



Cade Tompkins Projects



Intricate strokes of epiphany

Shweta Sharma Dec 8, 2015, DHNS



Artist Rohini Sen's rendezvous with art began when she was only three-years-old. "It may sound odd, but I actually stood in front of (Vincent) Van Gogh's Irises for nearly 30 minutes at a museum in Amsterdam at that age," says the Bangalore-based artist who is currently in the capital for her ongoing solo show, Drawing About Drawing - Perspectives, Process, Pedagogy.

And since then, with her firm determination of pursuing art professionally, Sen has come a long way embracing her love for it, overcoming the associated fears, understanding the nuances to finally putting up a show in the capital, which she says had been lingering in her mind for three years.

"As the title suggests, the show is a tribute to the process of drawing, what it means to an artist, and how it is synonymous with cognition," she tells Metrolife. After a brief pause, she adds, "Sometimes, lines can do what words cannot, and an artist is able to nuance the language of those lines."

Elaborating further, the artist says that in India, an art student will be lauded for his work, if he/she can flawlessly reproduce the teacher's work. "Here, we are stuck between expression and the wow factor. Finding my own form and visual vocabulary was a bigger epiphany when recreation and reproduction was not my forte," says the artist, who began her art training under an award-winning Madhubani master craftswoman Sasikala Devi at Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh.

198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888



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For her, this epiphanic moment came when she was at the Rhode Island School of Design where she was able to ask questions about the process of drawing and how it is different from print making.

“Drawing is a partner to the artist at all times in the artistic process. However, at times, it is not given recognition as a complete process in itself that has the potential to pervade all other media. For me, it is my lines that complete what I have to say through my work. Colour, while essential to my image, is a layer beneath my ink lines,” she says.

The artist, who occasionally teaches art at the Bangalore-based Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, says she draws influences from what she “reads, sees and experiences in everyday life”. Teaching, therefore, is integral to her practice as in many ways as it informs her practice and vice versa, she says.

But what about the animals that find space in most of her works? “I use things that stand symbolic, as I really want people to think. The turtles that you see in the work, Red Trees Forever, are a tribute to the time when I was repeatedly failed in arts in school.

And that was because I dared to paint a pond green and a tree red,” she says pointing at the work which has two turtles with intricate patterns – one of whom is looking ahead, while the other is looking sideways.

“I wanted to show that no matter where you look, you will always find your way ahead and be successful in reaching your goal. Some may take time reaching there, while others may have a path without hurdles; the slowness that is attributed to a turtle is therefore something essential to learning.” she adds. The show is on display at the Art Gallery, IIC Annexe, Lodhi Estate, until December 11.