

VIVACITY

INDIAN ART BLENDS WITH FOREIGN TECH

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Artist Sen Shombit re-imagines Renault's Kwid



Indian origin artist Sen Shombit decorated car-maker Renault's Kwid model in a gestural style, bringing together art and technology as a creative mode of self-expression.

Désordre, an exhibition of gesturism, created by Sen, was inaugurated by Yves Perrin, Consul-General of France, in Mumbai at ICIA Gallery yesterday. He also unveiled Renault's first Kwid art car painted by Sen.

"In the Kwid that Sen painted at our invitation," said Patrick Lecharpy, Renault's design director in Paris, "It's the first time an artist has narrated a story through his painting style in an art car, in contrast to earlier art cars done by famous artists like Lichtenstein, Warhol, Koons and Calder that showcased only the artist's style of art."

Gesturism art, the new painting ideology created by Sen, is a creative celebration of the limitless gestures of all living beings, from birth to death. "Sen has been able to re-write the rules of contemporary art through a new and appealing chromatic language," said Alberto Moiola, member of the prestigious International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and director, Enciclopedia d'Arte Italiana, who as the Commissaire d'Exposition has curated Sen's paintings for the *Désordre* exhibition.

"*Désordre* is a wonderful spiritual thought that captures the physical disorder of life in India," said Vickram Sethi, chairman of the Institute of Contemporary Indian Art (ICIA) hosting the exhibition. "Sen's paintings create an enigma that defies logic. He invites his viewers to engage in his art through their physical interaction. This participation is so engrossing that it leaves the viewer with memorable experiences."

Ever since Sen left India for Paris in 1973 at age 19, he has not painted any subject pertaining to India. But since the beginning of this year (2016) he re-started painting on the India he had spent his childhood in, which is Bengal. He has extended the theme of *Ville Enigmatique* to the Kwid art car. As Mr Lecharpy recounted, "I am fascinated by Sen's bi-cultural aspect in his art. The Kwid art car vividly reflects his French inspiration, Indian colours through 'Ville Enigmatique' where he has juxtaposed historical French Bengal and Victorian Bengal with traditional Bengali life that continues till today."

For Sen, life is movement and gestures segregate life from non-life. Born 1954, Sen lived poverty stricken upto his adolescence in a slum-like refugee camp called Shohidnagar 50 km outside Kolkata without electricity, sanitation or potable water. Crossing the Ganges from his mud home, Sen would escape into the erstwhile French colony at Chandan Nagar where he experienced Western architecture and saw the painting styles of famous European painters in the French museum library. This inspired him to go to France in search of art.

In 1973, at age 19, he daringly catapulted himself without completing his study at Government College of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata to arrive in Paris with only \$8 and some of his art work. He encountered uncertainty, money crunch and big bang culture shock in France while trying to realize his dream of living in French artistic freedom. Necessity made him work as sweeper in a lithographic print shop near Paris. Most fortunately his job here also entailed helping great painters like Jean Carzou, Alain Bonnefoit, Erte and Yves Brayer who came to get their lithographs made. Sen hungrily learnt many techniques of Western art from these artists. Sen has since integrated seamlessly into French society. He studied at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts and ESAG (Academie Julian) in Paris, but could not complete his studies as he had to earn a living to support his family. So he entered the design domain even as he continued to paint. Sen has since become an acclaimed international designer in the corporate world. At least one or two products designed by him are used on an everyday basis in their lives by people in Europe, the US, Argentina, Japan, China and India.

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