

BIG ART

The art, artists and everything in between.

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DRIFTING CANVAS



Edgar Degas

I remember when I was little I would rummage through the *Great Artists Series*, in search of the brightest, most colorful collection of paintings by the likes of Seurat, Matisse, Rousseau, Lautrec amongst a horde of other names. Tirelessly I would go through them, page-after-page, repeating this ritual every day. But today I sat through a monumental display of the same: not paintings, not books, but surrounded by live bigger-than-life-size screens. The amalgamation of art and technology was enthralling.

The large black hangar stretching across the center of the bustling Select CityWalk Saket Mall arena, is a simple set-up. On entering, one is directed to indulge through text, in the lives of eleven modern Western artists, a selected few from the notable art movements running from Impressionism to Suprematism touching upon Symbolism, Art Nouveau, and abruptly stopping there. Having skimmed through the large folios, one feels educated enough to move further into the landscape. On the way to

the Media Hall, two 3D TV screens calls to attention the passerby, who stops to interact with the digital paintings on display wearing her pair of 3D glasses. Then finally the Media Hall-bound spectator with a tingling in the toes enters “a whole new world” and stops astounded, for a minute figuring out an ideal way to react: the space engulfs, overwhelms and sensorially affects!



Henri Rousseau

It is a simple formula of projection of a programmed video of a series of works through digital intervention. “Twenty-four screens and twenty four projectors across 7,000 square feet of space” says N. Manikantan, CEO of *Esperienza*, responsible for this traveling exhibition through India, *The Drifting Canvas, Art in Motion*. Sitting through the fifty minutes loop, one gets to *experience* the artworks of these eleven artists (Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Signac, Henri Rousseau, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Amedeo Modigliani, Gustav Klimt, Wassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich) within an augmented format and in constant motion. Adding to this the soothing *period* music and elements of fantasy within the compositions can take you down that memory lane and perhaps halt at a scintillating memory coming to life in parallel progression with the moving images on the video walls: the digital evoking an analog past. The digital narrative series showcases these invaluable works of the Great Masters and gestures to the possibilities of experimentation and manipulability through the new-age mediums of art expression.

A brief conversation with Mr. Manikantan explained how the project happens to be showing in Delhi. After having come across *Art Play Russia* -the organization responsible for building this extensively researched content- in Poland in 2015, *Esperienza* was determined to collaborate and bring the project to India for its art enthusiasts. The *Drifting Canvas* had traveled across twelve countries before making

its first stop in the Indian capital of Delhi. The show will continue to educate and entertain other major cities of the subcontinent and in the process incorporate artists from major art movements in India accountable for the fabrication of an Indian art history.

He continued that the audience response has been stimulating; the footfall has been immense: “the exhibition’s first largest market lies in the age group between 24-38 years while the second is covered by the age groups of 18-24.” The audience leaves with an exhilarating set of emotions.



Vincent van Gogh

But this is not the end of the show. On exiting the Media Hall, one is absorbed into yet another landscape designed by the *Desi Canvas* series of exhibitions, a section of the *Drifting Canvas*. Curated by Aakshat Sinha (with a background in Mechanical Engineering from Moscow was soon drawn to the creative domain receiving a Diploma in Fine Arts in 2009 and has ever since undertaken the conception of various exhibitions, camps and shows) this exhibition is a fusion of eight shows, to be displayed over eight weeks -pertaining to the period of the *Drifting Canvas*- and changing its appearance every week with a new title, a new set of artists and their artworks. Ashish Singh, Consultant for *Desi Canvas*, who has interviewed the curator and closely followed the exhibition, explained the design behind the making of the series of shows: it is to bring to the fore local and national contemporary artists and exhibit their works in a space outside of a gallery where more public tends to interact with the artworks. On wondering how this show could possibly be associated with the *Drifting Canvas*, he explained that the public that has been educated within the confines of the Media Hall would now walk out into this space to encounter the more contemporary art coming from within India, which may or may not necessarily

create a dialogue but certainly shares the experience of art-making. This week –the fourth- the show titled *Oorjaa*, addressing the works of six women artists of the 41 participating artists, is on display.

Immerse and experience!