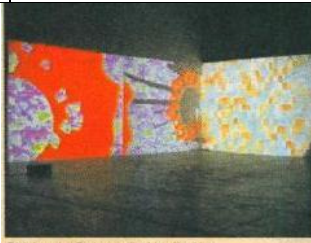


Newspaper's Name	The Pioneer
Date	18.01.11
Description	Personal Take on Icons



Disinformation Background by Matt Sheridan

PERSONAL TAKE ON ICONS

N DAS

A portrait of Hanuman carrying the *sanjeevani* boon is what most of us have seen, sometimes as part of an over-dramatic Ramleela scene and mostly in temples. But a canvas at Religare Art's ongoing exhibition *Iconoclasts and Iconodules* has Hanuman carrying a lotus instead of mountain. Made by artist Avishek Sen, the painting shows a ballot paper with a hand casting vote underneath. This work, Sen explains, highlights some of the social religious and political issues of our country. "I have always worked on political and social issues. This particular painting symbolises some of the social realities like our right to vote, which I have shown by using Hanuman as my icon," he says.

With a total of 16 emerging artists from India and abroad, the exhibition comprises 63 paintings of icons and easily recognisable images to form the basis of works. Some artworks even make sharp criticisms of the very establishments that generated the icons. Says Ombretta Agro Andruff, the curator of the exhibition, "The idea came into my mind after visiting a gallery in London where the artists had used 'icons' in some form or the other. There were zombies, skulls, women as goddesses and temptresses, deities, demons, snakes, swords, logos and masterpieces of the western art. So I decided to do my next exhibition based on the concept of easily recognisable pictures and images of eastern as well as western traditions."

Mumbai-based artist Reena Saini Kallat too, uses Indian mythology and has showcased two of her poignant and iconic large-scale portraits of men and women from her *Synonym* series. "My paintings are made of several hundred stamps, featuring names of people and pasted between plexi glass panels that stand upright like a screen," she explains. On the other hand, the works of Delhi-based artist Gagandeep Singh deal with the art of storytelling, narration and contemporary drawing practices. There are buildings, hen and guns in all four. "My work is an exploration of things in my own way. I have used dark, thin and dotted lines in my paintings to create a narration," says Singh, who uses pen and ink on paper to bring out the narrative through the characters and the environment behind them.

New York-based artist Daniela Kostova addresses the issues of geography, cultural representation and the uneasy process of translation and communication. Kostova's featured work, *I Am Whatever You Want Me To Be*, is an opulent photographic self-portrait that shows four archetypal characters which also appear in some of the artist's previous works. Andruff explains, "It combines the Bulgarian tradition (where a Kukeri dancer wears beast-like costume) and Bulgaria's struggle with the idea of tradition."

There is also an imposing three-channel video installation by San Francisco-based Matt Sheridan. Titled *Disinformation Background*, the installation was conceived in 2008 and is a response by the artist to the Iraq war.



Remembering by Gagandeep Singh