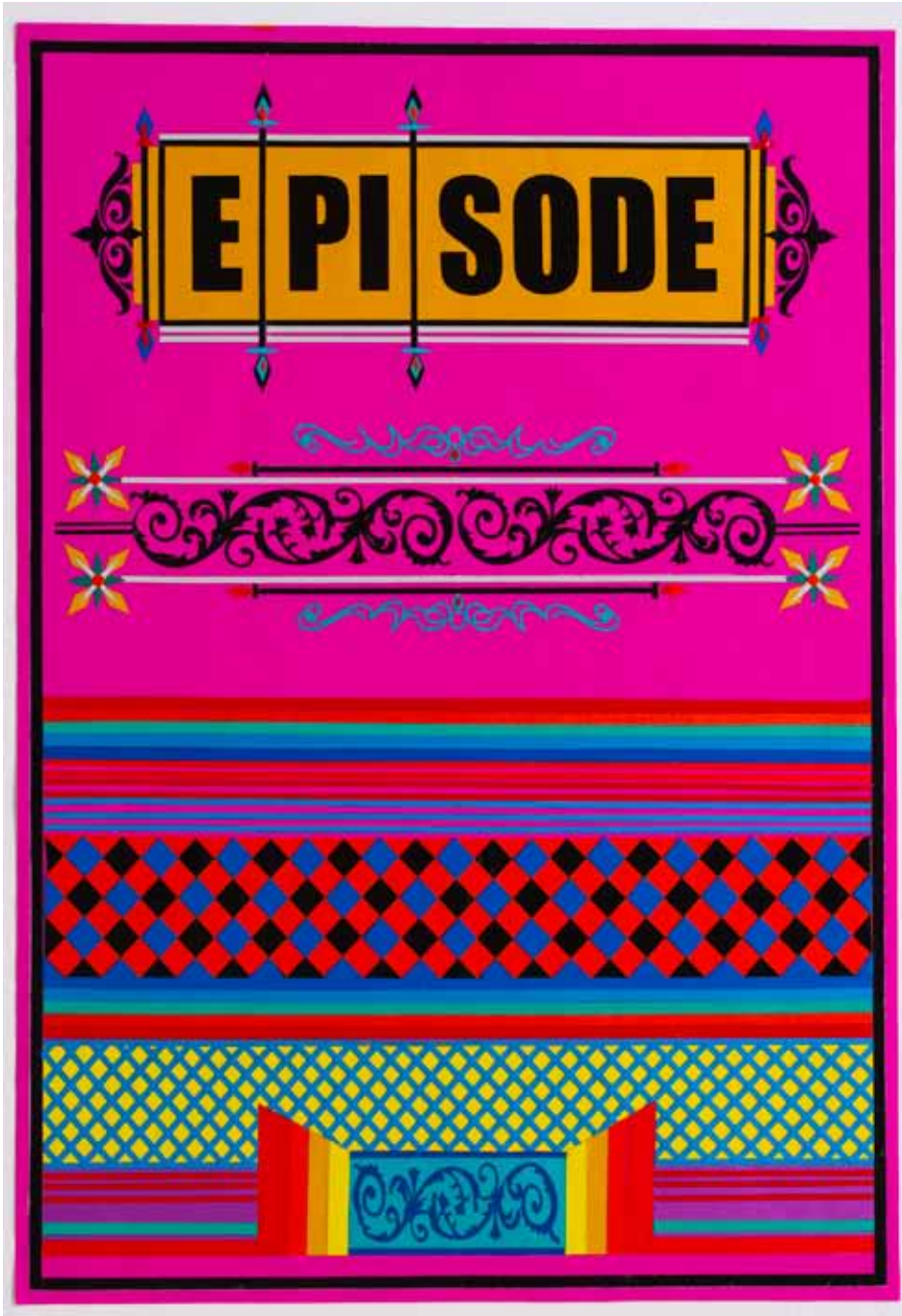
Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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3B_3_Episode, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
20.5 × 29.5 cm



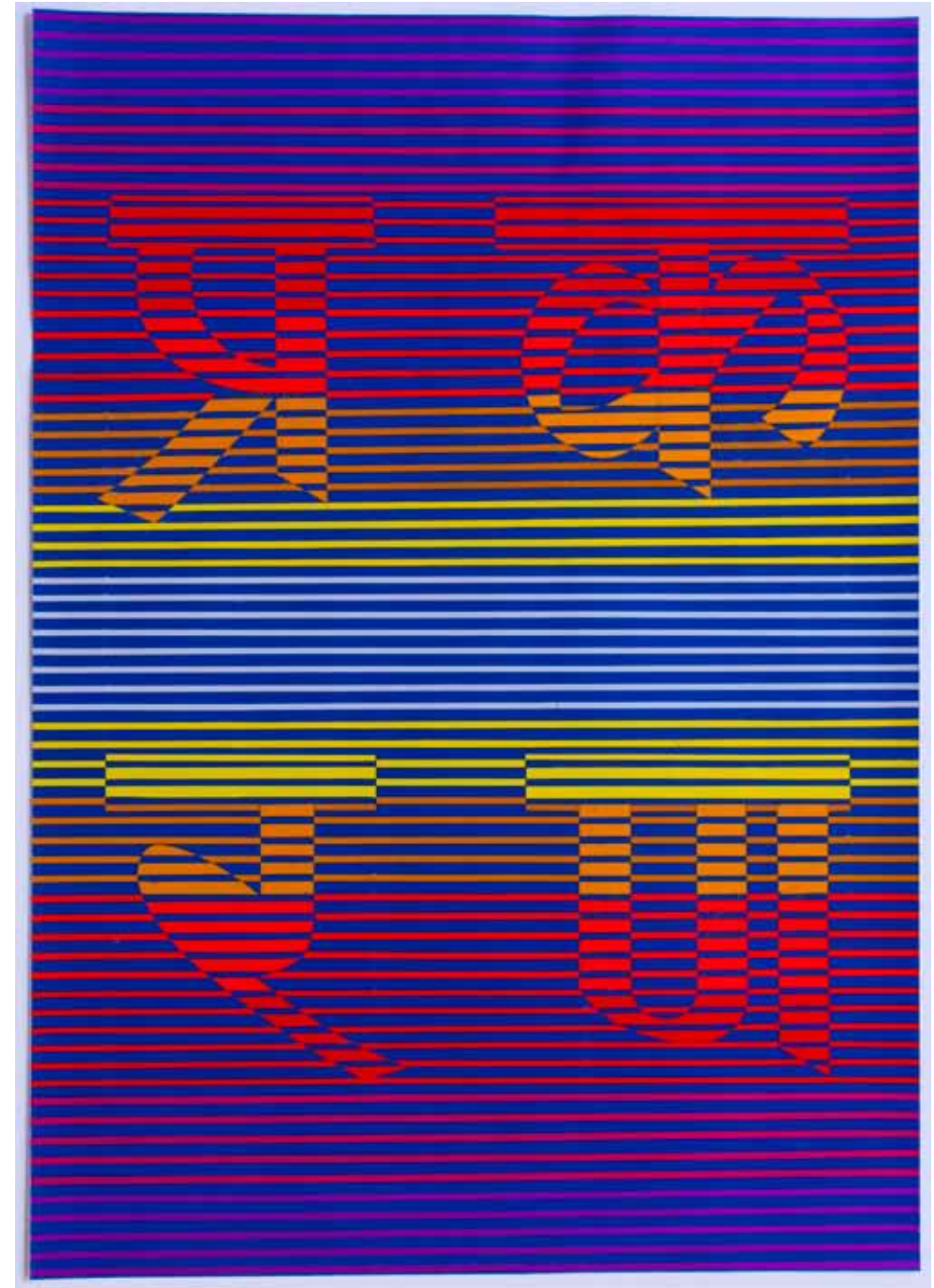
Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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3A_6_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
22 × 30 cm



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3B_4_Episode, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
27 × 39.5 cm



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3A_3_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
38.5 × 27 cm



Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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3A_7_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
22 × 30 cm



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3B_6_Episode, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
29.5 × 42 cm



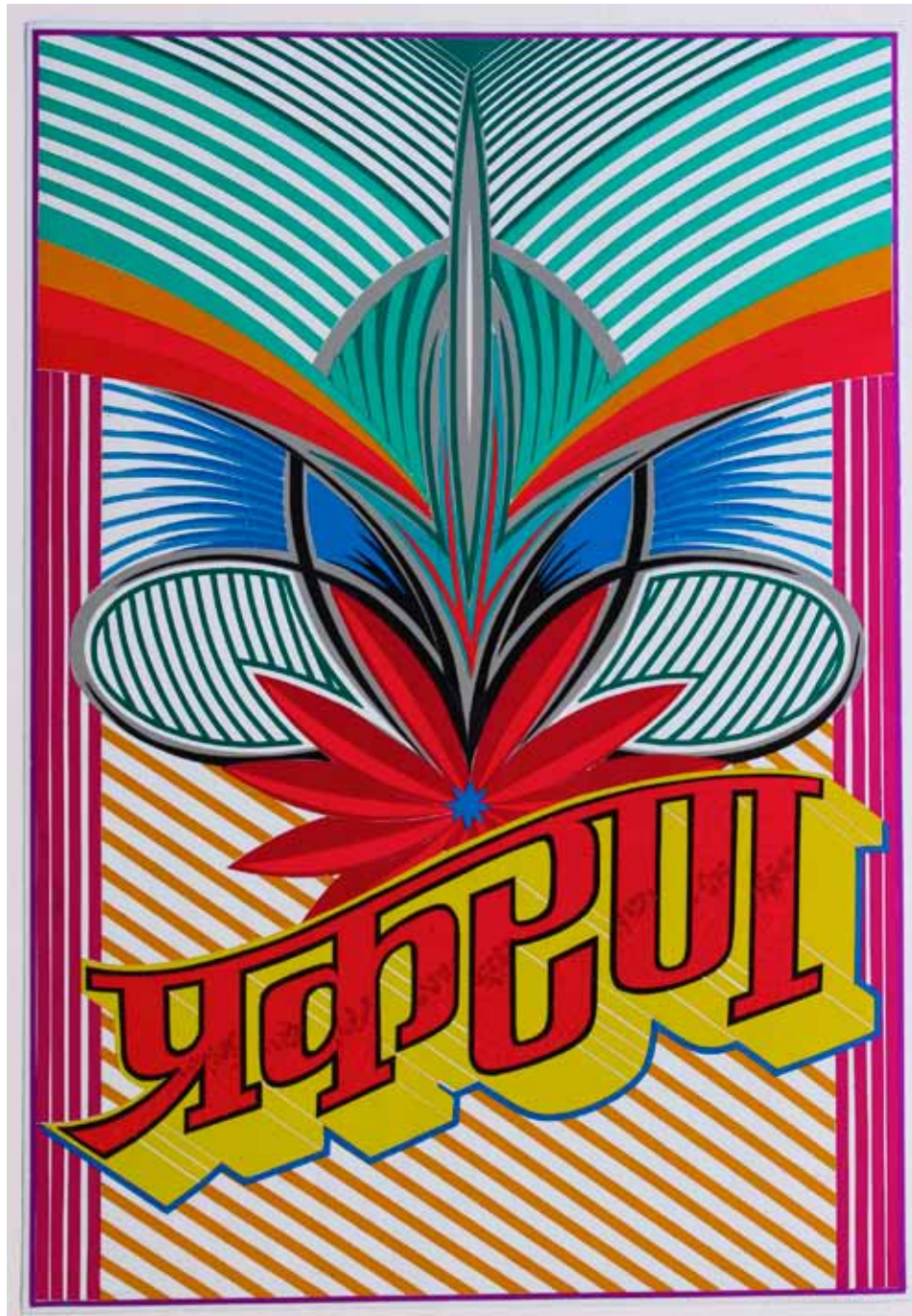
Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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Mario Pfeifer

3B_1_Episode, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
27.5 × 39.5 cm



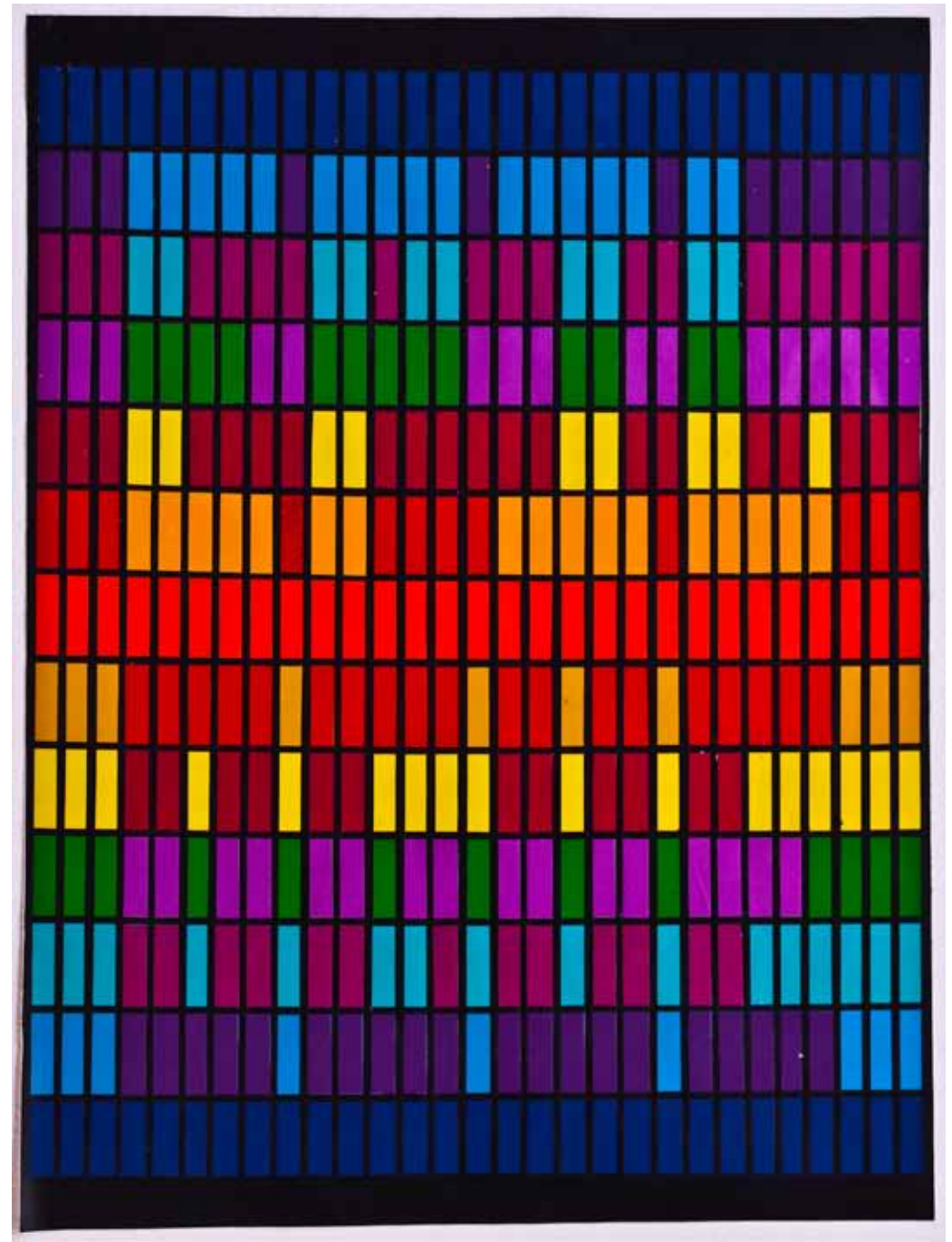
Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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3A_5_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
22 × 30 cm



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3A_4_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
28 × 40 cm



Taxi Sticker Art
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1B_Epilogue, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
33 × 25 cm



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3A_8_Prakaran, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
25 × 41 cm



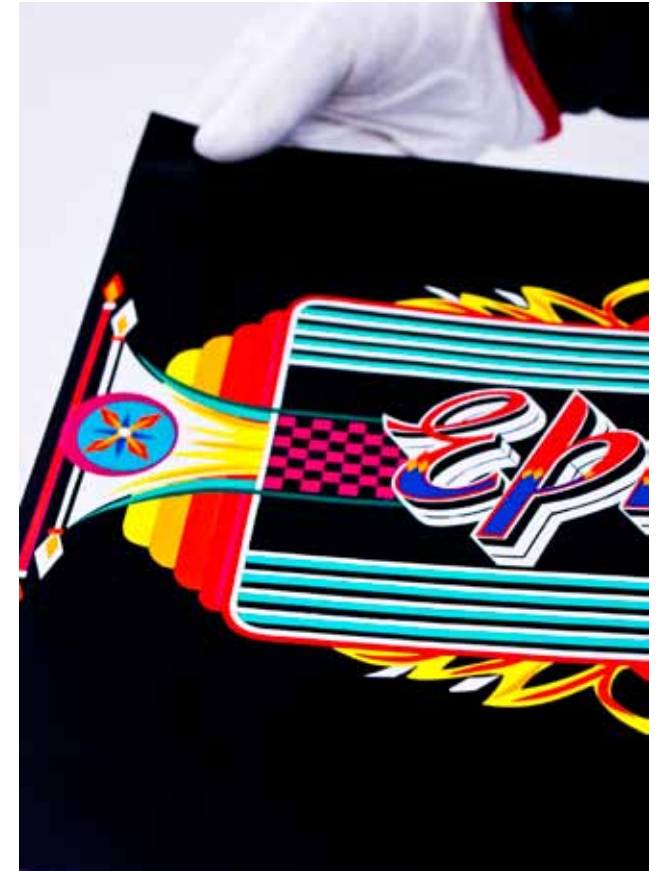
Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
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Mario Pfeifer

3B_5_Episode, 2012
Hand cut design on peel-off adhesive
vinyl sheets, unicum
27 × 39.5 cm



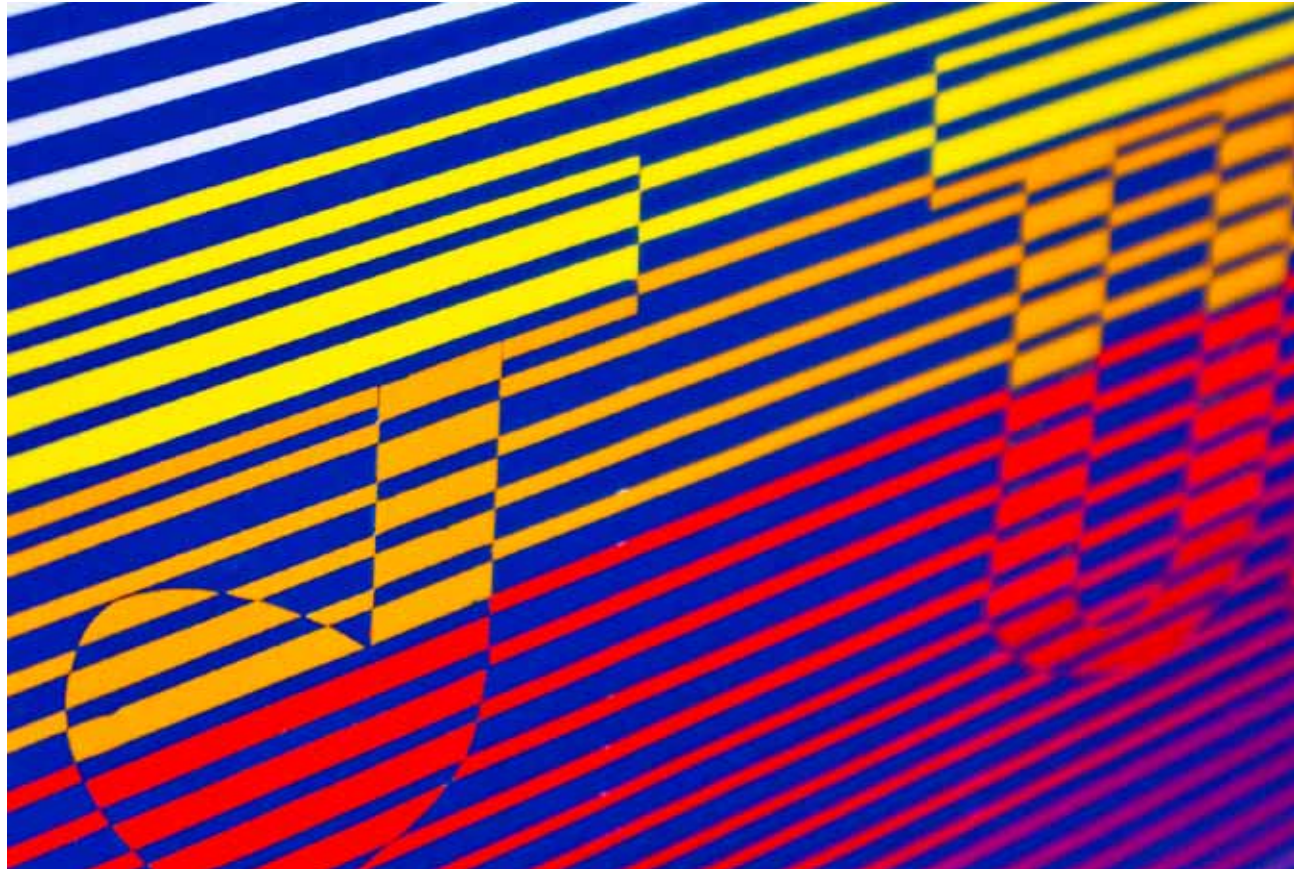
Taxi Sticker Art
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Details



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Prologue and Epiloge – A Critical Reader
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Details



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Detail



Taxi Sticker Art
 Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
 Prologue and Epiloge – A Critical Reader
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Production Stills
 Photo: Anand Tharaney



Taxi Sticker Art
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Prologue and Epiloge – A Critical Reader
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Installation View: Project 88,
Mumbai, 2013



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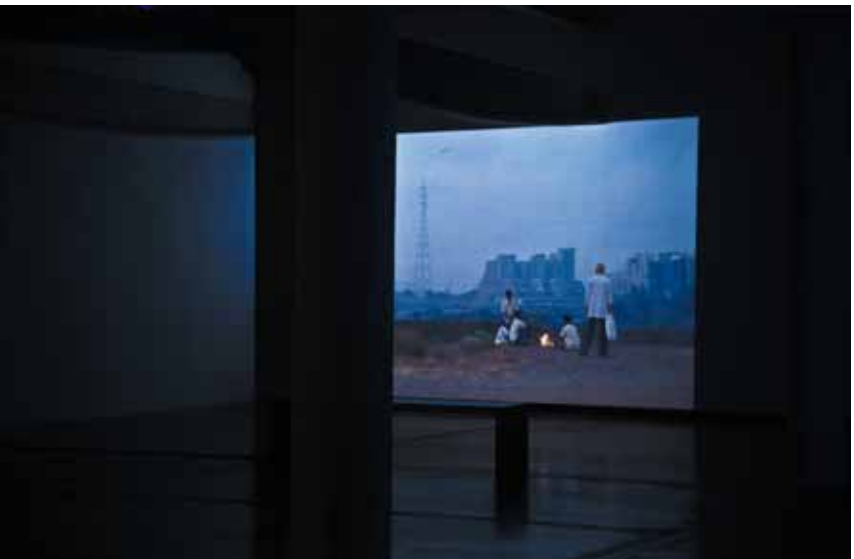
Installation View: Project 88,
Mumbai, 2013

Print production materials: letterpress,
silkscreen, 4/4 offset print plates,
test prints



Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
Prologue & Epilogue
Mario Pfeifer

Installation View: Project 88,
Mumbai, 2013



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Prologue & Epilogue
Mario Pfeifer

Installation View: Project 88,
Mumbai, 2013



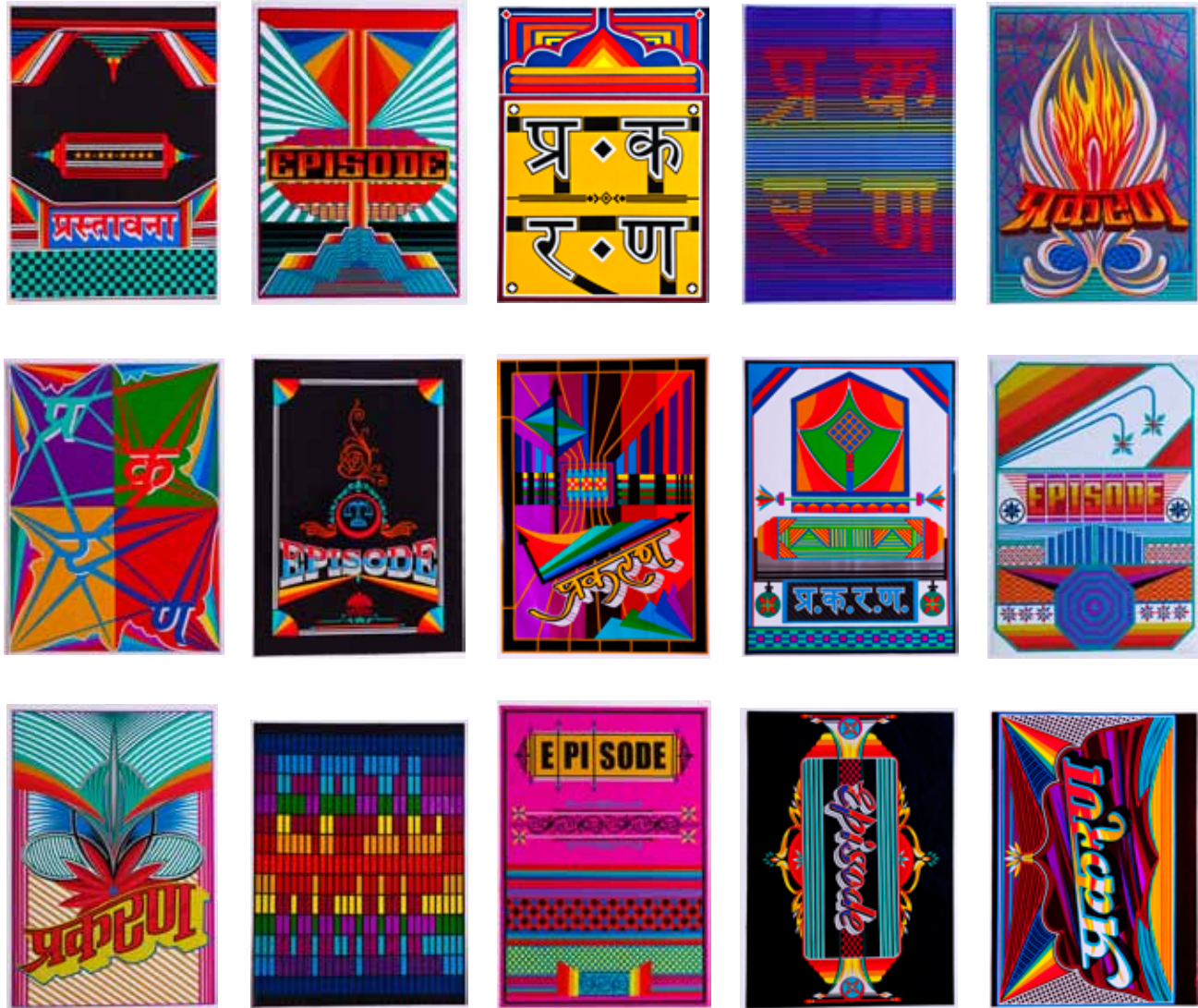
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Original Letterpress blocks from the
print production



Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
Prologue & Epilogue
Mario Pfeifer

Original print palts from the 4/4 Offset
production, Aluminium



Taxi Sticker Art
Project: A Formal Film in Nine Episodes,
Prologue and Epilogue – A Critical Reader
Mario Pfeifer

There are about 60–70,000 registered taxis in Mumbai. The huge amount of taxis almost exceeds the demand for them. This was once a lucrative business but has now become highly competitive. Since residential areas have shifted further away from work areas, the fuel prices risen sharply and traffic congestion increased, it has become expensive and time consuming to travel by taxi and so trains and buses have become more popular. The taxi owners have therefore resorted to devising ways to make taxi travel more attractive. The bright stickers on the exteriors, colourful interiors, stereo systems and dazzling lights are all attempts to lure customers. As all taxis are customarily painted in yellow and black, the decorations help to differentiate one from the other. The resulting competition between these decorations has led to the “sticker art” on the taxi exteriors evolving into a developed urban design form. The artists who make the sticker art works do not have proper workshops. They sit by the roadside and work from there. In the picture the taxi driver is reclining against the tree trunk waiting for his design to be ready. The material used for these designs are peel-off adhesive vinyl sheets. Different patterns cut out of different coloured sheets are put together to form intricate designs. Another important feature of this material is that it has a reflective quality that makes it glow when light is bounced off it. This makes these decorations all the more attractive in the nighttime.

The title design for the film Ek Tera Saat is based on the typographic style used for decorating Mumbai taxis. This is because the central character of the film is a taxi driver and the plot of the film follows a nighttime taxi ride through the city. The Hindi title of the film Ek Tera Saat translates into “Only Your Companionship”. Ek means “one” or “only” and implies “singular”. Tera means “your” and saat or rather saath means “companionship”. The number seven is also pronounced saat in Hindi. Hence, using the abbreviated syntax popularly used in text messages sent by mobile phones, the film title is written as 1 tera 7. This abbreviated syntax has also caught on for typographic slogans on the backs of taxis and has therefore been aptly adapted for the film title too. Recently, the art form has been facing a decline as the old Fiat taxi, the favourite sticker canvas for decades, is slowly being phased out. The Fiat possessed a unique three-box structure and there was ample space on the front, back and sides to display the designs. Today the streets are filled with dull hatchbacks that have neither the girth nor the shape to appeal to the taxi artists. Moreover, the advent of air-conditioned fleet cabs displaying corporate advertising has further alienated people so that they no longer appreciate a good old radium, the local term for retro-reflective stickers in Mumbai.

The art displayed on the page dividers of this book is a slight departure from radium art, as it is primarily the work of a graphic designer in close association with a taxi artist arranging patterns from a multitude of early taxi graphics and doesn't necessarily keep to a black background. By contrast, taxi art assumes the shape of a cab and adheres to the bulges, curves and flat parts, where certain patterns are meant for the specific section of a cab. Here, the artist has condensed an entire design apparatus into one vertical plane, though unlike the digital illustrations on which these designs are based, here the artist handles the colour layering on his own terms, deciding what colour should form the base and what needs to be brought out and how well he can replicate it by hand, improvising as he goes along.

Essay by Kunal Rawat, Taxi Sticker Art (A Formal Film in Nine Episodes, Prologue and Epilogue – A Critical Reader, p. 264, Spector Books, Leipzig, 2013)

The presented selection of “Taxi Sticker Art” designs were produced for Mario Pfeifer’s publication *A Formal Film in Nine Episodes, Prologue and Epilogue – A Critical Reader* (designed by Markus Weisbeck/Surface, Spector Books, 2013). The concept for the publication is based on a research by Mario Pfeifer and Markus Weisbeck in Mumbai, India in 2012 and concluded in a collaboration with Mumbai based designer Kurnal Rawat. These analogue designs are unique pieces locally produced in Mumbai, India in 2012. They reappear as chapter dividers for Pfeifer’s monograph as reproductions in different printing techniques available today in Mumbai.

Mario Pfeifer: *A Formal Film in Nine Episodes, Prologue and Epilogue – A Critical Reader*. Published by Spector Books, 2013. ISBN: 978-3-940064-60-8

Mario Pfeifer
Dossier, Taxi Sticker Art

Design: Alexander Fuchs

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