

Mumbai artist Jaideep Mehrotra cannot remember a specific time that he began painting. Growing up as he did in a beautiful colonial bungalow by the sea in Mumbai, surrounded by music and art, it seems to him that he has always painted. His first exhibition was at the age of 13 – since then he hasn't stopped. A self-taught artist, he has evolved a unique style in various widely different media; the sheer versatility and breadth of his work is phenomenal. Before his first-ever show in Singapore, Jaideep spoke to EL about himself and his art.

EL: How would you describe your work?

JM: Others have described it as surreal, iconic, hyperreal. To me, creativity does not have parameters. I find it exciting to portray different subjects in different media. I paint mostly in acrylic and oils, but have also ventured out of the two-dimensional plain into sculpture, using fabric and resin; and into the digital domain of installations, web-based art, audio-visual depiction, short films and digital lithographs.

My work is a socio-political commentary. My paintings are about life as I know it, our relationship with our emotions and our interactions with our surroundings. What may seem obvious to many may, in fact, not be real. My works often reflect just that – a transcendental moment caught as if by chance in the camera's frame or in the blink of an eye.

EL: What are the major influences on your art?

JM: Maturing is a process of enrichment and learning; and learning to use your experiences. My paintings are an extension of all that. I borrow, like everyone else, from what I am surrounded by, as nothing in this world is original.

EL: Is there a message in your works?

JM: Always. There is always a message. Different paintings have different messages – and these could be anything – social, political, philosophical, spiritual, compassionate, sensual or idealistic.

EL: Why Singapore?

JM: Singapore has a soul that encompasses both the East and the West. It has the best of both worlds – a bit like my own Indo-Western upbringing. What's more, it's a country that provides a wonderful platform for art from all over the world.

The Arts House (Old Parliament House) is a dream location for an artist to exhibit. Not only is it in a picturesque location, it also has a perfect gallery, which blends the old world and the contemporary. The committee members have been exceptionally warm and helpful, and are going out of their way to see that the exhibition is well received.

EL: Who would be interested in your art?

JM: Everybody, especially those interested in contemporary Indian art. My art sells well in India, and the prices here are the same as there. My reason for bringing a show to Singapore is to promote India's voice in contemporary art. Increasingly, Indian art is collected not just for pleasure but also for its exceptional investment value.

Jaideep Mehrotra will be exhibiting at the Arts House (Old Parliament House) in Empress Place, from 7 to 13 November.

by Verne Maree



Who is **Jaideep Mehrotra**?