

Artist plays with visuals to chronicle changing perceptions

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spotlight

Artist Jaideep Mehrotra likes to play, not just with colours on the canvas, but also with the way his audience perceive things. For him it's a necessity, an important extension of his artistic expression that helps him stimulate ideas without challenging one's perceptions. "I don't like to challenge people's perceptions or ideas. Rather I show them a combination of imagery and let the mind do the work," says Mehrotra, whose works are currently on display at the Tao Art Gallery. Titled *Metonymical Subtext*, the show is a culmination of three years of investigation of the perception and meaning that are altered by a shift of traditional parameters.

In the current set of works, Mehrotra uses pop-

ular figures like the Chinese strategist Mao Zedong, Burmese politician and activist Aung San Suu Kyi, and on one occasion the deceased Bollywood superstar Shammi Kapoor by putting together with a set of other motifs. His aim is to not challenge any set ideas or perceptions, but to stimulate the onlooker. "Everyone has his own set of ideas and perception of things. What could create revolt and anger in my brain could actually generate love in someone else's," says Mehrotra.

"Every generation ruminates their presence by showing dissent to something or the other. It could be negative or positive. The popular icons like Mao, Suu Kyi, Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Shammi Kapoor, all hold a certain set of perceptions. They could be negative or positive. Some have lost their place, and are now just a part of the history, whereas others are more prominent in the current

situation. Mao and Martin Luther King were once a symbol of a political situation, but today they are people. My aim is to show how perceptions change with time," he says.

Jaideep's works play the role of a traveller; an explorer who is interacting with every idea in the human brain, but in the process makes no effort to change it. What it does is stimulates them, and that perhaps is the biggest achievement of his work. "People react differently to the same thing. Everyone associates a different idea to what they see living or dead. My works are not to challenge any of the established ideas or norms, or people's perception toward an object or a figure, but to stimulate the ideas that one has stored in his/her brain," he says.

These figures, however, are not blocks of paints, but a culmination of text, revealed only when looked from a closer distance. "We are all figments of our own

imaginings. We perceive and believe what our mind tells us. And I don't want people to look at my work and change their perception, instead, explore what is already there. My works only act a catalyst; while the viewers realise their existence," he says.

Having had no formal

education in art, except a few workshops, which the artist felt were limiting his creativity, Mehrotra started working in oils, acrylics and fabric sculptures on his own. And when computers arrived, Mehrotra was one of the first to use digital art, create Giclee prints, use site-specific

installations, and video art. Mehrotra, in an oxymoronic relationship with his work, explores the quality of the medium visually, allowing the message to sidle into the mind while observing a seemingly benign work of art. The use of two separate mediums, says Mehrotra has given him immense freedom. But while his journey started with paint and brush, it's the binary digits that appeal him the most. "I work on conventional (oil and acrylic) as well as the unconventional methods (computer). On the one hand it's a painting and then it's just a product of the play of binary digits. But then, today the digital medium has become a significant part of our life. I believe, soon, the word digital will become a part of the conventional medium. It's almost indispensable."

The artwork shows at the Tao Art Gallery, Worli, till December 15. For more details contact: 24918585

