

Fine art of wooing regular patrons

Art auctions have now become very popular in our city

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DECCAN CHRONICLE

✶ Bengaluru was never associated with art auctions in the past, but now, that perception is certainly changing. With bigger, well-known artists, curators of international art houses and patrons making a beeline to the city to participate in these exhibitions, the IT city is slowly but surely making a mark in this sphere.

The recent art auction at ITC Windsor was a runaway success, with several renowned names in the art fraternity curious to see what was being offered. Artworks done by Francis Newton Souza, Manu Parekh, S H Raza, Shivaprasanna, S G

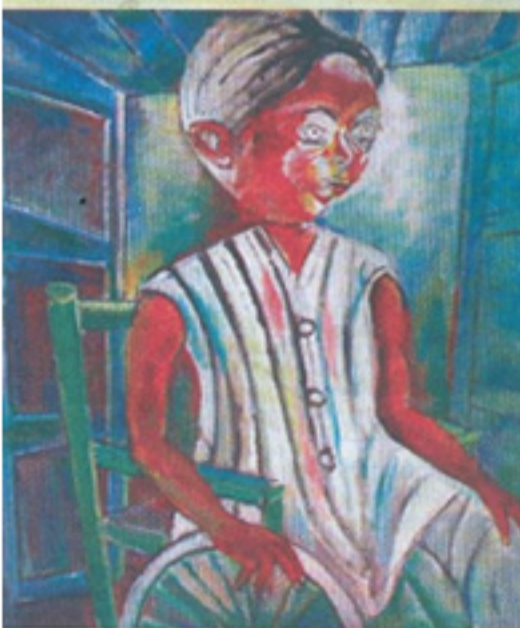
Vasudev, Yusuf Arakkal, Pradip Maitra and Thota Vaikuntam amongst others were in high demand. That the city has a rich fund of creative minds is no secret, but of late, there is an increasing number of patrons and buyers. Painter Yusuf Arakkal, whose works were displayed, says, "There is high purchasing potential in the city, thanks to the IT sector. Art investment is being taken seriously now and it gives a much-needed fillip to us as well. It gets interesting when auctioneers are brought down from other countries as they bring a fresh perspective to the entire process."

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Youngsters at the ITC Windsor art auction

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Paritosh Sen

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He feels all auctions must do extensive research on painters, purchasing power of the place where the auction is held and related trends.

Without doubt, the image of the city is changing rapidly, and is being heralded as an arty hub. Industrialists, businessmen and others are beginning to hobnob with gallery owners and artists, learning more about what's in vogue and how to pick out artwork.

Businesswoman Shaista Baljee who has recently turned a serious patron of art says, "After speaking to several artists, I realised art isn't just eclectic. Personally, I appreciate those who make a concentrated effort to build a collection and I'm doing my bit. I see that there is immense talent out there and it's only a matter of time before they adorn the walls of galleries, offices and more." In India, the auction culture is rich in Mumbai and New Delhi but South Indian cities have always been

perceived as conservative in this space. Bengaluru is slowly shedding that notion and daringly venturing into art.

Despite extensive research, auctions are still a calculated risk that organisers must be mindful of. Uzma Irfan, co-founder of the Art Auction says, "While we cannot compare ourselves to Mumbai and New Delhi, Bengaluru is developing its own charm. There are a lot of people from Karnataka who travel the country to bring artwork here. We are providing a platform for people like them." She explains how the proverbial art buyer's definition has gone beyond a conventional art lover.

Financial institutions, hospitality chains and educational institutions are coming forward with a keen interest in adding aesthetic value to their spaces. Raj Bagaria, of Art Chutney says, "There is definitely an audience, rising interest levels and of course, art at an affordable price. The culmination of these reasons is leading to a thriving art scene in our city."



Yusuf Arakkal

Modern &
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