

Art is a full-time obsession: Raza

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SYED HAIDER Raza, the veteran artist who took Indian paintings to a global landscape, splashes a colourful smile.

He has been living in Paris for over 50 years, but his soul still craves for his roots. "My visit to Madhya Pradesh, is like a pilgrimage to me," he says. The octogenarian artiste discusses his more than eight decade journey, the status of contemporary and more in an interview with the *Hindustan Times*.



And what was the journey like — the ups and downs?

Oh, it has been an extremely passionate life. So much has happened in the more than 80 years. I am surprised that so much can happen in a small life. Health is important for overall functioning, but it is secondary. What is more important is an imaginative intellectual plane.

One should have an individual concept because that is ultimately recognized. This is true in poetry, dance, music, painting or any other form of art.

I just cannot do without sketching. I can't live without

painting and that is why whenever I visit India, I always carry sketch books.

Maintaining that he was offered a job as a professor in the University of California in 1962 with a fat salary he said, "I re-

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fused the offer even after they gave me freedom to paint for one year and teach for two years. Painting is a full-time job, which takes all your Sundays and Mondays. It is a total investment, a full time obsession. I

have never been bothered about success. It was a question of passionate interest in research. There should be a deep involvement with the research.

How do you define the contemporary Indian art?

The Indian art has become one of the most vital art expression in the world today. We have worked very hard and I am proud to say that the Indian painters are very talented. It is the spiritual interpretation in the Indian art that radiates. Indian art is not just a representation of the nature sensed by the retina. It is something beyond that. It is an interpretation of the third eye. It is Antargyan or Antarjyoti.

Indian art is fantastic. I visualise cities of Madhya Pradesh like Bhopal and Ujjain as percolating a growing impact in the art arena.

The young painters are developing and honing their skills tremendously. I would say that

Raza to inaugurate exhibition

Raza will inaugurate Fusion— an exhibition of paintings and sculptures at Rangdarshini in Bharat Bhavan on Tuesday at 5 pm. The exhibition, which will continue till February 6, is organised by Rangayan in association with Bharat Bhavan.

Madhya Pradesh is like the beat of human heart.

Is it true that art caters to only the rich and the affluent?

No, there are people from all segments who are attentive to painting, who savour the art in silence."

And lastly, what were the three essential ingredients for success?

A woman partner, real involvement with your work and of course immense faith in God."