



**A NEW TAKE** Shombit Sen Gupta's gesturism art borrows from human gestures.

## Solving a painting

Artist Shombit Sen Gupta talks of his quest for new artistic idioms in a book, says *Shailaja Tripathi*

**R**evolving against digital art, Shombit Sen Gupta has devised a new art form called gesturism art. Spontaneous brush strokes dot his canvases rendering them vibrant and dynamic. With gestures being such an integral part of our lives, it is then obvious for it to inspire a mind, feel the artist, who is gearing up for exhibiting at the Carrousel du Louvre of the 223-year-old Louvre Museum, Paris later this month. In November, the artist has a date with Milan. At Museo d'Arte e Scienza, he will showcase yet another innovation of his, the zig-zag scrambled installation painting "Leonardo Labyrinth" based on the masterpiece "The Last Supper".

And even as he readies for these major assignments, the artist known as just 'Sen' in the art world has come up with the book titled "Sen Gesturism Art – An Artist's Journey from Kolkata to Paris" (published by Sage) capturing his journey from a squatted refugee colony outside Kolkata to Paris. Poverty came in between him and his art education — he couldn't complete his studies at Government College of Art & Craft, Calcutta and Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris where he went to study art. He lived there as an illegal immigrant and worked at Jacques Gourdon atelier of lithography as sweeper to make ends meet. But for all the struggle, Sen went through, his canvases bear no sign of it but celebration of life. "Poverty shouldn't destroy your emotions, my mother had told me once. At art college, one well-off friend used to supply me colours. She then took me to American Library where I

saw these amazing art books and got inspired," says the artist.

While the rigour and discipline of College of Art and Craft, Kolkata drilled into him the fundamentals of art, honed his skills of sketching, Paris taught him to innovate. From the trademark luminous water colours he was doing in Kolkata, his visual language changed after his move there. In 1994, he embarked on gesturism and in 2008, he devised scrambled installations. "When everything is available at the



Colour bath - 2015, Acrylic on canvas 117 x 107cm

click of your hand, why does my work remain far off for a viewer? If the viewer can come close, experience the work and arrange a painting according to her choice, it would be better, I thought," explains Sen.

Scrambled installations are participative works comprising different panels within one frame like a triptych. A connecting white line flows from one canvas to another but obviously put in a manner when they don't connect but has to be solved by a viewer like a jigsaw. And as the real painting emerges, Sen's idea becomes visible. In Kolkata, at the group exhibition by alumni of the Government College of Art and Craft held as part of its 150 year celebrations, Sen exhibited 'Sardinian Rhapsody', his scrambled painting installation. The famous garden of master impressionist Monet in Giverny has been reinterpreted in one of his

scrambled installations and so is Vinci's "The Last Supper" which is looked in the context of the evolution of Christianity. The panels attached to the floating American frames through magnets can be easily taken off and reattached. The book contains small essays by his friends who range from art collectors to writers and art critics and his seminal works which present evolution of his art. "I was searching for my language for a long time. The book shows that search. It also showcases my struggle and what all Paris gave me. I was a sweeper in a studio whose owner took me out for dinner. He gave me money and artists who came there bought my works and that is how I survived. The book is an ode to France because it is there I met and learnt from greats like mime artist Marcel Marceu, painter Alain Bonnefait and photographer Marc Riboud," says the artist.