

Colour me Colomer

YOUNG FRENCH ARTIST MARION COLOMER INTERWEAVES SYMBOL AND PERSONALITY IN HER PORTRAITS

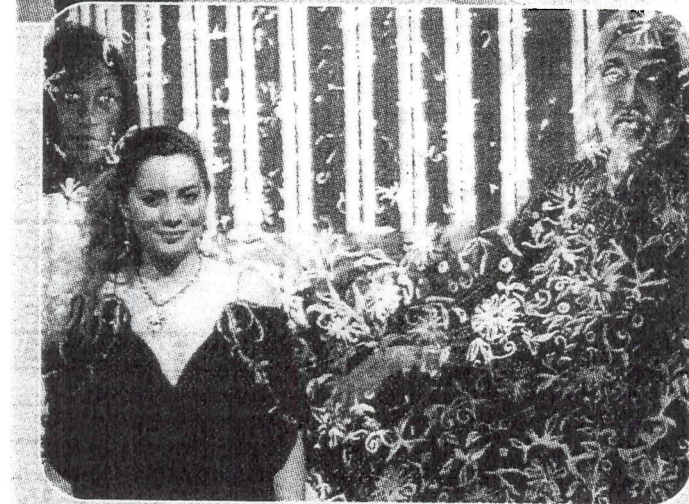
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Marion Colomer's "Portraits 2007: From Maharajas to Glitteratis" mount the Alliance Francaise Art Gallery-36 not like the paintings they are but like a natural creper; an offshoot of Indian tapestry in a foreign artist's imagination — rich in craftsmanship and richer in execution.

The walls seem to be incubating the 25-year-old artist's conception on the 6X6 feet canvases. The portraits — of high society Indians, like Jawab Mansoor Ali Khan Patuadi, princess Shekhar Jah, princess Esra Jah, painter Julius Macwan, Meera Muzzafar Ali, Alyque Adamsee, fashion designer Gaurav Gupta, actor Kirron Kher and painter Baba Anand — are here and yet not there. The veiled portraits lose a mystery woven by Indian motifs, embroideries that have become tradition over the centuries, and mind games stitched in symbols of animals, birds, insects and God.

So, if parakeets perch on the canvas adorned by stiff Pataudi, or a moth — maybe already captured into a butterfly — looms next to Julius Macwan, the viewer is questioned from canvas to canvas. Each personality is hidden and at the same time given away rather enhanced by the environment of the painting handled intelligently by the medium.

Baba Anand wears rosary and cross around his neck in the portrait but as the viewer narrows eyes a little more, an embroidered halo in full-gold thread emerges and so do Christ's im-



TAPESTRY OF STROKES: The portraits on display are rich in Indian motifs, colours and textures.

ages all over the canvas in appliqué work. Motifs in a peek-a-boo with symbols and structure make the exhibition insightful.

And the French artist uses embroideries by Indian craftsmen as she integrates elements in her paintings because: "they represent all that is disappearing in France, but still exists here, in India."

The unpolished four flat timbers crisscrossing each other not only hold together a French

frame of mind brushstroke-ing Indian sensibility but also a young perspective unique to portraits in oil paints.

The exhibition, in collaboration with Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi, is on till October 3 at Alliance Francaise-36. Marion Colomer will also hold lecture-cum-slide show at auditorium, Government Museum and Art Gallery-10 on Monday at 5.30pm.

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