



THE SUNDAY STANDARD

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'ART DRIVES ME TO BE ALIVE'

Shombit Sengupta started out by doing odd jobs in Paris. Today, he is a renowned artist credited with creating Gesturism Art and bringing forth a totally new dimension—*désordre harmony*. He talks to **Medha Dutta** about the adrenaline rush he gets in transforming his vision into the canvas.

What encouraged you to be a painter?

As Picasso said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." Perhaps this artistic bent from my childhood has always remained with me. Art drives me to be alive in this beautiful world. Art always, even at the age of five, took me into a paradisiac dream.

Tell us about your early life in Kolkata.

Poverty pushed an erudite person like my father to join Leftist politics. Being his locality's proletarian leader, he was often thrown into prison. My father had vaguely narrated a story to me of how a Dutch or German artist came to France, and his colour palette changed radically. He could not recall who the artist was. Later, when I had joined Government College of Art and Craft in Kolkata, I found the exact paintings my father had referred to. In the American Library, in a glossy book on artist Vincent van Gogh was his dark painting 'Potato Eaters' done in Holland. On arrival in France, his colours became vibrant in 'Sunflowers'. This is where I learnt that Franco represents freedom of artistic expression.

How did Paris treat you?

For the first three years, I worked as a sweeper in a lithography print shop. All the famous artists used to come there. They gave me access to their atelier, which enabled me to learn different techniques. Sometimes, they even bought my paintings. The way my art has been nurtured by the French people is phenomenal.

What's your latest project?

The latest was an invitation from Renault in Paris, to paint their Made in India Kwid art car. Renault exhibited the art car in a glass jewel box in front of the Institute of Contemporary Indian Art gallery in Kala Ghoda, Mumbai. Then they transported the art car to my next solo exhibition in the Painters' Village of Barbizon, France.



QUICKTAKES

ROLE MODEL A graduate artist whom he addressed as Subhiroy uncle

A COUNTRY THAT FASCINATES HIM France, for its artistic freedom

MOST DARING MOVE Landing up in Paris at 19 with \$8 and no knowledge of French

WHAT DEFINES HIS ART Not following any dogma or doctrine in using irreverent Indian colours

MAJOR INFLUENCES The Italian High Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci

MOST UNAPPEALING ART Any kind of digital art that pretends to be fine art or contemporary art



bring a dynamic movement with Western structured paintings while throwing in irreverent Indian colours, and a totally new art dimension of *désordre harmony*. *Désordre* in French means objects in disorder. The values of inclusiveness, acceptance of *désordre* and irreverent colours in living ways are ingrained in India. These values reflect in my art.

You have called your Gesturism Art an artistic revolt.

Gesturism Art is a creative celebration of the limitless gestures of all living beings. I have shaped the manifesto of Gesturism Art movement with the grand palette of Indian canvas.

One dead artist you would like to bring back.

Artists never die because they leave their vision and imagination on canvas or bronze or in stone. I don't need to bring any artist back. Whoever has left his or her vision through talent is always alive.

Your take on India's art scene.

It is the responsibility of the next generation of artists to involve writers, philosophers, art critics and journalists in understanding and analysing the meaning and value of art



What is Gesturism Art and your concept of *désordre harmony*?

I started working on Gesturism Art in 1994. My aim was to

movements. India has to create new schools of thought and establish art movements so that the rest of the world recognises them as new genres of art.