

Train of thought



Artist Jaideep Mehrotra's latest paintings have the train as the theme

HAPPY JOURNEY: Jaideep Mehrotra

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Times News Network

The train took you on delightful holidays. The train carried the Mahatma across India on his peace mission. The train witnessed history's biggest forced migration in 1947. And it was a burning train that shattered peace in Mahatma's homeland, Gujarat, and elsewhere in the country.

These were some thoughts buzzing in the head of artist Jaideep Mehrotra for some time as he decided to make the train the theme of his latest paintings. And a happy nostalgic journey swerved into a cerebral route. "From the early memories of travelling by train... I got into exploring different connotations of rail journey," says Jaideep. So, it is not just what meets the eye but what the paintings say that becomes important. "The paintings should talk back to me, they should get people thinking. So it's a mix of the artistic and the intellectual," says Jaideep.

A vendor sells aerated drinks to a man sitting in the train with a mobile in hand — invisible to each other as they are in spheres of different shades depicting India's extreme disparity; a train door opens into another train and then on to a platform creating space within space... The series captures curious aspects of life surrounding the tracks. All with Jaideep's trademark fudgy feel, which seem to say a lot while blurring something. No bold colours screaming for attention. Wellknown for the imaginative use of technology, Jaideep veers away from it this time. An exhibition of these paintings, opens today at the Jehangir Art Gallery.