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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

A FREE-FLOWING CONVERSATION WITH THE CANVAS

Artist Sen Shombit speaks about his artworks, his love for Chickpet and more...

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HIS LOVE FOR CHICKPET

The artist now shuttles between Bengaluru and the rest of the world, as he globe-trots with his work. "I stay in Bengaluru for about five months a year. The people are very nice and non-interfering. The weather, too, is better than it is in Paris. The area in the city that fascinates me the most is Chickpet, I love the colours there!" says Sen. His wife chips in that he collects colourful bags from there, just because of how vibrant they are. "I love the flower market too and the 400-year-old Banyan tree," he adds.

And I always wanted to create my own movement, my signature and the result was an Indo-Western blend. It had the structure of the French and the free-flowing colours of India. It is impromptu, filled with colours and has shapes and figures for the audience to discover," he adds.

In his Désordre harmony series, he even invites the audience to move around the pieces in the installation and interact with the art so that they too can become artists.

CONVERSING WITH THE CANVAS

Sen describes his art as a free-flowing conversation with the canvas. "Before I start, I have no idea what I am going to paint, I love that element of surprise. I will put on some colours and paint many paintings at the same time. This is not haphazard, there is a storyline to my paintings and they have universal appeal — anyone can relate to them. On the car that I have painted — I have represented Bengal. But otherwise, my art has always been inspired by colours and not specific places. And I never throw away any canvas. Given my past, I make it a point to not be wasteful. One has to respect art," he says.

ATTENTION TO FINE ART

Speaking about the need for the appreciation of art in India, Sen says, "People need to pay attention to fine art. The architectural intricacy in our temple carvings in Hampi, for instance, show that people were sensitive to fine art. We need to create more art galleries and art museums. We need to recognise and pay attention to fine art. If we do that, 25% of the population's livelihood will be sorted."

A riot of colours welcomes one into this art gallery in the city, where Franco-Indian artist Sen Shombit's canvases are on display. Clad in a pair of vibrant, mirror-work pants and a rainbow-like stole, Sen's personality resonates with a personality as colourful as his paintings. He spoke about his art, his journey to France, his formative years as an artist and more. Excerpts:

FROM INDIA TO FRANCE

"I was born in a refugee colony in 1954. My fascination towards France started when my father spoke to me about the human rights movement in the country. Near the refugee camp in Kolkata where I was staying, there was a French colony. I was fascinated by the architecture there. Eventually, this led me to pursue my future in the arts and I moved to Paris. My mother sold her bangle to buy me a ticket," says Sen. Despite being in an alien country, Sen believes it was art that helped him connect with the locals. "Art is for France, what rock-n-roll is for America. I connected to the people there through art — it has always been a key focus," he explains.

THE INDO-WESTERN BLEND

Sen says his work is heavily influenced by Western art, and that the Indian connect came in because of his wife. "She implored me to come back and form a new connection with the country as I had left India and headed to France when in poverty. So, I wanted to forge a new connection," he explains, adding that the first thing that struck him was the vibrancy. "There are so many colours that people don and there is no system to it. That disorder is intriguing.

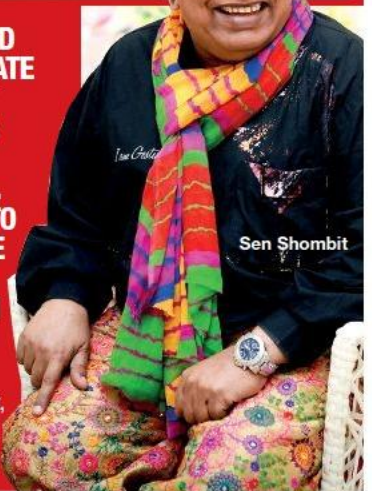


Glimpses from his artworks on display



WE NEED TO CREATE MORE ART GALLERIES AND ART MUSEUMS. WE NEED TO RECOGNISE AND PAY ATTENTION TO FINE ART

— Sen Shombit, artist



Sen Shombit