

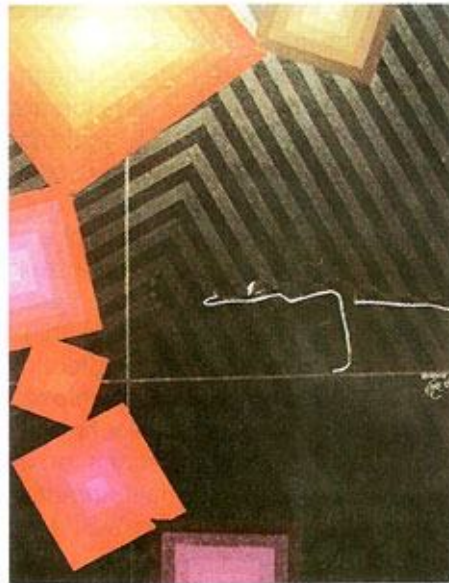
AN ARTIST WITH DISTINCTION: SRUSHTI

She has launched a new form of "line-ism". Gayatri T Rao

Explore your body and mind and it will take you through the journey of exploring various emotions felt by the mind and different body postures followed in yoga. It is an essential amalgamation of the mind's perception and the detachment from the material world by following the ancient form of control. The colours brilliantly explode and capture not only the eyes but also the senses and transform the observer into a parallel world. That's what you can say of Srushti's art.

Born in Lonavala's naval base *INS Shivaji* to a naval-officer father and central schoolteacher mother, she has an elder brother, who is a major and Sena Medal holder. Her father took a premature retirement and went into the oil industry. Srushti's husband, Mandar Rao runs his own ad agency. They have been married for the last six years.

Srushti did her bachelor's in fine



arts (paintings) from Khirragarh University, which is now in Chhattisgarh. Of her institute, she says, "It has been renamed Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, which is, as I understand, older than the J J School of Arts as well."



When and how did you realise that you are an artist?

I knew I had a creative streak since I was a child. I started colouring from the age of 2-2½. I had this huge collection of colouring books. I started with pencil colours and then crayons, then pastels and then it went on to tube colours. After that came the oils. That's how I grew in my colouring.

It is like a typical student, I suppose. Most people tend to eventually leave art. But you continued.

Yes, I continued. I would rather colour than study. That's how my childhood was. And colouring was not the only thing I did. I also stitched a lot of clothes in a creative manner for my doll. It was something that my parents had not seen any child doing. Initially they thought that probably I'll be a fashion designer. That didn't happen (*she laughs*).

You left a successful corporate career and chose being an artist. Why?

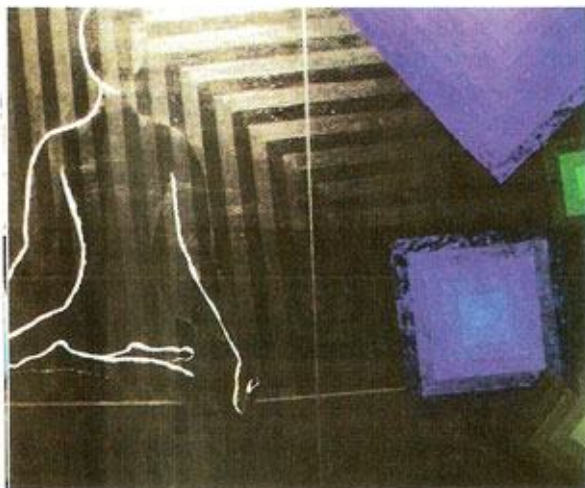
As a child, colours and forms always intrigued me. I would try to translate them in my own childish form. I would cut colourful papers, make clothes, make houses from Lego... but nothing could hold me back. The decision to graduate in fine arts came rather suddenly as my parents would have rather seen me as a management postgraduate. They nonetheless supported me.

I developed as an artist during my college years. After college, advertising was the first choice to explore the creative brain. However, somehow, things started moving in another direction and marketing was the destination. After six years of a corporate job and marketing specialisation, I wanted to pursue my destiny. Once an artist, always an artist. I like painting thoughts, ideas... without keeping things too abstract I like giving them form... in my own passion that I share for life...

my paintings share with colour. Each of my works speaks for itself as I try to present my inner self on canvases.

What kind of paintings is your forte?

My medium is acrylic and oil on canvas. My paintings would come under contemporary Indian art, wherein I play with human figures, a face. But it is not realistic. So there's an abstract element to it. I like to call





it line-ism, since there is this typical characteristic to my work wherein I add lines with different colours to my work.

When and how did you get attracted to this kind of painting?

This is something that I started from my very first year in fine arts. When you join an art school nobody can teach you how to paint and how to draw. It is always ingrained in you. But, what they do is open the windows to your mind and give you that creative freedom to explore. I was given that in my first year and that's when I started doing this and

encouraged by my teachers I developed on the style.

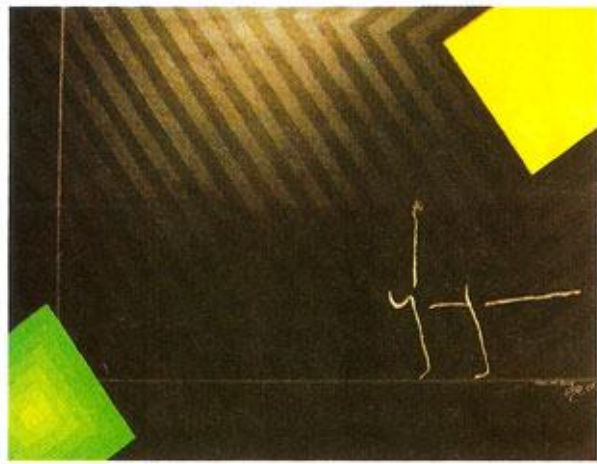
Most of your works are stripes of colours creating an image... why do you choose this style only for the expression to your thoughts?

The style that I work on is something that I started doing in the first year of my college. I liked working in this style, it is unique, and no one has ever experimented in this. I developed this style and it has somehow become my patent. Now, when I think visually, I think in stripes. That's what I call "line-ism". It not

only expresses my thoughts but also gives my work a distinct look.

What is the medium you use? What is the process of your work and the genre you belong to?

I use both oil and acrylic mediums, the mediums again differ based on my compositions. I would get up in the middle of the night and start sketching if a thought comes in my mind. I have scared my family a lot of times by this habit of mine. I like to sketch my dreams... I like to translate those in the same way that I visualise them. I am a contemporary artist with a distinctive style and would not like



to belong to a particular genre... I have a lot to work on and experiment with.

Are you experimenting now on this kind of art?

Yes. Initially it was a more static kind of work I did on the same style. Now, I have given more flavour to it by working on spaces, on expressions, on other elements of our daily life. The figures are more fluid now. I would like to call it more mature. So I'm just adding elements here and there and trying to give a different angle to every series that I do.

Tell us which artists have influenced you and your work.

I think the typical flamboyance that is there in my work maybe influenced from Van Gogh's works to a very large extent. And I like Rembrandt also.

How do you select themes and ideas for your paintings?

They are random. Whatever

comes to my mind at that particular time. I do not really sit and give it a lot of thought.

What really inspires you?

Life, in itself.

Do you pick up subjects from life then?

Not consciously. It's very random.

Is there any difference between your earlier works and now?

It has grown immensely. Yes, there is a difference. I think more on the thought level.

Are auction houses helpful in the development of art?

I don't know at what level you mean. At the end of it all if the artist is directly auctioning off the works, then maybe it helps. If you are asking in terms of helping the artist, then I am not very sure. But art, there's a difference.

In what way does it help art?

Of course, your work travels. It goes to better places, to better buyers and you get publicity.

And the publicity helps the artist?

Yeah. Publicity helps the artist. Again, it depends on what level you are talking about. If the auction houses emphasise on the artist and the background of the artist, then



yes. If they concentrate on the art only, then probably not.

Being an artist can you compare today's and yesterday's art world?

The contemporary style of painting is more of an expression of thought. Today, artists have the freedom of expressing themselves in different mediums, styles and forms. This allows the freedom that artists have been seeking for centuries. We are not bound by the strict rules that the artist had to follow during the Renaissance or the struggle that artists had to go through during Impressionism. So, yes, people are more open to accepting new ideas and welcome artists that would rather not tread the beaten path.

What is the current scenario of art in India?

I think it's much better than what it was a couple of years ago. Due to this recession, even art has been hit. For close to a year there has not been any buying or any other movement as far as art is concerned.

What does the future have in store for you?

I intend to have many more exhibitions and participate in loads of group shows in the future. I would also like to experiment in different mediums. I want to grow as an artist and learn. In art, learning never stops and the more you work, the more you mature as an artist and the better you paint.

Art has a very promising future. People now understand art more than they used to. The sensibilities of people and patrons are changing. I am proud of being part of a generation of artists that is not scared to experiment. I believe that an artist never ceases to grow and I would follow that path.

What are your future projects?

I am working on a concept right now and hopefully I'll be finishing it in a couple of months. It's a series of paintings that I'll be coming out with.

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