

Emerging artists to shine at Harmony Art's show

Harmony Art Foundation, one of the country's top art promotion forums, will showcase 350 works by 173 artists, half of whom are emerging talents, during its 13th annual exhibition of contemporary Indian art.

Tina Ambani, former Bollywood actress and wife of Anil Ambani, head of the Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group, is at the helm of Harmony Art Foundation, which has supported contemporary Indian art since 1995. For the past 13 years, the annual Harmony Art show has given a platform to a wide range of artists from all over the country.

'Our support to young talent continues. Forty-four artists on the show are under the age of 35 and over 50 percent are emerging artists. The show is also perhaps the most diverse with elements like mixed media works, installations, photography, and experimental art, in keeping with international trends,' Tina Ambani told media persons.

The foundation's weeklong exhibition 'Harmony Art Contemporary Works: India 2008' will be inaugurated Friday by actress Shabana Azmi and her lyricist husband Javed Akhtar at the Nehru Centre here.

At the show, young artists will share space with heavyweights like Jogen Chowdhury, Ambadas, Amarnath Sehgal, Manu Parekh, Sakti Burman, Paresh Maity, Mithu Sen, Rameshwar Broota, S. Harshavardhana, Valsan Koorma Koller, T.V. Santosh, Bose Krishnamachari, Navjot Altaf and Anant Joshi.

Two upcoming artists, aged below 35, will receive the Harmony Excellence Award for Emerging Artists of the Year. They will be given Rs.100,000 each.

The Harmony Heritage Award for Lifetime Contribution to Art, Culture and Literature, carrying a prize of Rs.200,000, will also be presented at the show.

The jury for this year's show, chaired by Tina Ambani, will include Sarayu Doshi, Akbar Padamsee and Phiroza Godrej.

The foundation has selected artist Dhruva Mistry as the 'Artist in Focus' for 2008. Born in 1957 in Gujarat, Mistry's body of artwork comprises pencil, ink, crayons, wood, plaster and fibreglass. He has exhibited both in India and abroad and won an award at the Third Rodin Grand Prize Exhibition in Japan in 1990.

The foundation also gives marginalized sections of the society space for creative expression. For the sixth consecutive year, it will provide a platform to the children of Aseema, a non-profit organisation dedicated to the rehabilitation and education of street children, to display their work. This year, Harmony Art is also extending its support to another NGO, Anchorage.

Ambani said Indian artists were finally broadening their global footprint.

'I am delighted to see that Indian artists are now being appreciated globally. In the country too, there is increasing professionalism and transparency, and facilities of global standards are now available.

'But we must wait and watch whether it signals a true evolution of the market and takes appreciation for art, and accessibility to it, to a whole new level,' she said.

For Ambani, the process of understanding art was closely linked to cinema.

'While I was trying to make my mark as an artist in the film industry, I began to understand the creative process, the progression of translating your innermost energies into something that stakes its claim on the public's imagination. Thus began my affinity for art, and its endless possibilities,' she said.

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