

Heart to art

Kolte on the cover of the book



Abstractionist Prabhakar Kolte comes out with a long-pending book on the ideals of art

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SENIOR artist Prabhakar Kolte is perhaps one of the most personable gents of his generation. Visit his studio and he will take you out for a pizza, ready to discuss and debate art with any one who is interested. Which is why when he spilled the beans about his upcoming book *From Art to Art*, one was not surprised that his eagerness to share his knowledge had got an avenue.

The book, to be released by Bodhana, is a compilation of various articles written by Kolte over the years on various subjects pertaining to art. The book will be published in Marathi (edited by Ratnakar Matkari) and English (translated by Irawati Karnik and Rajalakshmi Pandit and edited by Vishwas Kulkarni) this September.

The release is accompanied by an exhibition of works at the Jehangir Nicholson Gallery, NCPA, by Kolte from his early college days to the most recent, including an audio-visual installation that revolves around Kolte's interviews, lectures and musings on art.

To show readers how accessible the book is, here is an excerpt: "One can appreciate art not necessarily by purchasing it but by just viewing it, experiencing the pleasure of viewing with complete surrender. This act of surrendering is like a magnet that draws us nearer to its embedded abstract beauty. Art makes for a complete maturing of the human mind."

Kolte paints with a long brush and allows

the paint to drip down his canvas while working. In a way the control exerted over the work is less and the work emerges on its own. A movement called Action painting that began with the likes of Jackson Pollock inspired Kolte to move in that direction; however he also draws strongly on early Indian sensibilities.

Excited about the solo as well, Kolte points out that it will be his biggest till date. The show includes early figurative works, mostly portraits of the people he admired, his wife and son. Then there is a phase where one sees the transition from figurative to abstract and the final and current phase is of course his abstract works that are "pure joy and pure art". "There is no narrative to be found in my work, no associations. I want to approach a work purely for the joy of appreciating colour and line. It is important to separate art from economics," says the artist who is appalled by the lack of the cultural growth in the face of economic expansion. "We see a superficial boost in art, while the colleges are overflowing with students eager to learn art, maybe not always for the right reason, since now it has become a money-making racket. But also, there are no good teachers left; everyone is busy furthering their own career," says the artist slightly embittered by the lack of scholastic interest.

His book argues strongly for an ideal situation where all the students, teachers, artists' connoisseurs and critics work in harmony. "That would be Utopia," he sighs.