



PORTRAIT of an artist

Marion Colomer explores personalities through paints and sequins

NAVDEEP SANDHU

THE pull was the palaces, sufi music and ancient royalty. Three years down the line Marion Colomer finds the complexity of Indian culture 'un-leavable'. "Though I have travelled only three cities in India the experience is quite interesting. The hospitality is very heart-warming," says the French artist sporting a Punjabi jutti with her blue dress. For Colomer, the first visit happened as a student for a workshop back in 2003. The India of 21st century influenced her so much that she painted a long series of men living in Malviya Nagar for 'India of the

thousand faces'. Colomer studied painting, lithography and photography in Paris in ENSBA. Other than art, she is flexing her vocal chords and learning the harp. In the exhibition on at Alliance Francaise, she portrays people of high society like Alyque Padamsee, Nawab Pataudi, Kirron Kher. What's unique about the works is the integration of embroidery in the paintings. "The combination of tradition with modernity results in an amazing product. Through embroidery I have tried to guess what kind of a person he or she is. The beads, sequins and motifs are all symbolic of the subject's personality but still it's a mere guess which I hope is

right!" she knows of only one other artist who does similar work.

So how does she find working in India? "I don't have any problems communicating but as a foreigner I have to be very patient. I'm quite shy otherwise but for painting that vanishes. My work is different in terms of logistics since I have to convince people to sit for me for a long time," says Colomer adding that a single painting takes about two to three months to finish. The 25-year-old has been trying to build a bridge between India and France and believes that her understanding of art through her work has reached a "new level of complexity". Portraits are what she

likes to do best since landscapes, for instance, may be "relaxing but don't tell a story. I'm more intrigued by people, it's a way to learn about the culture." Commenting on censorship on art, Colomer tells that France offers a lot more freedom. She also delivered a lecture at the Arts Museum Auditorium where she talked about her influences. Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademy has also released her mugs and tee shirts. "It's nice to see such initiatives being taken to promote art. India has quite a handful of talented artists like Subodh Gupta," she signs off.

The exhibition is on till October 3 at Alliance Francaise