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By: Swati Kumari Date: 2010-12-08 Place: Delhi

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What's buried inside a US-based gay artist's heart comes on canvas with Uday K Dhar's first solo exhibition in the capital

After successful shows in New York, Los Angeles, Budapest, Berlin, Bali and Mumbai, Uday K Dhar, an artist of Indian origin, is displaying his works in the Capital with his show The Exquisite Corpse.



Uday Dhar with his painting "Exquisite Corpse". pic/ Rajeev Tyagi

The artist is proud to be gay and feels it gives him an advantage as being gay gives one two prospective of the same thing. A part of the proceeds from this exhibition will go to Pratham, an NGO working for under-privileged children.

Behold it

The name of the exhibition draws from a collage-based parlour game that was often enjoyed by surrealists in Paris of the 1930s. This, Dhar says, is the result of his own life, which he refers to as 'full of collages'. "My art focuses on the common ground between diverse cultural experiences and backgrounds.

I want all Indians to have information and stimulation about non-Western ideas," says Dhar, who is a member of the Asian American Arts Alliance. The artist draws inspiration from his diverse and multicultural background. Curated by Dr Alka Pande, the artist uses kitschy elements like mobile downloads, fashion advertisements, newspaper articles and flashy web content to highlight the consumerism overdose that affects the world today.

East meets west

Curiously, collage also helps Dhar see his own world. In his frames you will find collages scanned, printed and then painted with pencil, crayon, ink and oil. "There are two series -- Mirror, Mirror on the Wall where each painting starts with a rough human outline representing the 'Purusha'.

The profile remains the same but different materials are used to express the transformation of the elemental man into a multiplicity of avatars. The 'Exquisite Corpse' series has collages created through scanning, reworked digitally and laser printed on canvas.

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The works are then enhanced with hand-painted sections of oil colour and lastly collaged with graphics," explains the 52-year-old artist, whose family shifted to New York from Patna in 1971. Dhar says his life itself is a pastiche in which the edges don't always bleed onto the underlying surface.

Issues all over the globe

Dhar, whose father was a doctor, first studied architecture at Columbia University and practised in New York and Berlin before changing his passion for painting into his profession. Apart from obvious Hindi references among 16 of his works, his Indianness is reflected in his drawing style.

In a work titled Oh! baby, Baby, Please! he refers to the dynamic attraction that plays between the US and India. Everyone wants to rule the World: Game On refers to the conflict between the West and the East; the friction and sexiness of pop culture games. In Twinkle Twinkle, he refers to the conditions of the hijras; the symbol of genderless, cultures and media transformation in the age of Facebook and Twitter.

At: Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road

On till : December 14

Timings: 10 am to 8 pm

Ring: 24682001

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