

Art scape: From London via India

Fashion meets nature in London-based artist Anj Smith's maiden exhibition in India, titled *Woods Without Pathways* that begins in the city from September 7

EXHIBITION

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"I jumped at the opportunity of exhibiting my artworks in India," says artist Anj Smith, who has been brought up around the Indian diaspora in London. "I love India. I have been here once before when I came down to Kerala for a holiday and I had a fantastic time. In London too, there is such a huge Indian diaspora, so I grew up surrounded by the Indian culture in one way or the other, through friends and through the writers we read about. There were many connections. So, I have always wanted to hold an exhibition here," she adds.

Fusing fashion and nature

Smith, who lays a lot of emphasis on detailing, will be showcasing paintings that incorporate references to the worlds of fashion and nature. "Sometimes people are very snobbish when it comes to fashion because they feel it's a privileged subject. But I take it very seriously because I feel fashion is something that is so instilled in the western ideologies that sometimes it becomes a psychological guide to unravel personalities. So, I often use



London-based artist Anj Smith.
PIC COURTESY/ ALEX DELFANNE

elements of fashion in my paintings," informs the 33-year-old artist.

In terms of nature, Smith explains, a close friend of hers served as a muse and helped her understand the fluidity of gender in nature. "My friend was born as a woman, but now he has changed his gender. He had 14 operations to become a man. It made me think about how even gender is something that is not fixed in nature, if one comes to think of it. My friend's experiences served as a catalyst for all the portraits in this exhibition," she reveals.

The magic of linen

Another interesting facet of the exhibition is that all paintings are oil colours on linen cloth from France: "The paintings are oil on French linen. I've imported the linen because it's the finest possible weave and that facilitates the subject of my show and adds detailing to



A Painting from artist Anj Smith's exhibition. PIC COURTESY/ THE ARTIST, IBID PROJECTS, LONDON AND HAUSER & WIRTH, NEW YORK



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the paintings. At the same time it's very strong so it holds the painting and the colours together," adds the artist, who took nine months to complete the artworks. Smith works 12 hours a day from 8 in the morning to 8 at night, but admits that the hard work is worth it when she sees the final product, complete with the colours and the layering.

FROM September 7 to November 17
AT Galerie Isa, 132, Great Western Building, first floor, SBS Road, opposite Lion Gate, Fort.
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