

People's art land

Young French painter Marion Colomer's art is about the land and the people who make it

Sarika Sharma

What is it behind the portraits that she paints, we ask French painter Marion Colomer — in City with exhibition *Portraits 2007: From Maharajas to Glitteratis* at Alliance Francaise Art Gallery-36. On the face of it, it's people on her paintings and elements associated with them, but the leitmotif lies in what makes these people, her perspective of them as she decipher India through them.

That's what intrigues her... the country, its people, its traditions. "It helps me find a new identity."

"My view of India, before knowing it, was a romantic one," she says. She first saw India in 2003 — when here for a workshop. After three years of experiencing the country, she says, "It has turned out to be much more, with its complexities". She tries to make sense of these complexities through her paintings. Like filmmaker Muzaffar Ali and his Sufism... "He makes me grow with him,"



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she says. The portrait of her friend fashion designer Gaurav Gupta is her take on the modern, dandy man.

But, no, these are not the images that make India for her. India is about "common people, those on the street". Incidentally, the class formed the subject of her first portrait in India, where she picked people from a street (her neighbours in Malviya Nagar, Delhi) and made their por-

traits. "When it was exhibited, they came to see. Most of them had never seen an exhibition in life," she says.

On Monday, Marion held a lecture-cum-slide show at Government Museum and Art Gallery-10 in collaboration with Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi on her works, inspiration and the French tradition of art, which she says has similarities with the Indian tradition like embroidery.