

Art that gives you a 'shift' in your perspective



Suresh Jayaram(top) and Uzma Irfan

“Everybody's changing and I don't feel the same,” goes the Keane song, which is over a decade old, but still creates an extraordinary resonance in today's world. Things are changing, both in themselves and in the way they are perceived. Art is no longer just about a canvas in a frame, technology has revolutionised our individual expression just as much as anything else. 'Paradigm Shift' is the theme for this year's Art Bengaluru, now in its sixth edition, organised by Sublime Galleria and curated by eminent artist and art historian Suresh Jayaram.

The ten-day festival that is held in the city each year, is well on its way to being one of the most important art events in South India. The sixth-edition has been packed to the rafters, with people of all age groups coming in to acquaint themselves with the wonderful, infinite world of art.

“The theme explores a shift in the way we see things around us,” said Jayaram. While public art is definitely making a comeback in Bengaluru, much of this is uncurated. “Here, we are working with a theme to bring art to a wider audience and I see this growing too,” said Jayaram. “A lot of people don't want to go to museums or galleries, but a mall brings in a very varied audience.” Installations, music, video art and photography create for a wide spectrum of artistic expression, bringing both established and upcoming artists to a single platform.

“We had the Chinese artist Li Hongbo display his paper sculptures, which are like origami, but unravel into all sorts of abstract art,” said Jayaram. “It leaves the audiences amazed and bewildered, which is what we want.” Video portraits by internationally renowned artist Nicolas Clauss, paper art by Li Hongbo and a performance by legendary percussionist Trilok Gurtu are all part of the massive lineup this year. A dedicated video lounge features video art from some of the most important artists in genre, both from India and abroad. “We also have a photo wall this year, where documentary makers like Claire Arni, Ryan Lobo and Cop Shiva talk about the shift and change in society,” Jayaram explained. “These are the aspects that we have brought into the festival, because not too many people are friendly with the idea of interactive sculptures, installations of video art. It's what I hoped to achieve by curating the festival.”

Uzma Irfan, the festival founder, also wants to give younger artists the visibility they seek. “I don't think it's a problem to have an established artist exhibit next to an upcoming one. It gives the younger artist a morale boost and also sets him a benchmark. Any art form requires encouragement.” The response to the festival has been overwhelming, with the guided art tours proving immensely popular among school children. “Curiosity draws them in,” said Jayaram. “It leads to a kind of discovery of something they have never encountered before and the next reaction is to know how it's done.” Art, after all, is not just painting and sculpture, it is shaped entirely by the ideas that drive it.