

Grand master of Indian art S.H. Raza talks about how meeting the Mahatma left a huge impact on his mind, new talent in India and how the value of an artwork is far higher than its price tag



(Above and below) S.H. Raza's interpretations of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on display

Delhi diary



ARTISTIC VOYAGE INTO SINGAPORE

Art Spice gallery at the Metropolitan Hotel & Spa in association with Singapore Art Society is hosting "The Nanyang Spirit", an aesthetic voyage into Singapore. In this exhibition, the 22 Singaporean artists, each with a unique style of paintings, are representing 'Nanyang' spirit, which stands for idea of a regional identity and culture.
When: March 12 - 21, 10am to 10 pm
Where: Art Spice Gallery, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, Bangla Sahib Road



FUSION AND MUSICAL TALENT

Enjoy the scintillating voice of Kabul & ROCK VEDA, a progressive fusion band, as they are set to enthral their Delhi audience. Kabul's versatile voice easily transcends from Hindustani classical to soulful sufi, raw earthiness of folk to the foot tapping popular chartbusters.
When: March 1, 6pm onwards
Where: Indraprastha College for Women, Delhi University

Shades of the Mahatma

REENU BAHL
THE ASIAN AGE

The zeal with which he painted in his younger years has stayed unchanged down the decades for renowned artist S.H. Raza, who still paints at the sunny age of 92. Upon his return to India in 2010, the master busied himself in executing a new collection of artworks, out of which his series "Parikrama: Around Gandhi" was recently inaugurated at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi.

The inauguration coincided with the artist's birthday, which made both the occasions special for Raza. "It was a nice feeling. There was so much warmth and so many friends. I always like to have a show of my work being put up on such an occasion," he shares.

Talking about his artworks on display, Raza says the entire series is dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. "I saw the Mahatma when I was barely 8

years old in Mandla. His humility, profundity in thinking about human possibilities and predicament, his transparency, his life-long insistence on truth and nonviolence, and his struggle for true freedom left a huge impact on my mind. That is why I wanted to do a series dedicated to him entirely. However, I have only interpreted some of his concepts into my own visual idiom, as it was not easy. I am neither a translator nor someone who can adequately represent the ideas. I only explore my own feelings about the noble ideas," says the artist, who admits to being hugely inspired by Indian metaphysical and spiritual ideas of Buddha, Kabir, Muktibodh and many other Hindi poets.

It was also an occasion when two books on Raza's art-



works and journey were released. Sharing details on the same, he says, "Vadehra Art Gallery has published a large book of 108 colour reproductions of my work called *The Journey of Master*. The Raza Foundation has published a book of my correspondence *Geyssers* featuring letters from Husain, Akbar Padamsee, Tyeb Mehta, Ram Kumar and Gaitonde etc. They both chronicle my life and art, though differently."

Though he feels grateful for the respect art lovers have for him, Raza says he does not like to be in the limelight for the price tag of some of his artworks. "I feel grateful for the warm feelings and regard people have for me. My modest artistic endeavour has been well appreciated in India and elsewhere also, which is rare. But sometimes there is more talk of price than of value, which is distressing for me," he states.

Nevertheless, the artist is optimistic about the emerging talent and respect for legacies of artists like him. "The art scene in India is exciting and hopeful. There are new idioms, new insights and new experiments which are amazing and full of vital plurality. The young are daring and willing to take risks. As for our legacy, time alone can judge. We tried our best with passion, honesty and dedication," he ends.

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S.H. RAZA

A celebration of womanhood

UMAR DEWANI
THE ASIAN AGE

To bolster the confidence of women through self-defence awareness and to engage them in different games and activities, Akshuna Bakshi, 23, the founder of Travelista, is organising a women's festival "SHE" at Dilli Haat, INA. As a prelude to Woman's Day this festival aims to celebrate womanhood and bring them together at one platform.

Talking about the highlights of the two-day festival, Akshuna says,

"Through this festival, we want to encourage more women to stand up for their rights and feel brave. We will be organising self-defence workshops and travel safety workshops for women and hope to disseminate as much useful information as we can."

Colourful dance and music performances, eclectic art and poetry installations, funky photo booths and makeover tents will be some other attractions of this festival.



Akshuna Bakshi

girl child and status of women as we feel the conventional and plain methods of lectures and speeches are unable to strike a chord with the audience." About how this festival would cater to different needs of women, she replies, "We have tried to

embed a cultural theme in our activities. There will be over 70 women entrepreneurs and designers from different parts of India selling unique handicrafts and products like apparel, handicrafts, vintage, kitsch, jewellery." She concludes, "Dance performances from Northeast like Bihu from Assam, bamboo dance from Nagaland and Rajasthani folk dance performances will be part of the event."

SHE is scheduled for March 1 and 2 at Dilli Haat

