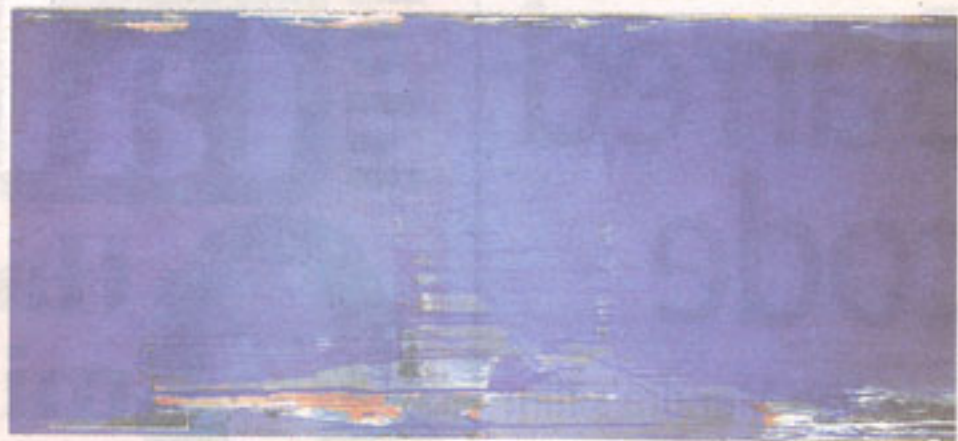


School Daze

A unique art initiative is hosting a mini-retrospective of one of India's leading abstractionists



VISHWAS KULKARNI

Having taught art at the J.J. School of Art for over 20 years, Prabhakar Kolte is a well-known name in the city's art circles. However, his fame as an artist has spread beyond the geography of Mumbai. A leading abstractionist of his time, the artist has inspired Bodhana, an organisation that does archival work on the historicity of Indian art, to organise a mini-retrospective of the artist.

The exhibition features portraits (a rarity given that the artist moved towards non-figurative eventually in his career), drawings, canvases, archival lectures and videos of the artist. Given that his four decade-long career cannot be accommodated in the space of the NCPA, Jesal Thacker of Bodhana has done well in creating cozy nooks in which one can absorb the brilliance of Kolte's brush. Also to lend the experience a college feel, Thacker, a J.J. alumni herself, has put up easels and benches from the art school itself; even Kolte's bookshelf has been imported for those truly looking for a dose of school daze.

"The exhibition is a complement to a book of the artist's thoughts and critique titled *From*

Art to Art. So aside from the show, which I've designed quite literally as a walk through the mind of an artist, there are talks and lectures that we are organising," said Thacker. The two-week long exhibition will conclude with the book release on October 1 at The Experimental Theatre at NCPA, with readings by Vikram Kapadia, Sandeep Kulkarni, Irawati Karnik and Jesal Thacker.

There are three videos to give you a sneak peek into the artist's cosmos: old lectures from 1989 and 1990; one with Kolte reading from the *Dyaneshwari*; and the third is an abstract video that captures the energy of a street painter over the artist's voiceover. "A lot of Kolte's energy is about painting in the moment; it's rooted in an inspiration that is sourced from the now," says Thacker of this video. Bodhana is currently working on two projects, focusing on the works of ethnomusicologist Dr Ashok Ranade and a project on stalwart Prabhakar Barwe.

Prabhakar Kolte: A walk through his thoughts and art is exhibiting at Jehangir Nicolson Gallery, NCPA, until October 1. In conversation with Prabhakar Kolte, an interactive session with the artist will be held there on Sept 19, from 6 pm to 8 pm.