

# BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

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BEAUTIFUL INSIDE  
KATE WINSLET  
THE ART OF  
SLEEPING

THE FINER  
THINGS IN LIFE  
INDULGE YOUR  
SENSES

AUTUMN-WINTER 2008  
SALVATORE FERRAGAMO  
BASELWORLD AND SIHH  
WILLS LIFESTYLE INDIA  
FASHION WEEK



anoushka shankar  
DESTINY'S CHILD

# french connection

FRENCH ARTIST MARION COLOMER PAINTS UNIQUE PORTRAITS.  
SUCHITA PARIKH OBSERVES HER BRUSH STROKES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANKUR CHATURVEDI, DWAIPAYAN MAZUMDAR

**F**rance has inspired many an artist, and has created even more. Nineteenth century greats like Manet, Monet and Degas – they were all Frenchmen; in fact – all Parisian. Paris has, for centuries, nurtured art and artistes alike. The city is home to the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay, and to a magnificent cultural heritage that is apparent not only in the centuries-old museums but in commonplace streets as well. Street performers and street artists are a quintessential part of this creative hub. It is no surprise then that such a city is also home to young portraiture artist, Marion Colomer. While at the National Superior College of Arts in Paris, Marion's interest in street art peaked and led her to a one-month training programme in Chennai, in 2003. "I studied movie banner paintings," she explains. "I was quite impressed by the street painters in India. I found the country so full of colour."

With the support of the French Embassy, she returned to India again – this time visiting New Delhi. The contrast of rich and poor she witnessed, the street urchins and labourers she came across moved her, and this translated onto her canvas. "Every day in India is a subject to do something with art," she articulates. Having found a reservoir of inspiration to dip her brush into, Marion made the capital her second base. She has, since 2005, been working out of both, Paris and New Delhi and has had shows in each city. Her trip to

Mumbai involves her latest project, portraits of known personalities, for which *Beautiful People* lent a hand, and portraits of Indian royalty, for which she has travelled to Hyderabad as well. "This show will travel to Paris and eight Indian cities," she says.

This travelling artist was six years old when she decided art was to be her calling. "I had gone to an Impressionist painters' exhibition with my parents; it was there that I told them I wanted to be a painter," she smiles, adding, "My great-great grandfather was a portrait artist, so my childhood home was full of sketches and paintings. That influenced me also."

Marion talks of the role played by Indian miniature art, block prints and traditional Indian clothing in her artwork and comments on the similarity of cultures. "There is a lot of my old [French] culture that I can see in that of India's." Her work is a cross between portraiture and decorative art. Her materials of use include fabric, sequins and embroidery, besides oil paints on canvas.

Her process is simple: Stage one involves sketching her subjects, as she observes and familiarises herself with them. Stage two involves transference of these impressions and thoughts onto canvas in the inimitable way of artists. The resulting works of five such portrait sessions lie before you. "I hope they do justice," says Marion, with unassuming modesty. We will let you be the judge. ■





#### On Alyque Padamsee

*"I was happy to meet someone so full of culture. He seemed a bit apprehensive at first, but opened up after a while. He spoke on theatre, books and culture. It was an unexpected, different experience. He also spoke of his children; he's very proud of his son."*

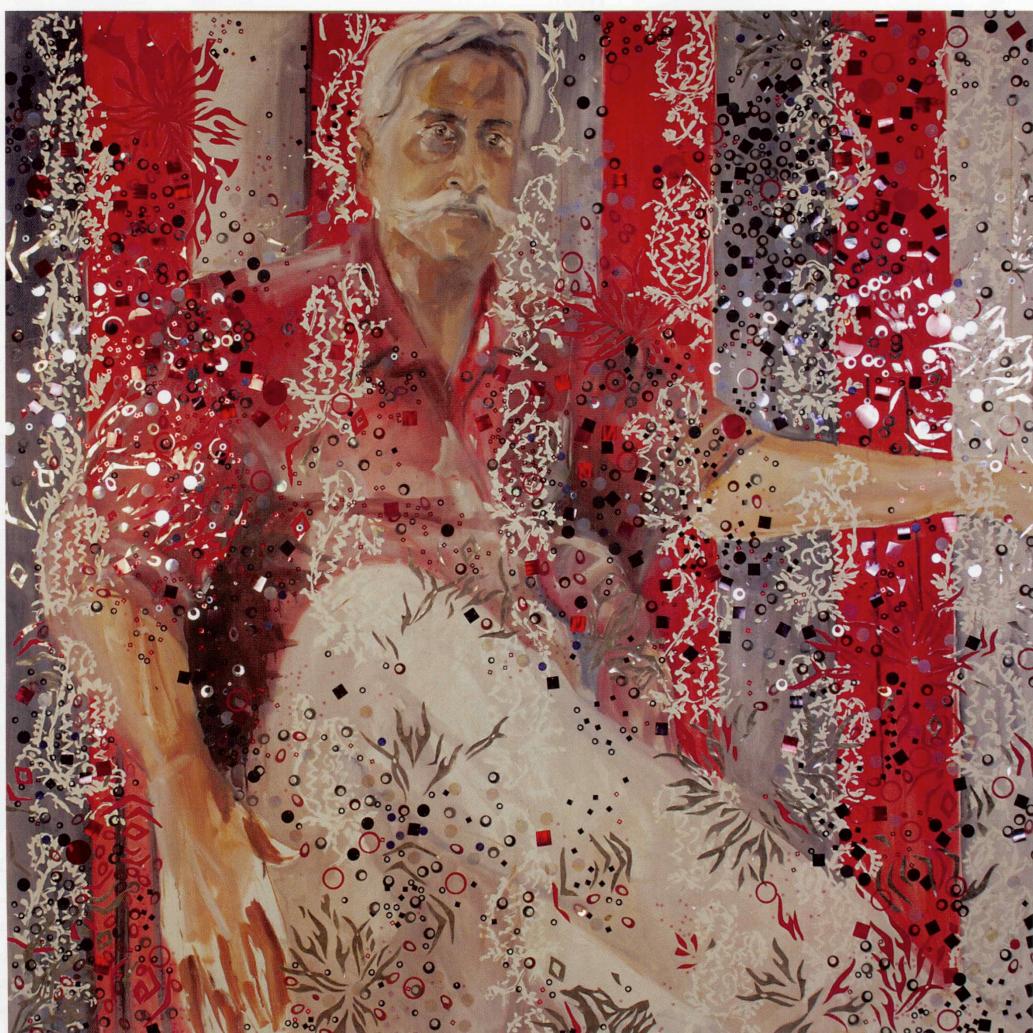
#### On Julius Macwan

*"We sat in his studio so the atmosphere was right for a portrait session. He showed me his works; they were impressive. I was also a little stressed because of it! During the sitting, Julius seemed very inspired and deep in thought."*



### On Piyush Pandey

*"Unfortunately, I only got to meet him for a few minutes. He was quite busy, but he seemed sure of himself, and his face makes for an interesting portrait."*





#### On Princess Shekhar Jah

*"Shekhar is very well-educated, loves animals and is an excellent rider which is why I decided to paint some dogs around her. Horse portraits were used a lot in 17th century, European court paintings; I like to play with those references. She comes across as an extraordinary, strong woman."*



#### On Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla

*"We took time to get acquainted. It was very interesting to speak to such creative people. I have a feeling they are very open people who enjoy fine things. They were very interested in the portraiture-making. They are interested in art and it shows in their creative style. They lead active lives."*

**On Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi**

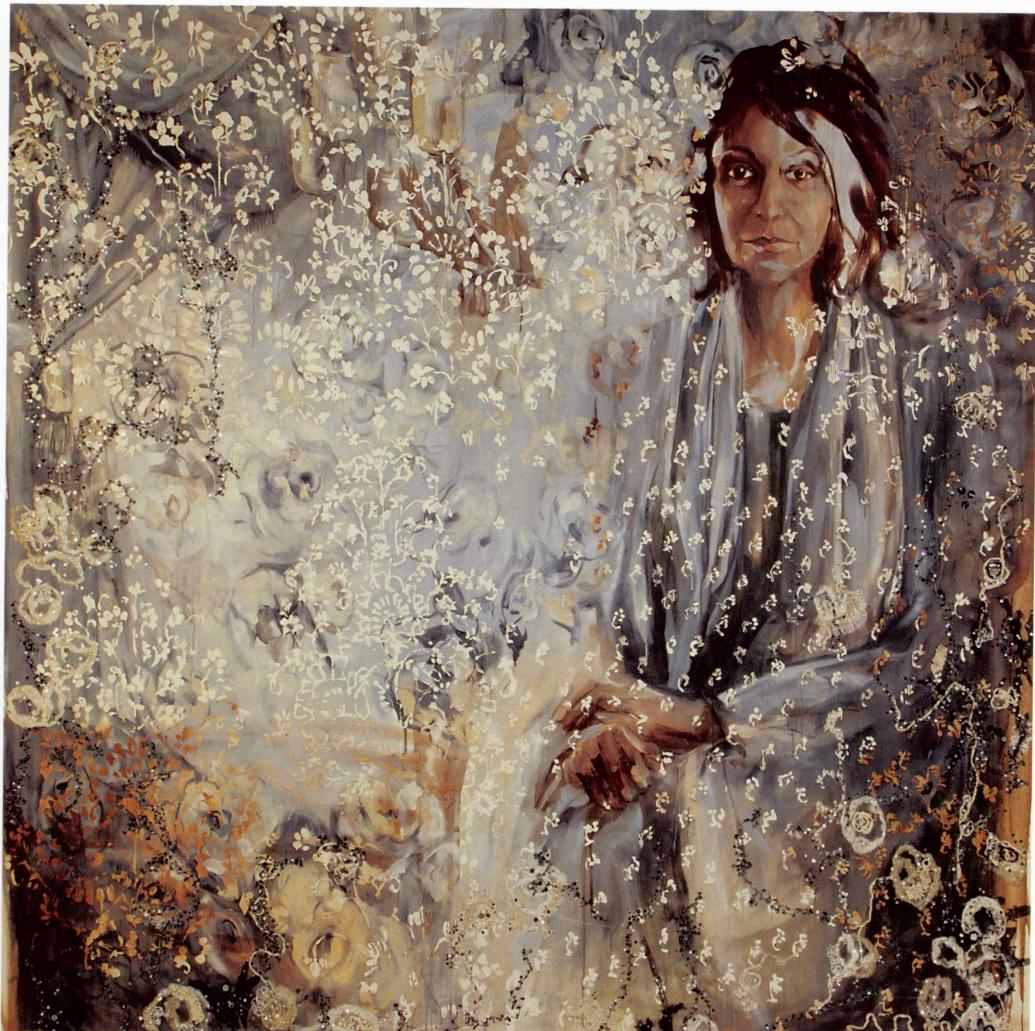
*"He is an amazing man. I met him through his sister (the Begum of Bhopal) from Hyderabad. During the sitting for the portrait, he was almost day-dreaming. He comes across as a strong, generous man who knows what he wants ."*



Illustration by Amane M. Hamed

### On Princess Esra Jah

*"Esra seems very fragile and sensitive. I played with elements of her palaces: Chowmalla and Falaknuma. The embroideries, influenced by art deco roses, are meant to show her delicacy."*





#### On Gaurav Gupta

*"Gaurav Gupta is a good friend, since two years. He is very sensitive and generous. The colours I have used are dramatic and delicate. I put a lot of details from the cloth of the European Renaissance in reference. It shows sophistication and complication; his very own dandy style. He embroidered his own portrait."*